

**IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL
LANGUAGE SPEAKERS**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Cherron Nonceba Vundla (student number: 2014162651), declare that this work (improving reading comprehension in English First Additional Language speakers) in this thesis is my own work and has never been submitted to any other institution towards qualification. The sources cited and quoted have been acknowledged by using Harvard referencing.

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CHERRON NONCEBA VUNDLA

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late grandmother, Thembekile Ntombemnyama Mtshali, who wished me success in my education. She used to say, “I want you to learn until you have got what you want.” This thesis is my dream; it is what I wanted. Thank you so much Gogo for your inspirational words.

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ABSTRACT

This study develops an approach to improve reading comprehension in English First Additional Language. Learners in Grade 7 are challenged with limited vocabulary, mispronunciation of words and word recognition in their pursuit to comprehend written texts. This study will assist teachers in improving vocabulary skills, word recognition and pronunciation of words by using various teaching strategies. It developed an approach as an improvement plan to diagnose learners to improve reading comprehension and apply appropriate corrective strategies. It aimed to find an approach that would improve reading comprehension that is practical and reflective in the challenges identified, adopting participatory action research as design. This design gave all the co-researchers an equal chance in practical participation in its cyclical process with an aim of constructive learning. The critical epistemology theory requires the users to co-participate actively in the construction of knowledge, so that they would be socially transformed. Data generated was analysed using three levels of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. Findings were that learners were limited in vocabulary skills and word recognition. It was recommended placing focus on principle intensive skills to improve vocabulary and word recognition and so assist reading comprehension. This method stimulates learners to think actively and critically about speculation of title and pictures.

Keywords: Reading comprehension; EFAL; vocabulary skills.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ANA | Annual National Assessment |
| BICS | Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills |
| CALP | Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency |
| CAPS | Curriculum and Policy Statements |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CET | Critical Epistemology Theory |
| DBE | Department of Basic Education |
| D-CAPS | Differentiated Curriculum and Policy Statements |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| DP | Deputy Principal |
| EFAL | English First Additional Language |
| FAI | Free Attitude Interview |
| FP | Foundation Phase |
| HL | Home language |
| HoD | Head of Department |
| IP | Intermediate Phase |
| IQMS | Integrated Quality Management System |
| KZN | KwaZulu-Natal |
| LoTL | Language of Teaching and Learning |
| PACT | Promoting Adolescent Comprehension Text |
| PAR | Participatory Action Research |
| PIRLS | Progress in International Reading Literacy Study |
| PISA | Programme for International Student Assessment |
| RIMS | Research Information Management System |
| RSA | Republic of South Africa |
| SACMEQ | South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Qualification |
| SASA | South African School Act |
| SES | Subject Education Specialist |
| SFL | Systematic functional linguistic |
| SGB | School Governing Body |
| SMT | School Management Team |
| SP | Senior Phase |
| SULE | Sustainable Learning Environment |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |

CHAPTER 1:

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to develop an approach to improve reading comprehension in English First Additional Language (EFAL) speakers. As an EFAL teacher I have observed some learners have problems with comprehension texts when read to them, notably with fluency and pronunciation. These have a negative impact on the accompanying questions, in addition to understanding written words or characters when reading them. EFAL learners may understand the instructions provided with the comprehension tasks, for example, to insert pronouns instead of the underlined nouns. Oral instructions given by the teacher are, however, usually better understood.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

According to Abrar, Makminin, Habibi, Asyraf, Makmur and Marzulina (2017:130), as an international language of communication, English requires to be taught as early as primary school level, for instance, Grade 7. However, many learners are unable to communicate in EFAL, with challenges including inability to maintain focus on learning to read in reading comprehension (Sousa, 2017:26). From Annual National Assessment (ANA) results of 2011 for Grade 7, only 34% achieved the required level, one third of whom were below proficiency, including their ability to comprehend text (Scammacca, Roberts, Vaughn & Stuebing, 2015:369).

Lasaux, Kieffer, Kelly and Harris (2014:1161) found that learners who are non-native English speakers and have a rural background lack vocabulary knowledge, and recommend they be provided with support in reading comprehension in EFAL. Faggella-Luby and Deshler (2008:70) found that 26% of Grade 7 learners could not understand text adequately for daily life, and 68% were below reading proficiency

standard. Such deficiencies inhibit ability to compete in the employment market and advance in such academic fields as literature and reading comprehension in EFAL. According to Cirino, Romain, Barth, Tolar, Fletcher and Vaughn (2013:1060), a large number of challenges in EFAL are caused by inadequate support in lower grades from teachers and parents. **The cause of inadequate support from parents not to support learners are working while teachers had larger number of learners in one class.** This study therefore aims to use its research findings to make recommendations for helping learners meet challenges to reading comprehension, and provide teachers with guidelines and decisions on best practices. Based on the above, it will focus on grade 7 learners to devise an approach to improve their reading comprehension in EFAL.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Pretorius (2012:76) insists that learners who use English as EFAL should first master their mother tongue before acquiring the second language. When they start formal schooling they have to extend their reading, listening and writing skills, termed cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), and basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) (Faltis, 2014:90). It is important that parents support them by reading to them, thus, when they reach school-going age, they understand language better and experience fewer challenges in language comprehension.

Matthews (2014:67-69) highlights that there is a greater problem in South Africa as the Basic Department of Education (DBE) is more concerned about implementing the 11 official languages whilst also focusing on EFAL. The learners receive education in their home or mother language up to Grade 3, thus having to switch to EFAL in the Intermediate Phase (from Grade 4 onwards).

Amponsah (2014:51) lists creating a warm learning environment and allowing all learners to voice their views as possible components that may be successful in improving reading. According to Ozsevik (2010:27), the characteristics of communicative language teaching include focus on improving fluency and accuracy and providing guidance and learning development processes. Lun and Wenjing (2014:247–248) argue that dividing learners according to their levels provides positive results, however, this could have negative results at a later stage if the

teacher catered for perception of discrimination. Dividing learners according to their levels could also lower their self-esteem, for example, if they have to be moved to a lower grade. A threat to dividing learners according to levels is that there may not be sufficient material to cater for various reading levels, so the learners are obliged to use the same books in different levels.

Costin (2011:16–17) lists seven basic language methods on which learners should focus in order to master reading EFAL, namely, instrumental, regulatory, personal, imaginative, representational, interactional and heuristic. It is significant that teachers are responsible for teaching and support of this basic language as learners would not be able to do it on their own. The structured instructional approach emphasises meaning, communication, efficiency and competence. Van der Walt (2010:324–325) states that in South Africa the structured instructional approach follows from Anglo-American books, the aims of which are mostly based on reading comprehension in EFAL. According to the structured instructional approach, learners need to participate and complete practical work in a classroom environment which uses the four language skills of reading and viewing, listening and speaking, writing and presentation and language usage. Teachers need to focus on each as they are all equally important.

Mutekwa and Musanga (2013:540–542) assert that Zimbabwe also experiences difficulties in reading comprehension in EFAL. It provides teachers with professional development in communicative language teaching, although it is not always accepted or well implemented, as communicative teaching is not usually practised in classrooms. The result is that curriculum designers and material designers have to go beyond training teachers by modelling how to apply communicative language teaching in the classroom. As an approach it seeks to change teaching as an instructional system concerned with materials, teacher and learner attitudes and behaviour in the classroom, in an effort to improve communicative competence.

In this study learners were encouraged to speak English in the classroom, with the teacher only translanguaging when necessary. Reading books with pictures draws the interest of learners to read for pleasure as teachers aim to motivate them to practise reading anything written in English. If they do not understand the texts the procedure should familiarise them with reading. Listening to English radio and

television programmes could also improve their vocabulary and enrich their reading comprehension in EFAL.

Ozsevik (2010:52–52) found that, in Turkey, teachers were not provided with professional development in approaches to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, leading them to deviate from traditional teaching methods. Often they did not have time to motivate learners to read or develop teaching material as they themselves had to search for strategies that could improve performance. This was caused by challenges teachers encountered when they do not engage in in-service training as required by the Department of Basic Education (DBE as an employer (Skills Development Act, 97,10,1:1998). Other challenges were overcrowded classes, insufficient funding and excessive assessment loads.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learners are seriously underperforming due to the challenges they experience in reading comprehension in EFAL, including failure to read with understanding or answer questions related to the text, pronounce words correctly or read fluently and proficiently (Van der Berg, 2015:3). This was evidenced by the ANA results in which South African learners achieved below 40% in 2011 and 2012 (Nasimbeni, 2011:96), indicating that more should be attempted to improve reading comprehension in targeting 60% pass rates. Personal experiences included reading text to the learners from the *Top Class* book, following which they had to answer ten questions. The majority succeeded in answering only three of the ten questions, confirming Matthews's (2014:1) theory that learners fail to exercise their critical thinking ability, use information for learning reasoning and process information that is read to them.

1.5 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, critical epistemology theory (CET) is the theoretical framework employed for devising strategies and methods to improve reading with understanding for Grade 7 EFAL-speaking learners. It focusses on developing constructive knowledge based on social, economic and political issues of previously

marginalised people (cf. Giroux & McLaren, 2014:215). In an emancipatory democracy citizens should be treated equally, without asserting power over others, thus countering beliefs of group domination, exclusion, oppression and stereotyping.

Originating 30 years ago in the Frankfurt School, CET was developed by Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx (Roblek, Pejić Bach, Meško & Bertonec, 2013:555). It requires its members to learn practically from other members of the group (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:141), including about moral social relations, which lead to equal education and ability to compete with counterparts worldwide. In the context of this study, it means that learners and teachers are part of finding possible solutions to challenges with reading comprehension. They can reflect on what they have learnt and make corrections when necessary.

CET allows for the involvement of teachers, the school governing body (SGB), the learners and other members of the learning environment in the construction of new knowledge. This theory imposes reality and truth of constructed transformative knowledge (Barton & Hamilton, 2012:18). The objectives are to find more information or prior knowledge about the theory that is applied, illustrated by the evidence found from aspects that encourage a proper attitude when teaching reading comprehension. An assessment illustrates whether the theory is being implemented successfully and is effective. A key feature of CET is equality in education (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2010:143), confronting issues of power, justice, moral action and ways in which the community addresses issues of race, class, gender, sexuality and education to construct a social structure that shapes the consciousness of its members. Against group competition, it encourages working together in a team, thereby ensuring that everyone learns and gains equally. CET deals with the meaning of words to the extent that learners are able to understand and create meaningful sentences. Teachers are encouraged firstly to assess the prior knowledge of learners, known as baseline assessment, then start building on the knowledge they had (Muis & Duffy, 2013:213).

The study of knowledge, that is, the know-how by which it can be obtained, and belief, the trust in a person of authority and how it is related to truth and justification,

learners and teachers can learn from each other after discussion. Rather than seeking experts, people learn from one another. It gives consideration to methods, validity, reliability and scope, a kind of knowledge justifiable by use of different kinds of testers, supposedly in order to provide the same knowledge that proves truthful. CET facilitates the construction of a new mode of emancipation and transformative multi-logicity, formed due to previous and current challenges (Kincheloe, Steinberg & Hinchey, 2013:72).

Qhosola (2016:37) states that the relationship between researcher and co-researcher should be one of mutual trust, based on an understanding that a level humanity achieved through equality of power ought to enhance and acknowledge democratic consciousness. In this context, learners are not to be treated as subjects but as humans and should be allowed to take responsibility for their learning.

1.6 THE RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main research question that is central to this study is:

How can an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL be developed?

The aim of the study is to develop an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL in Grade 7 speakers.

Based on a study at Ntabasuka Full Service School in Louwsburg, the following objectives emerged:

- What are the challenges and justification of the need for development of an approach to enrich reading comprehension in EFAL speakers?
- What are the components in respect of an approach to enriching EFAL speakers?
- What are the threats, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for an approach to enrich EFAL speakers?
- What conditions are conducive to the implementation of a communicative language and teaching approach?

- What are the success indicators of a structured instructional approach informed by best international practice?

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study employed participatory action research (PAR) in the context of CET. Tsotetsi (2013:18) highlights that the views of the researcher and co-researchers are equal, thus everyone has equal status. PAR allows all co-researchers to be active in identifying the problem and finding a solution, and provides an opportunity to implement structured instructional approaches. As a methodological approach it fills the gap between structured instructional approaches and CET, as their objectives are similar. PAR provided guidelines on how this approach could be implemented (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:444–448), with CET and its branches being classical epistemology. PAR was useful as it allowed the teachers and learners to participate practically in the construction of new knowledge, resonating well with Poldnikov (2013:4), who stated that learners are responsible for knowledge and their education, while parents support them.

Developing an approach to improve reading comprehension and employing PAR requires members of the group to work in collaboration as a team. Having equal power they share ideas in finding possible solutions to a problem (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2013:34). The principles of PAR were applied since this approach is emancipatory and takes place between the community and the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2014:70). It inspires transformation by which the co-researchers share a common goal in the challenges they are facing.

PAR principles are participatory, emancipatory and reflexive, with the purpose of transforming theory into practice. All the co-researchers would be socially transformed at the end of the process, such that the challenges would be minimal or non-existent (Creswell & Creswell, 2017:173). The co-researchers should be active and share knowledge practically in their group discussions. Applied to this study, when they left the group everyone should have been empowered and able to influence social transformation in order to gain knowledge to improve performance in reading comprehension in EFAL (cf. Yin, 2017:62).

1.8 DATA GENERATION

Free attitude interviews (FAIs) and meetings, and a test of knowledge and understanding (written assessment) were used to generate data (cf. McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:448–449). A further reminder of proceedings, voice recording was employed to ensure accurate capture of information and to focus on the discussions in the meeting. The co-researchers permitted me to use the voice recorder during the session, assured that the information would then be kept safe during the study period and destroyed at the end.

The co-researchers were learners who were interviewed and observed, and teachers who observed my teaching and the behaviour and attitude of learners in my classroom. These meetings lasted for four hours on different occasions. A role of the learners, as co-researchers, was to state the problems they experienced in learning EFAL and help develop an approach that would improve reading comprehension. Another role was to contribute to solutions and provide assistance in implementing them.

1.9 SELECTION OF CO-RESEARCHERS

Random participation selection was best suited for this study of knowledge construction and how it relates to truth, justice and hope (cf. Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:280). All learners were involved in finding possible solutions to problems with reading comprehension in EFAL. In accordance with Maree's (2010:175-176) advice that an equal number of participants should form a coordinating team, I randomly selected four Grade 7 learners from each of two different classes. The other co-researchers were two parents, four qualified English teachers, one subject advisor, three members of school management teams (SMTs) and two members of the SGB. The overall population of the study twenty co-researchers.

1.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was adopted to analyse the data, and to integrate linguistic and communicative analysis (Van Dijk, 2011:89). The results were interpreted, based on the objectives of the study, with the three levels of CDA, namely the social, textual and discursive, used to analyse the data. CDA critiques the abuse of power and inequality and is used to analyse written and spoken texts (Potter, 2013:13). It is used as a method of observation during meetings to reveal power dominance and inequality. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:449) highlight that initial data obtained during informal observations may be reveal the effect of change following a new approach. Reflection is then made on what should be improved, illustrating that the co-researchers learn from their mistakes by reflecting and taking diagnostic measures.

1.11 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

It is intended to provide information to the DBE regarding a structured instructional approach that would improve reading comprehension in EFAL with critical understanding, interpretation and application (cf. Nasimbeni, 2011:18). Subject advisors, policymakers and researchers can use the results and EFAL learners can be provided with components and learning strategies of help in reading written texts with understanding. The approach can assist the DBE in improving the level of EFAL reading in South African schools so that learners would be on par with their counterparts in other countries in seeking employment. It should also assist with improving results in other subjects, an important factor since English is the language of teaching and learning (LoTL) in most schools, and a *lingua franca*, that is, a language used to communicate with people with different native languages.

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the participants included minors, the researcher had to obtain informed consent forms from the parents and take care of them *in loco parentis* (Bankole & Bankole, 2017:492), ensuring they were not harmed physically or psychologically. Constantly helping learners with pronunciation and reading, and correcting them could, for

instance, harm their self-esteem, therefore, I did not assist them while they were reading. I also assured them of anonymity and confidentiality. The information gained during the research study has been safeguarded, and destroyed on completion. Permission to conduct the study at the relevant school was requested from the Head of Department (HoD) the DBE (see annexure 3), the principal of the school (see annexure 1), and the Faculty of Education at the University (see annexure 2). I informed the learners and teachers that their participation was voluntary, with no reward, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time, without recrimination.

1.13 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 has presented the background and layout of the study. The aim was to set out the structure.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework, CET, and how it has been utilised to find possible solutions to the challenges of reading comprehension in EFAL.

Chapter 3 is a review of associated literature on reading comprehension in EFAL. Reference is made to African countries, Southern African democratic countries, the Republic of South Africa (RSA), with reference to specific provinces, and various other countries.

Chapter 4 presents the research design. The processes of data gathering in a PAR group discussion or meetings are discussed. PAR was employed to gather data and the three levels of CDA, social, textual and discursive, to analyse it.

Chapter 5 is a presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter 6 identifies the structured instructional procedure approach as useful in improving reading comprehension in schools. It is a synthesis of the findings of the research. Recommendations are made and suggestions for future research given.

Chapter 7 presents an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

1.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter has stated the aims and research problem, posed the research question and outlined five objectives of the study. The challenges faced by learners and teachers in reading comprehension in EFAL were discussed, followed by discussion of the selection of co-researchers, how the data was generated using PAR, and analysed using CDA. CET was the theory adopted.

CHAPTER 2 : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In line with the study's aim to advance a strategy to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, this chapter presents critical epistemology theory (CET) as the theoretical framework that informed it. A detailed description is provided of how it helps learners in the construction of new, transformed knowledge.

2.2 CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY THEORY

Adopted as a theoretical framework, CET is understood as the centre of knowledge and is transformative in its purpose (Domingues, 2016:205). According to Leland, Lewison and Harste (2014:41), it is generative and forms a catalyst for new knowledge by co-constructors. The study focuses on the developments of teaching and learning towards gaining clarity on social, cultural, political and economic issues, re-assembling knowledge and reconstructing knowledge into ideas. CET allows those who are not in power to voice their views, effectively empowering them (Jardine & James, 2012:8415). According to Giroux and McLaren (2014:215), it is an intellectual and academic exercise in fighting for meaning and power, and following morals and ethics. It is concerned with freeing the oppressed.

The term 'critical' in CET originated from the Greek word *kriticos* (Luke & Dooley, 2011:3), meaning the ability to contend or critique things. The historical origin of CET in Brazil, Latin America and Africa required political transformation and pedagogy for critical transformation. In practice it encourages the freedom of all learners to express their views. CET explains the source and nature of knowledge and how people get to know and understand it (Alemán Jr, Bernal & Cortez, 2015:22). According to Eastwood, Jalaludin and Kemp (2014:12), it is based on the construction of uniformities, whilst Nouri and Sajjadi (2014:78) agree with the above scholars that it can be used to comprehend the nature, source and development of knowledge construction in the equal power dynamics of marginalised or previously marginalised learners. It plays an important role in socio-economic, political and

cultural spheres, contributing to discourse and co-construction of new knowledge, especially in the development of social interest, also recognised as the social construction of power (Dorsey, 2014:20). In explaining human perception, which is shaped cooperatively to co-construct the wisdom of the world, it is a continuous process that could be used meritoriously.

Reflection and learning from one another's accomplishments and faults are the goals of CET, comprising a socio-economic, political and cultural context (Frankenstein, 2015:295). According to Formosa (2015:74), it aims to lead learners to optimum levels of freedom and empowerment, and so could enable them to enrich their reading comprehension. Its practices point out the satisfaction of the social state, the voiceless and powerless by bringing about change in the society of the learners by letting them voice their views on the challenges. It is crucial that this theory encourages the questioning of new transformed knowledge resulting from teachers and learners working collaboratively (Shor, 2014:7).

Previously marginalised learners and rural communities that experience inequality will embrace CET if they can appreciate that it will help in their enrichment. It requires leadership that would bridge the gap between reform schools and communities by improving reading comprehension in EFAL (Green, 2015:2), and bring about collaboration among schools in the community to improve the education of learners. It can be implemented by principals when inviting parents to meet with teachers to discuss the challenges they face in teaching their children and help motivate the learners to enjoy their schoolwork, in addition to helping with household chores (Copper, Riehl & Hasan, 2011:760). Principals should encourage parents to buy books to use at home and to read to their children, thus instilling a reading culture, and allow learners to use the school library outside school hours. All learners have the potential to perform better in their schoolwork if their parents assist them (Grady, 2016:80; Leithwood & Patrician, 2015:665). Green and Gooden (2014:931–934) agree that teachers and community should build a strong relationship to improve academic achievement.

CET counters inequality of programmes concerning education, culture, ethnicity and institutional racism that particularly affect rural schools (Green, 2015:3). Over-working by teachers resulted in problems paying attention to learners' weaknesses,

therefore, it is additionally important that parents help by reading to their children at home and showing supportive interest in their school performance. Kenny (2016:17-18) agrees with the above authors that empowering parents and caregivers is crucial and improves learners' performance. Involving all stakeholders in the education of learners improves the culture of reading and decreases challenges faced by teachers and learners in constructive reading (Francis, Blue-Banning, Haines & Gross, 2016:4). It relates significantly to this study, as learners perform better if they are supported by their parents. They can practice independent reading and improve in reading comprehension of written text.

In terms of CET, there is support for ethics that value curricular suggestions on learners in well-versed multifaceted knowledge (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014:80). It is evident that knowledge of reading and reading comprehension will allow learners to pursue their education to a higher institution without challenges as learners are challenged to understand when reading. Authors further indicate that expanded knowledge will encourage learners to communicate internationally, economically and politically and gain knowledge that will create opportunities given to other race groups.

Copper, Riehl and Hasan (2010:759) explain that practical application of critical epistemology has to be conducted equitably by using different languages when communicating with other co-constructors of new knowledge, that is, learners and parents. No language should be undermined and parents who cannot read English should be communicated with in their language of choice. Co-researchers or constructors of knowledge should be culturally sensitive, with, for example, parents playing an important role as co-constructors at home and supporting their children with schoolwork. Teachers can let parents become involved in their children's work by inviting them to school meetings.

Teachers with extensive knowledge of the curriculum and departmental policies can discuss with parents how to assist their children, as parents have knowledge of their children's ambitions, skills, strengths and weaknesses. It is pivotal that departmental officials should allow partnerships between parents, learners and teachers to discuss the policies of the school or Department to assist in improving reading comprehension of EFAL.

Allowing equality in terms of race, gender and class, CET is against the marginalisation of learners and gender stereotyping, and encourages the empowerment of these learners, thus making their education equitable and accessible. The critical epistemologist teacher allows or accepts knowledge from learners as partners or constructors of knowledge (Jorgensen, 2014:313). Teachers acknowledge and respect existing knowledge of learners by not treating them as *tabula rasa*, that is, as blank pages to be filled with new knowledge.

Learners are free to ask questions, ranging from issues of power and politics to life experiences. Green and Gooden (2014:931) concur with Alemán et al. (2015:20) that learners feel devalued by disrespectful educational policies, a major cause of learners underperforming in reading comprehension in EFAL and other subjects. Examples of power politics are organisational racism, poverty and insufficient resources in previously marginalised schools. In the context of progressive and competent comprehension reading strategies in EFAL, these could be alleviated by allowing all stakeholders to be treated equally, allowing them to voice challenges and possible solutions since they are the ones performing all the work.

The significantly marginalised learners' knowledge reveals how they are associated with the practicality of specific empowerment, comprising how one thinks beyond knowledge and how others were marginalised (Leithwood & Patrician, 2017:330). This theory is from a social viewpoint on how to understand knowledge and establish it. It is important to engage with knowledgeable people by being involved in preparing action, collecting previous knowledge and constructing new knowledge. In this study, for example, different stakeholders are involved in enhancing reading comprehension and finding solutions that could improve the reading comprehension of an EFAL learner.

Kowch (2013:27) highlights that CET encourages incorporation of various talents of one individual into the school environment, as well as ethical exercises and enriching achievement in constructive knowledge. This is of significance as it allows a society with scarce skills to acquire ones more needed in the working environment. Educating society with a variety of scarce skills will lead to transformation and it becoming a learning society. It also manages the performance of learners and members of the community by creating a lifelong learning society.

The concept of critical epistemology requires teachers who are empowered to appreciate social justice and a self-governing view of schooling. It requires teachers who can make wise decisions with regard to knowledge and curriculum development in the classroom. Knowledge forms the learners of the future in the community and assembles political power to teach it (Kincheloe, 2004:51). Teachers should be aware that knowledge encompasses various kinds of information, including reflective data, be it cultural, historical or political, and is fundamental to CET.

Gist (2014:193) writes that linguistic knowledge is seen from different angles as a guide for the construction of decisions and understanding in a questioning environment, building cultural and linguistic skills in the classroom. It is important for teachers to understand the approaches they should use in class in order for learners to enhance their understanding. There is a need to be sensitive to race, culture, gender, social and linguistic groups of the learning environment in the discourse of language teaching from a critical point of view, associated with CET (Gist, 2014:111). It is crucial for teachers to be prepared in such a way that they understand educational inequalities, simplify their own understanding of pedagogical knowledge and become agents of transformation in society.

Learners are encouraged to become part of the construction of scientific knowledge. Rudge, Cassidy, Fulford and Howe (2014:1883) argue that learners should be invited to share and reflect on their background knowledge of a specific written text. The session should include a level of understanding and people with knowledge, the teachers, to provide assistance if required. In their sessions they should discuss historical development to gain insight into the insufficiency of their previous understanding and demonstrate the enrichment of reading comprehension in EFAL.

The theory of CET requires teachers to communicate with learners in their own learning language. In an English class, for example, the inclusion of literature, rap music and films when teaching reading comprehension is important. This allows learners to co-construct new knowledge and reveal their characters and gives them the opportunity to apply their previous experiences and background (Leighton, 2018:42). The teachers learn from the learners and *vice versa* (Winchell, Kress & Tobin, 2016:105). The class should be a democratic learning environment in which

everyone's voice is equal and heard, accepting of various cultures, freedoms and social structures. Leighton (2018:34) adds that learners learn not only from teachers but also from different situations of learning, such as family members and peer groups, and through community links, formal and informal social networks. They come into contact with different people in the learning environment and learn from them.

Teachers and learners have the power to become contributors to race, cultures and beliefs in the classroom (Diakogiannis, 2016:5), where it is wise to permit discussion about diversity as many countries experience challenges in these fields. There are reading comprehension challenges, since they speak different languages and mostly use English as a first additional language, so by permitting conversations their minds are opened to a wider area. They can move internationally, with more knowledge of social issues required, and have consideration and respect for different races and cultures. Green and Gooden (2014:940) assert that learners who were exposed to other ethnicities learnt to value each other, irrespective of background.

2.3 HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY THEORY

Development of CET began in the 1950s and was led by different researchers (Sinatra, Kienhues & Hofer, 2014:125). The first group, led by Max Horkheimer from 1875 to 1973, was interested in how learners understand their educational experience. The second group, from 1930 to 1933, guided by the works of Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Immanuel Kant and Karl Marx, was interested in questioning how the individual believes the knowledge they have is truthful. The third group, in the 1940s, led by Karl Popper, believed that a learner is less liberated by the teacher than by themselves, if they have knowledge. The central idea of this theory is the method of construction of knowledge, a belief that background knowledge of the researcher and co-researcher could be influenced by what is obtained during data generation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014:210).

Critical epistemology was promoted by Adorno, Marcuse, Kant and Marx from the Frankfurt School and deals with matters of sociology, psychology and political science (Cooper, Riehl, & Hasan, 2010:761). On the educational level, Cooper,

Riehl and Hasan (2010:762) identify the purpose as to improve the performance of marginalised learners in different low-income societies in a political context. According to Rivkin (2017:1018) it was developed to transform society and eradicate inequalities in culture, communication, mediation of political reality, as well as cultural and social fields. Eming, Groos, Mertens, Meyer, Rasmussen and Schiewer (2014:1-2) note recent figures who revisited and rewrote about CET in the middle to late twentieth century, notably Kant and Hegel, as concerned with democratic issues.

CET denies the political aspect that is advantageous to privilege and gives power to cultural political realms (Giroux, 2018:30). Some of the challenges facing EFAL learners which hinder them in reading comprehension are culturally bound. Being against the dictatorship of the voice of others any inequality requires transformation and evaluation. Based on Marxist and phenomenological philosophies (Luke & Dooley, 2011:4), it requires learners and teachers to be transformed to such an extent that the challenges of reading comprehension are directed to the realities, unloading myths and misrepresentations in favour of construction of a new way of knowing. Development and co-construction of English will include different cultures that cater for EFAL learners and encourage recognition of marginalised communities' histories and practices.

The scholars of CET regarded it as the construction of knowledge of human existence and meaning (Babich, 2016:67), a theory of knowledge, recognition and consciousness of liberation and history expressed in inspirational logic. According to Kieser, Nicolai and Seidl (2015:145), it is charismatic and democratic, focusing on historical transformation with sharing of knowledge to transform the social community and an aim to be declared the rightful knowledge in pursuit of equality in the learning environment. Giroux, Lankshear, McLaren and Peters (2013:240) assert that it has to do with social constructed knowledge of exercise and comprehension of a written text.

The main aim of CET is to make learners constructive and contest the knowledge provided towards the change of social community and cultural environments (Hoffman, Afflerbach, Duffy-Hester, McCarthey & Baumann, 2014:54). This could be illustrated by providing learners with the chance to understand their own history,

background and culture in reading comprehension. Social critical theory established CET with the aim of removing social injustice inequalities. Before 1994, there was power segregation in South Africa, between so-called 'model C' and public schools (Caledoron Pena, 2017:25). The education system was not equal as, for example, isiZulu learners were taught in isiZulu until Grade 7 (Caledoron Pena, 2017:28), given an education based on the banking system that gave information without them questioning it or the issues of power behind it. When CET emerged it allowed learners to be critical, question knowledge and be part of its construction. English was only taught as a subject and made it difficult for those unfamiliar with it or of a critical disposition to examine its meaning or even understand it. The same applied to learners who only learnt or were exposed to English in class, as they faced challenges in reading comprehension in EFAL. This was attached to cultural ways of pronouncing and clarifying through CET (Ellis & Shintani, 2013:62), and it is crucial that readers comprehend the written texts' values, ideologies and representation about social issues of the world. They should be aware that reading is related to knowledge distribution, co-construction and power in society.

Social development and justice are encouraged in CET, where there is inequality, for example, in reading comprehension (Giroux et al., 2013:32). It provides various paths to equality in different races, ensuring that every learner has equal access to good performance and that the enrichment of reading comprehension is part of transformation and consciousness of power relations. Derived from critical social theory, it deals with the improvement of marginalised people and fights for an improved society, power, knowledge, material resources and status. It is against inequalities in societal ideologies, institutions and practices that can be reconstructed through language (So, 2016:182). According to Bishop (2014:53), it deals with how to teach a soul and how that soul can learn. It is important that critical epistemologist teachers apply construction of the text, not explaining what it is or what infuses it, nor merely finding its meaning.

Critical epistemologist teachers and learners had to learn to understand social, power relations and history text as means of social change. Giroux et al. (2013) argue that they should work together to create lessons in critical literacy (Schiro, 2012:13), giving learners an opportunity to reflect on social practices. In the classroom, it is important that equality in terms of gender, race and ethnicity is

acknowledged. Learners became aware of social practices, social justice, freedom and equity in social construction and change (Hosoya & Talib, 2010:45). In the United States of America (USA), the main aim of Section 702 of the Bilingual Education Act, 81 of 1965 was to address access to equal educational opportunities for minority learners, who were provided with guaranteed rights to learn EFAL. The aim was to provide them with necessary arrangements to meet challenges they faced in reading comprehension in EFAL.

Learners are allowed to question knowledge that is provided to them and also be part of its co-construction, such that learners are afforded with knowledge that is culturally based, suits their ability and is on the same level as that of their counterparts (Huang, 2012:285). Most EFAL learners' language skills and cultures differ from their counterparts, thus teachers should cater for them and interrogate their culture and social standards. CET offers the practice of a learner-centred method to its constructors, leading to a consciousness which prevents injustice and ensures equality and democracy. (Segall, 2013:482). Learners are taught the kind of knowledge they can attain in order to contribute to society as active members and knowledgeable citizens (Giroux & McLaren, 2018:20). They should acquire knowledge that will make them part of the transformational, economic and political work environment (Springer, 2011:527), acquiring skills and knowledge that will enable them to read, speak and write, and lead to their having culturally meaningful values.

According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (2007:6–7), the educators and users of knowledge from society should be dealing with unity among poor, middle class people marginalised by inequality and mistreated in terms of race and gender. The main goal of critical epistemology is consciousness of a construction of rebellion against major power blocks to redistribute power equally. In recent years, when applying CET in schools, learners' performance in reading comprehension has improved more in diverse schools than in predominantly white schools (Giroux, 2020: 848).

CET forms part of the basic knowledge of education, which should practically be democratic, political and free of unjust power relations. It requires all members of society to have access to and equality in society (Fox & Doherty, 2012:145). The

main purpose is social transformation of all members of society, with teachers knowledgeable about their learners' backgrounds, empowered with intellectual and practical skills and familiarity with their societal world.

Lunneblad and Johansson (2012:708) agree that CET is the process of social construction of new and prevailing knowledge that is value-free and necessitates the transformation of the realities of learners. Part of human consciousness and reality in society, for Hoeg and Bencze (2017:280) its power lies within the learners. An authoritarian relationship between the teacher and learners should be replaced by a friendly one in the same language, based on equitable power. This theory offers opportunities for questioning as the teacher poses questions, allowing learners to be part of the expansion of knowledge. Learners in CET exercise freedom in their education, learning who they are.

Believing knowledge to be developed by the teacher and learners, Joldersma (2010:140) states that learners construct knowledge to gain power and control in the world, as illustrated by CET's prerequisites that a human acts as an active agent who sees the world as a reality that can be changed. A change agent has the ability to develop a new reality which requires critical consciousness, practice of the mind, inferences and associates. It is illustrated by learners who are able to participate, construct and synthesise knowledge about the world. This is significant, because knowledge expansion and social change go hand-in-hand and cannot be separated.

It is important for teachers to develop themselves continuously and professionally if they are to stay abreast of developments in education, notably new social, cultural, political, economical and historical knowledge that are used to structure their consciousness (Kincheloe, 2005:1-2). They will then have knowledge of construction and reconstruction of knowledge, leading to the transformation of themselves, learners and society. Teachers should be hands-on with the new generation of learners, involving them as organisers and planners of education to the extent that all their activities involve the values and ideas of society. Teachers and learners teach, learn, gain knowledge and create new knowledge by working together. Whilst learners have knowledge the teachers guide them and give them and provide access to practical knowledge (Joldersma, 2011:442).

In critical epistemology there is no object that receives knowledge, but instead co-contributors working, thinking and informing in collaboration. Joldersma (2011:443) states that critical epistemological schools are influential in social control and a place of clarification and exploration of ideas. Authoritarianism has no role in critical epistemology, with the learner thinking critically and the teacher willing to learn more in collaboration with the learners. Learners should not be treated as objects that receive knowledge but rather be given the opportunity to express themselves. Zireva (2014:19) states that CET is about correcting social injustice, inequality, oppression in institutions and social associations. Critical epistemologists are empowered to pursue justice and freedom for individuals to change cultural actions into social reality. The teachers allow learners to take part in planning their own education.

2.4 OBJECTIVES OF CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

There are a number of objectives of critical epistemology, detailed in this section.

2.4.1 Emancipation

The objectives of critical epistemology are outlined by Formosa and Higgs (2015:79–82) as “focused on political rationale to show its commitment to learners in social structure”. Learners should participate in educational meetings in which they deal with their areas of educational practice, not be treated unequally due to marginalised social practices that discriminate by race, colour and gender. These need to be corrected and all learners should receive equal education so that their performance is improved and they can compete with their counterparts worldwide.

Critical epistemology directs social transformation, its empowerment and freedom into the world of learning. Kersaint, Thompson and Petkova (2014:127) argue that critical epistemology is responsible for reproducing power relations, which highlight that learners are required to be contributors of learning development, have a voice and be empowered to be critical contributors in developing solutions to challenges.

2.4.2 Transformation

A shared method that deals with transformation when learners and ethnic groups experience inequality implies that CET principles are responsible for removing inequalities in rural areas. Formosa (2011:319) believes learners should be allowed freedom, empowerment, transformation and social and hegemonic control over their own education. Being empowered will help in improving their reading comprehension and answering related questions on other subjects. Transformation challenges dominant ideologies, including the culture that informs learners on how they learn according to their challenges in reading comprehension. O'Shea and O'Brien (2011:13) argue that it is important for teachers and learners to have the ability to change since they think critically. Knowledge is transformational and teachers and learners, as agents of change, have the power to search for knowledge of reality to change the world. In relations to this study, this would enrich their knowledge and help them transform the reality of reading comprehension in EFAL.

2.4.3 Life enhancement

Critical epistemology is against the traditional education method in which teachers are the only knowledgeable people and learners have to listen without questioning them. Instead, it is based on liberating education that empowers learners, requiring them to have a fundamental understanding of their social, economic and political circumstances and issues. Teachers should not view learners as objects that only receive knowledge but as contributors and active co-researchers in finding possible solutions. This requires expanding their socio-cultural knowledge to reshape their lives and improve their reading comprehension.

The prominence of trans-corrective approaches that deal with the enrichment of pedagogical practices of learners, including learners of colour understanding their responsibilities in learning so that they are able to comprehend the written text. This would be illustrated by the learners when they are able to answer questions on texts without assistance.

2.4.4 Empowerment

Critical epistemologists are not only organisers but also committed to the fight against the oppression of learners. It is crucial to ensure that they assist learners in playing a practical role in planning for their education, participating in guidelines, visions and ideas of education, and not treat them as objects. In this study, learners were included in discussions about finding solutions to challenges in reading comprehension. As valued as constructors they helped organise the education curriculum. Formosa (2011:319) states one of the important objectives is raising the idea of praxis to create critical education, which is centred on taking power and control over education, knowledge and ideas. For Zireva (2014:18), critical epistemology favours liberating oppressed people for their social, economic and political potential.

2.4.5 Promoting equity

Critical epistemology practice is not only for schools but also for higher education, and as many learners live in rural areas it is critical to apply equitable programmes in tertiary institutions, including workshops on reading comprehension in TEFAL. It would be wise for teachers to allow learners to teach each other as peers, since they may share aspects of culture (Gomez, 2016:140). Teachers should be aware of the learners' needs, making it easier for them to provide support as they know their environment. It is grounded in a critical movement fighting for social transformation, an improved society and domination (Hafford-Letchfield & Formosa, 2016:240).

2.4.6 Overcoming injustice

Another objective stated by Formosa (2011:319) is for learners to be provided with a comprehension text of EFAL that suits their ability and age. They should therefore be promoted within their age cohort and question what they wish to do, until they reach their full potential (Alemán et al., 2015:22). Teachers should motivate learners to influence their social action and be independent critical readers. As a commitment of critical epistemology, social justice is based on race and gender, requiring

equality in an education exercise. The performance of marginalised learners in reading comprehension in EFAL can be improved (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014:81) and open access can be provided to those communities and learners who are still marginalised. Those who do not have the opportunity to receive quality higher education, as a result of socio-economic factors, place an obligation on the community to act as the agent of social change.

2.4.7 Collaboration

Forming a partnership with parents could result in positive involvement, care, cooperation and progress in social and political areas. This would encourage teaching and learning of reading comprehension in EFAL, which in turn would increase values, assumptions, ideologies and epistemologies. Working together can solve the problems by allowing learners to be co-constructors and allow them to position themselves in relation to race, class and gender (Cooper et al., 2010:768). Working in collaboration assists superiors of the DBE to construct inclusive education in a fair and consistent manner. Carspecken (2013:7) outlines the two objectives of critical epistemology as social reality and conditions and states that reality may be recognised by knowing its origin. Learning and critical epistemology are explained as a process of learning that is new or expands on existing knowledge (Leary, 2012:21). Learners learn better when they perform something instead of just memorising it. According to Giroux and McLaren (2014:34), its objectives have a significant influence on transforming social issues in communities, schools and higher education institutions and will ensure that learners independently comprehend the written text in EFAL. In transformation it includes equality and democracy as the opinion of procession. Another objective that Giroux and McLaren (2014:34) point out is reduction of opposition, oppression and manipulation.

2.5 DIFFERENT FORMATS OF CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

There are various formats of critical epistemology, outlined in this section.

2.5.1 Power relations

Power is wielded by a class or organisation for profit, often made up of those who hold a high position through domination (Wenger, 2010:180). A challenge may come from those who are in a lower position, though they can also hold power, and according to Rivkin (2017:756), whoever is superior has power. In a school a power structure is present with embedded inequalities that support certain social positions and allow those in power to benefit from them (Barry, 2017:89). Being part of the construction of knowledge allows learners to voice their views as well as the challenges they encounter. Formosa and Higgs (2015:74) write that the main concern of critical epistemology is to overcome the oppression, poverty and powerlessness that undermine learners. Uncritical education and knowledge are major concerns.

Leaders are those who wish to assist previously marginalised individuals by providing them with opportunities to be involved in discussion groups on finding possible solutions (Miller, Wills & Scanlam, 2013:1082-1083). They should be willing and prepared to give attention to their individual thoughts about poor reading comprehension in EFAL and their ideas can then be transformed and recognised. According to Miller et al. (2013:1083), it should involve implementing and sharing ideas and knowledge with others. Thus, it is valuable for learners to be part of the co-construction of knowledge to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

2.5.2 Abuse of power

Power abuse occurs when the programme of involving all the relevant stakeholders to co-construct knowledge at different levels in top-down authority is stopped (Sandlin, Wright & Clark, 2013:10). For instance, those who blame learners for under-achievement in reading comprehension in EFAL, instead of assisting and supporting them in performing to the required standard, may be seen as abusing power (Scott, Taylor & Palmer, 2013:290). The abuse hinders disadvantaged people from having a say in policymaking. Community members, teachers and principals should collaborate rather than be in competition (Dorsey, 2014:35).

Community leaders can provide curriculum-based books to the community library for learners to read, even after school, especially if their parents cannot afford to buy them. This motivates learners to be independent readers and subsequently improve their reading comprehension in EFAL. As a force against the abuse of power, CET could be misused because it legitimises the community, with groups and parents participating in school activities irrespective of gender, race or sexual orientation (Dorsey, 2014:23). Participating in a programme is important because it keeps the learners at school. Huang (2012:284) asserts that teachers who assist EFAL learners to enhance reading comprehension should work with those learners to find vocabulary in the text and the pictures associated with it.

Critical epistemology requires principals and teachers to eradicate injustice, increase equality and simplify knowledge and beliefs for every learner, despite their colour (Davy, 2016:16). This would lead to transformation of the focus of educational values in terms of performance, whether the learners come from rural or urban schools. It would benefit them academically, even in higher education institutions, as reading comprehension in EFAL is expanded economically, socially and politically. Prior to 1994, learners were segregated along racial lines in the education system, leading to an unequal struggle for knowledge. Present-day learners are taught that they should empower one another and expand their knowledge if they are to be successful in the future (Kowch, 2013:33).

2.5.3 Social justice

How the principals of schools make decisions and organise themselves, transform leadership and sustain social justice in the community with regard to previously marginalised learners is important. Principals and teachers may have a strong vision that includes policies and practices on how to improve performance, and during implementation of policy they should keep in mind the parents of learners who were previously marginalised and their inequalities to ensure they are provided for in their teaching strategies (Carlson, 2014:45). When teaching a written EFAL text they should provide cues and explanations with appropriate vocabulary, through teaching strategies, to make it more understandable.

The latter is an important point that illustrates the importance of principals and teachers working collaboratively, being sensitive to organisational inequality and collaborating with parents of learners to achieve social justice. Principals should be mindful of social justice and knowledgeable about the influences on learners' achievement in reading comprehension in EFAL. Principals of schools are advised to involve parents in the education of their children, including reading to those who cannot read for themselves. This can be achieved by inviting them to teacher-parent meetings in which the learning and education of their children are discussed. Involving parents in classroom activities is said to improve the achievement of learners in reading comprehension in EFAL (Scanlan, 2012:1069).

Palmer (2013:47) states that poverty in rural areas is one of the main causes of low achievement in schools. Usually learners in rural areas in South Africa with EFAL do not compare well with their counterparts. This contributes to the challenges of reading comprehension as learners do not have books. Socio-economic status has also been linked to poor achievement in reading comprehension in EFAL in the USA (Zano, 2020:8).

Ishimaru (2013:4) highlights that inequality is one of the social challenges that prevent learners from performing as well as their counterparts who are better off socio-economically. Collaboration between teachers and parents is a crucial factor that could improve performance, as they can discuss problems and join forces to find solutions. It is also important that learners have sufficient time to read, which would improve their reading comprehension in EFAL.

2.5.4 Gender equality

CET is against gender inequality. Currently, employment equity legislation stipulates that women and men be allowed to occupy similar level positions in the workplace (Formosa, 2010:62), therefore, their education should be equal. Previously, women were given lower level positions and fields of study, while men were afforded opportunities for higher level careers. CET is against this and advocates fair and equal treatment, regardless of gender. Prior to 1994, educational opportunities were characterised along racial and gender lines (Badat & Sayed, 2014:138). According to Herrman, Kelly and Haigh (2017:85), gender differences

have a negative impact on cognitive, academic, social and emotional development. Male learners are characterised by low scores in the National Assessment Education Progress and are associated with poor reading ability and leaving school early (Pienaar, Barhorst & Twisk, 2014:372).

Learners from low-income or middle-income families usually face challenges in reading comprehension in EFAL, which illustrates that the societal factor of low-to middle-income families has a negative influence on learner performance. School-based programmes aiming to remove inequality among learners is said to improve reading comprehension in EFAL achievement, which can be achieved by applying constructive individual development between the learner, community members and teachers (Miller, 2011:34).

Green (2015:30) concurs with Miller that inequality in education hinders learner performance. Those learners faced with inequality in education tend to struggle after school, pointing to inequality in educational resources, such as libraries, bookstores and community-based organisation. Here they are supposed to acquire books to improve their reading skills and reading comprehension skills so as to become independent readers. Helpman, Itskhoki and Redding (2010:1242) concur that poverty has a negative impact on learner performance.

2.5.5 Domination

Language is a means of maintaining and reproducing domination. South Africa and the USA are two of the most diverse countries in the world and are mostly challenged by language and reading comprehension in EFAL (Cullen, Gregory & Noto, 2010:1). It is vital that EFAL learners and their counterparts understand how language works and remove inequitable social relations. They should be lay a role in the construction of knowledge to include or remove what was previously required or a challenge.

2.5.6 Access

Previously marginalised learners should be given access to dominant languages, literacies and knowledge. According to Cashin (2014:12) this should be in a range of cultural practices related to social interaction, with access provided to academic development of institutions and economics that increase reading comprehension in EFAL. Access would allow them to be forcefully transformed, relaxing sharp differences of culture and social values in the construction of knowledge and leading to possible solutions and components.

Green (2015:31) states that the race and class of learners influence access to equal opportunities in education. For example, in schools with insufficient reading resources, learners are not motivated to become independent readers. Williams, Sanchez and Hunnell (2011:690) concur that learners from poor families are at risk, illustrated by early school leavers' results between 2003 and 2004, when a high rate of dropout from higher education institutions was attributed to poor reading comprehension in EFAL.

2.5.7 Diversity

Diverse learners should be treated in a comfortable way that allows them to understand any text written in EFAL in a positive environment that values their culture and social values (Horsford & Sampson, 2014:956). They should be treated in a similar way as are their counterparts, as co-constructors of knowledge. Importantly, it should be regarded as normal rather than causing nervousness and frustration.

Inclusivity in the language classroom should allow diverse learners to make use of different ideas and resources in the construction of knowledge. According to Lee, Teater, Hsu, Greene, Fraser, Solovey and Grove (2013:157), learners from violent environments are likely to be influenced by it and so likely to have poor reading comprehension in EFAL. Many scholars have no idea where to start, whether it forms an emotional, intellectual or poor school attendance challenge. Luke (2011:4) recommends that diverse classrooms focus on ideology critique and cultural

analysis, thus combatting exclusion and marginalisation. This could be achieved when meeting challenges and in the construction of appropriate materials.

According to Miller et al. (2013:545), working in collaboration influences the performance of learners in their challenges, for example, teaching vocabulary skills and creating personal dictionaries that could be used at home. Diverse communities working in collaboration with schools enhances social organisation and focuses their vision on improved performance of their learners.

2.5.8 Design

Learners, as co-designers of new knowledge have the power and ability to question and change existing knowledge in reading comprehension in EFAL (Perkins, 2015:320). By being designers they have a say in how reading comprehension should be taught and which teaching strategy they understand better, given that they are the ones facing the challenges. At the same time they should be joining and re-joining the resources to generate possibilities for transformation and reconstruction.

2.6 ONTOLOGY OF CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Ontology, from a critical epistemology stance, is viewed as the reality of social constructs. It should be constructed by the researcher and co-researcher as part of practical research with everyone able to voice his or her ideas in a form of learning (Fekede, 2010:102). Thus, it requires the construction of knowledge that is historical, cultural, social and contextual, indicating that it should be transformational to the learning environment. Mertens (2010:11) adds that ontology is against the power of privilege.

Blaise (2012:196) defines ontology as the nature of existence or reality of how learners are taught. The contrasting belief of learners on the grounds of reality is seen as ontology. Blaise further writes that in the ontology stance in critical epistemology, teachers and learners see themselves as social constructions and socio-cultural. Ontology is formed by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic,

gender and disability factors. Roth (2013:75) adds that it is the groundwork of reality in which knowledge is directed by satisfied requirement, representative and interactive procedure. Ontology is concerned with the nature of knowledge that learners need to learn and transform (Stoddard, 2013:459). Similarly, Allen, Strathern and Varga (2014:19) view it as outside knowledge, which is a reality that needs to be studied in understanding construction and creating a decent picture.

Pedagogically, it assists learners and teachers who are actually constructing new knowledge collaboratively. According to Vavrus (2014:1), teachers and learners, in their newly constructed knowledge, will include new ideas that assists them in getting to know themselves better. It also gains insight into social or broad construction, cultural, ideologies and the consciousness of new knowledge.

The ontological stance in critical epistemology has two perspectives, namely, dual constructivism and nondual ontology. The former deals with the practical construction of knowledge and learning by members of the social community (Packer, 2010:170). According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011:84), new directions of knowledge construction are required. In this study, for example, different teaching strategies are used to find solutions to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. The latter, nondual ontology consists of an idea that is constructed in a social context designed through practical activity and relationships inspiring a search for uniqueness. In this sense, ontology is concerned with historical and cultural contexts that become a reality.

Epistemic ontological learning makes learners the community members who are socially transformed and given a construction of identities in which they are responsible for and part of their own learning. They are being transformed to work collaboratively with the members of the community. Learning leads to direct involvement in the social community, through accepted behaviour. Norms and beliefs are followed to be an associate of a cultural community (Packer, 2010:172).

Martin (2013:24) writes that these challenges hinder their success socially, politically and economically. Ontological teachers of reading comprehension in EFAL should be aware of methods that work for learners. Teaching should thus be experimental, which could include the use of dictionaries so that learners are able to make sense of the meaning of the texts (Scotland, 2012:12).

This field is concerned with what reality is and investigation or inquiry of existence. Ontology is the field of study that focuses on the nature of being and reality, which differ from one person to another because they depend on what he or she wants to believe. It is historical, formed by social, political, cultural, ethical, gender and values. Raadschelders (2011:919) regards it as more concerned with the reality and justification of knowledge, what we can learn and different sources of knowledge. Theories of knowledge are developed by ontology, for example, critical epistemology through the use of research design. Kohn (2015:320) argues that it is an important branch of metaphysics and investigation of reality of the social and political world. It also includes participation in order to develop the basic foundation of knowledge. Concerned with finding out what is beyond known reality it deals with the creation of the world. Kohn (2015:319) regards it as socially related, which inspires learners to reflect on learning and think differently. Ontology gives guidance for research design to acquire knowledge to find possible solutions to problems.

Stoddard (2013:457) holds the view that ontology requires the action and tactics of inquiry. It takes on a role and a kind of disruption that fosters reflective learning, which improves learners' critical thinking skills and investigative or research knowledge. This could prepare learners to learn more about ontology and the nature of society and political structures. Thus, role-taking is important to learners as it allows understanding of learning. Caballero, Edwards, Goodyer and Okitikpi (2012:3) concur that ontology is the nature of the social and political world.

2.7 AXIOLOGY OF CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Axiology of CET is stated as the viewpoint of ethical and moral behaviour that should be revealed by teachers towards learners in a learning community (Goodman, Martens & Flurkey, 2016:217). This could be illustrated by cultural norms of interactions in terms of human rights and social justice. The axiological stance importantly requires that knowledge be constructed in social science and humanities in a vertical or horizontal way.

Learners in education are researching and learning, teaching and growing more knowledgeable (Martin, Maton & Matruglio, 2010:436–437). Teachers also learn from learners using the knowledge researched by them. Vertical axiology requires

learners to learn to use different challenges, expositions and discussions rather than learning in the same way. According to Allen et al. (2010:42), axiology is the study of moral values and valuation and the things that are valued, such as reading comprehension in this study.

Values in axiology are introductory for critical epistemology and social theories. Every social community has values that are agreed upon or allowed in that particular one. Various values in social communities are emancipation, justice, equality, transformation, enrichment and progress (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015:67). According to O'Reilly and Kiyimba, if the social community does not understand their values it will result in construction of knowledge that is inappropriate for the designated task. It is suggested that the social communities be aware of values that respect human rights and dignity (Kenter, Bryce, Christie, Cooper, Hockley, Mine, Fazey, O'Brien, Orchard-webb, Ravenscroft, & Raymond, 2016:360).

Values also include instilling love of reading to learners, with inhumane values removed. Carter and Chrisman (2012:329) state that epistemic expression is based on morals and practice and is more concerned with ethical evaluation than ethical value in the world. Ethical values are more concerned with plausible evidence, truth and moral knowledge. Axiology has an interest in technical and practical reading, communicative in understanding reading comprehension in EFAL. This can be reflected on actions that have already been taken in the process (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013:702). The main goal of PAR is to provide solutions to co-researchers in the form of learning.

2.8 EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANCE OF CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Blaise (2012:190) describes epistemology as the method that lays out how knowledge and reality should be constructed in a social community, whilst for Fekede (2010:100) epistemology in CET aims to determine the relationship between the teacher, the learner and the social community. According to Mertens (2010:11), epistemology is concerned with the knowledge that researchers and co-researchers have to transform into real knowledge. It deals with what the knower knows and what knowledge the knower imparts to the unknown and how. Knowledge originated from the knowers' knowledge.

Knowledge is the information gathered from experience or learnt by understanding the subject explained (Arp, Smith & Spear, 2015:641). Real knowledge is historically, culturally, socially, politically, ethnically and economically bound. Roth (2013:73) contends that epistemological methods are knowing the meaningful world properly and improperly, which is subject to the human mind and social context. Stoddard (2013:459) adds that epistemology is the theory of justified, independent and basic beliefs that are justified by inferential associations. According to Allen et al. (2010:42), epistemology is the knowledge inside humans that needs to be constructed, and studying that is transformed in society, transforming it as well.

According to Liu, Rogat and Bertling (2013:39), epistemology is a method that seeks to comprehend how knowledge is constructed. It is the method that builds from the learner in the classroom and leads to a decision that he or she needs, to be promoted to the next grade. This leads to that learner being part of the learning environment. Epistemology is derived from the Greek word *episteme*, which translates as how knowledge is shaped in the mind and acknowledged in the social community as reality (Edelheim, 2014:32).

The DBE should not provide learners only with access to quality education, but also with epistemology that they will use in their lifelong learning to be members of a transformational social community. Learners should be taught to be aware of epistemic values and knowledge, an appropriate method of knowing values, social norms, ethics and behaviours. Epistemology is continuous constructive knowledge that is never-ending (Arbee, 2012:17). According to Lillis and Curry (2010:41), learners at all levels experience challenges to comprehending English, even those who learn English as their home language.

The epistemological stance of CET is that learners and teachers are knowers, with direct knowledge, able to experiment with it, construct it and understand it. Knowers express the reality of knowledge inside and outside of what is knowledge. They show that that they have knowledge by presenting forms of language, for example, sounds, shapes, spoken and written language in their transformed society as transformed individuals (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:279). According to Scotland (2012:9), epistemological teachers should critically assist learners in comprehending a text by using teaching strategies. They should make sure that

prior knowledge and the background of learners do not prevent them from making sense of the text.

Construction of knowledge in CET requires serious engagement in the epistemological stance, thus meaning that the construction of knowledge in CET in the epistemological stance requires the use of three senses (Carroll, 2014:269). These are *re-remembering*, which is the ability to recall all knowledge and cultural memory. It is applied by employing cultural influence to find the hidden meaning of life experiences and experiential reality. In line with this study, learners are able to connect a text with their real-life situation and so comprehend the text. The second sense is that learners should be *conscious* of reality knowledge and able to apply practical knowledge to a text. Lastly, the construction of knowledge requires learners to be *transformed* members of the social community, so they can compete in the social, political and economic area.

Epistemology as the theory of knowledge also deals with the relationship between the knower and the known, for example, how someone gained certain knowledge (Reed, Evely, Cundill, Fazey, Glass, Laing, Newig, Parrish, Prell, Raymond & Stringer, 2010:5). This is significant as knowledge is constructed by someone, making it cultural and historical. Epistemology is also concerned with how the knowledge became accepted as knowledge, illustrated by the acceptance criteria that it must be valid, plausible, real, believable and trustworthy. Roblek et al. (2013:550) concur with Scotland that epistemology is what knowledge is, how it is known and how people acquired it. Roblek et al. (2013:555) outline the epistemological stances as pragmatic, positivistic, operationalist and referential, instrumental, empiricist, rationalistic and realistic.

CET motivates learners to be responsible for their learning by letting them know who they are and more about the world and what they know. This encourages learners to think laterally, acquire more knowledge and construct new knowledge (Caballero et al., 2012:2). According to Okitikpi (2011:37), unclear knowledge on how the world operates has different components, with values, norms, beliefs, attitudes and adaptations that are classified as cognitive objectives.

Epistemic knowledge should allow anyone to understand easily and become familiar with it (Audi, 2010:183). Concerned with the nature of being and values of

knowledge, it examines how possible it is that knowledge should be valid, real and plausible (Stoddard, 2013:450).

2.9 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher has several roles.

2.9.1 Reflective scholar

The role of the researcher ensures that everyone is in the group to learn and that no one dominates another, whilst he or she collects, analyses, interprets and provides description data (Wittmayer & Schapke, 2014:8). According to Dik (2011:1), the researcher is considered a tool used to generate data through human instruments rather than questionnaires, part of the research from beginning to the end to ensure that it runs smoothly. The role of the researcher is to keep things going, ask questions, listen attentively to what is happening and be cautious of the behaviour of the co-researchers. This study adopted CET as its theoretical framework with the objective of finding out how knowledge was created. Working in collaboration means that a researcher would know how knowledge could be practically formed.

Stanley (2012:95) believes that the researcher should be careful and enrich the validity of the research by ensuring that the knowledge or information is traceable and consequently scientifically proven. The author adds that he or she should be aware of the environment in which knowledge is imparted, while Wittmayer and Schapke (2014:484-492) give an overview of the role of the researcher as the one who promotes a working journey of collaboration, sharing knowledge, transforming social relations and providing space for learning with the co-researchers.

These roles assist me in knowing how to work with other people and not asserting authority over them. It helped in gathering knowledge of the problems I encountered when teaching EFAL and how to take on these in order to find solutions. Learners were helped in learning to voice their views openly and given the opportunity to talk to the people older than them, thereby being transformed and empowered. The

community members were empowered by having an opportunity to talk to their children's teachers.

2.9.2 Self-reflective scholar

A self-reflective scholar looks back at what has been done and adds the corrective steps when needed to enhance the task and ensure it followed a correct path (Chilisa, 2011:285). This helped co-researchers and researcher to condition the presentation of the challenges on how to improve reading comprehension. The researcher acted as protective knower who worked as one of the co-researchers, and was not superior to them. This can be illustrated by allowing co-researchers to play a leading role in finding solutions, for example, in this study, how one went about teaching EFAL learners in such a way that vocabulary skills and reading comprehension was improved (Camden, Shikako-Thomas, Nguyen, Graham, Thomas, Sprung, Morris & Russell, 2015:1394). According to Kemmis et al. (2013:175), being self-reflective means that the researcher is more observant of the action and decisions taken and assists with corrective steps if there are any that are not educating or assisting the members.

The self-reflective role requires rechecking if the steps of the construction of knowledge were taken correctly (Bjorn & Boulus, 2011:285). This determines whether the findings and solutions to the challenges of reading comprehension were correct, without taking any of the steps for granted. Bradbury and Lichtenstein (2000:562) assert that the main aim in this role is to make sure that the solution is transformative and empowering towards the identified problem. It allows learners and teachers to talk about their challenges and avoid feelings of superiority and gives them an opportunity to tell parents that, according to their research, this is what they have found and this is what could be done by reflecting on the previous activities. It can be illustrated by learners learning not to repeat mistakes made by their parents, who also reflect on their children's work and see how good performance could be achieved.

2.9.3 Change agent

The role of the change agent is to ensure transformational change and partnership in the process. He or she also ensures that partnership involves equal power balance, equality, full participation, collaboration and involvement in the construction of knowledge (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:67). According to Mulalu (2018:45), the role facilitates a process of learning, which leads the stakeholders to be empowered, transformed, self-reliant and liberated from the unknown to the known. Wu and Isaksson (2011:40) emphasise that the main role is to make sure that everyone learns from one another and that all the co-researchers are prepared and collaborate in order to construct new knowledge.

Supporting the co-construction of the knowledge and learning process, Marshall and Rossman (2014:70) contend that everyone in the group practically participates and no one is superior. Kemmis et al. (2013:20) assert that the researcher should ensure that every step of the research is performed collaboratively and raise consciousness. The researcher, as a participant in the research, ensures that changes are made when necessary and that all the actions are documented (Baskerville, Kaul & Storey, 2015:545). According to Osterman, Furman and Sernak (2014:90), it demonstrates a knowledge of transformation in ensuring success and equity, which can be illustrated by listening to the challenges and ensuring that reading comprehension is improved. It ensures that the required skills are achieved, in this case phonemes and pronunciation.

In summary, the role entails collaboration between co-researchers and researcher(s) to find solutions to the problem at hand. For example, in the case of co-researchers (learners), they learn how to find meaning in the text by using a dictionary to find vocabulary to comprehend the text, while teachers and community members (parents) learn how to assist and support learners in reading comprehension at home and school.

2.9.4 Knowledge broker or consultant

Knowledge brokering refers to the various constructions of knowledge and how they are used. The constructors and users of knowledge work together to reach their

goal of social transformation to improve the ability of learners (Turnhout, Stuiver, Klestermann & Herms, 2013:355). In this study, teachers, learners, policymakers and social community members worked in partnership to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. Beniston (2012:53) asserts that the stakeholders of the knowledge are required to treat each other equally in order to find solutions to the identified problems, namely, insufficient vocabulary, poor meaning-making and limited word recognition. Klerks, Schut, Leeuwis and Kilelu (2012:53) highlight that the emphasis is on stakeholders working together to find an approach that would improve reading comprehension in EFAL. When the problem arises, researcher and co-researchers act as problem-solvers and provide knowledge where needed.

The co-researchers should be motivated to apply their creative thinking in sustainable connections (Wittmayer & Schapte, 2014:10), achievable by working in collaboration to find various ways of enhancing reading comprehension and following the morals and ethics of the social community. According to Ivankova (2014:9), the researcher motivates and empowers co-researchers by taking on the challenges of reading comprehension. This shows that all co-researchers are required to find knowledge for themselves, assisting and supporting the community members to construct knowledge and develop theoretical understanding as well as bringing research to the community.

Green (2015:247) adds that the researcher, as a broker, communicates knowledge to community members and make them understand. According to Baskerville et al. (2015:541), he or she, as a consultant, gives clear guidelines on the process and ensures collaboration. A partnership between co-researchers in constructing knowledge and solving problems that may arise during the process is important. They are socially transformed during the process, showing that it is transparent to every community member.

2.9.5 An overseer of collaboration

Research work in collaboration with the members of the community is carried out to overcome false consciousness of knowledge and the community member should do the same in supporting their children's education. Overseeing is more a facilitating role as opposed to providing the processed knowledge, and it empowers

and transforms learners by using their own skills and those of members of the community without exerting authority (Osterman et al., 2014:95-96).

The researcher cannot work as a one-way source of knowledge, but instead works with co-researchers as partners. They can benefit from one another and sharing of experience and knowledge is required for social change (Crawshaw, Rowe & Hudson, 2015:102–105). In this study, as English teacher, the researcher benefitted more by understanding the problems that learners encountered in their studies, also learning from colleagues, as co-researchers, regarding the problems they encountered and how they solved them.

Problems that have been discussed with multi-stakeholders could improve performance in reading comprehension and its other aspects. Working together helps to share skills, and is a good way of gathering people together and exploring different perspectives. Mahlomaholo (2010:287) concurs with Crawshaw et al. (2015:104) that allowing co-researchers to share knowledge and work through groups' discussions could be valuable as more knowledge is gathered.

2.9.6 Observant and critical listener

The researcher should be an attentive listener open to the opinions of others, flexible and able to learn from them (Osterman et al., 2014:90). This study adopted CET, which requires the construction of knowledge by different individuals to learn and improve the performance of reading comprehension, as well as assisting learners to be transformative individuals. According to Vallespi, Perez and Hillaert (2013:4), a researcher, as observer, advances learners' ability to make a decision to implement the transformation of the constructed knowledge for themselves, teachers and social community members. It gives them the opportunity to empower, ensuring equity, equal participation, liberation and community-building.

Learners have a voice and can be well understood when given full support in the construction of knowledge. Parents and teachers are not the only ones with knowledge, as learners also do (Gabhainn & O'higgins, 2011:8). Learners should be provided with the opportunity to voice out the challenges and knowledge. Gabhainn and O'Higgins (2011:4) believed that learners have to lead and express

the construction of knowledge, while parents and teachers observe the process. Learners have the right to be democratic co-researchers in knowledge, consulted and heard, in order to achieve their goal of reading comprehension in EFAL.

2.9.7 Community organising empowerment

The role of a community organising empowerment emphasises that stakeholders of knowledge feel valued, satisfied and productive during the process of constructing knowledge. It is important to make sure that they are able to work collaboratively in a democratic way, and that they feel equal to all stakeholders, in order to learn, make decisions and construct knowledge (Boznak, 2012:142). This will ensure that every member participating in the construction of knowledge will be transformed.

The role helps the co-researcher find solutions to the challenges faced (Balcazar, Suarez-Balcazar, Adames, Keys, García-Ramírez & Paloma 2012:285), for example, in this study helping with possible solutions to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, looking at solutions in other countries and using them when relevant. This study uses PAR, which does not see co-researchers as subjects but rather as partners and co-researchers. Aspors, Porn, Forsman and Salo (2015:401–404) highlight that the researcher's position is as mediator who oversees the partner's or co-researcher's work in collaboration. He or she must solve problems that arise during the group discussions, work in collaboration and facilitate understanding between partners.

The popular educator or process facilitator provides guidance to the co-researcher, who is dedicated to transformation of social knowledge and egalitarian collaboration. The process facilitator or researcher creates a space in which co-researchers learn from each other by working in collaboration in the learning process and co-construction of knowledge (Franks, 2011:20).

2.10 THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE RESEARCHER AND CO-RESEARCHER

The researcher should hold democratic values and see social justice, as well as share views with co-researchers. He or she should show respect for the co-

researchers and treat them as equals (Nkoane, 2010:99). As researcher, one must guard against overpowering or dominating the co-researchers. Learners, as co-researchers, should be treated as being of high authority, respected and given a chance to share their contribution and experiences collaboratively. Foncha (2014:670) concurs that allowing learners to be co-partners of the researcher reduces challenges, as they are the one encountering them in learning. Al Husban, Al Husban and Al Betawi (2016:50) add that another role of the researcher is to make sure that the research process runs smoothly.

2.11 LEVELS OF CRITICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

There are several levels of critical epistemology.

2.11.1 Realist

A critical role in CET is that of realist, being unassuming, unconscious and thoughtful of knowledge (Al Husban et al., 2016:52). According to Hofer and Pintrich (2012:81), learners see themselves as knowers and sources of knowledge, able to construct knowledge and work in collaboration with their peers, teachers and other members of the social community to construct knowledge. Realism emerges through knowledge that is liberated from ideas and subjective knowledge that are not well presented (Minazzi, 2017:180). According to Pluye and Hong, (2014:30) and Peng & Lai (2012:471), the mind-independent reality, dedicated to that of knowledge, aims at constructive rather than experimental action, and knowledge multiplicity. Knowledge of reality and social reality are reliable, even if the construction is by different constructors of knowledge. This implies that learners need to acquire and construct as much knowledge as they can so that they can use it in their real life experiences. This level forms part of this study, since CET emphasises knowledge constructed by different co-researchers, leading to transformed knowledge and transformed members of the society.

2.11.2 Absolutist

The absolutist level of knowledge is exterior, whereas no ability to acquire knowledge is interior (Luce, Callanan & Smilovic, 2013:60). Pronounced knowledge works in collaboration with researchers and well-known knowers in the community. Absolutists regard knowledge, in objective terms, as situated in the outside world and it is understandable with confidence (Wise, Sevcik, Morris, Lovett, Wolf, Kuhn, Meisinger & Schwanenflugel, 2010:345). The required knowledge is that which will assist them economically to acquire different skills, politically and internationally.

John Locke developed the empiricist theory and believed people are clean slates that have to be taught everything, also known as *tabula rasa* (Brookfield, 2015:28). In this theory, knowledge is viewed as personal and subjective. A second form is existentialism, founded by Hegel (Putnam, Fairhurst & Banghart, 2016:69), proposing that every person works on his or her own and does not form part of any group. There is no partnership or collaboration. The knowledge explosion of the twentieth century is a form of absolutism, as the learner is viewed as a passive member who only accepts knowledge and does not contribute to the group. The learner fails to work in partnership or collaborate with the group.

This theory does not form part of this study, as CET requires everyone to be part of the learning process. Knowledge is shared and there is no authority. Everyone has the right to voice their opinion, work in partnership and collaborate to become a transformed member of society with the use of knowledge constructed during the process.

2.11.3 Multiplist

Multiplists defined as the reposition source of knowledge from unknown to knowing objects, known as the nature of knowing. Thus, the development of knowledge is predictable, recombining and co-constructed (Luce et al., 2013:61). According to Mason (2012:105), knowledge is regarded as multipart, which will assist learners in a school area and in the outside world to be vibrant. Schunk (2012:49) adds that multiplists are sure of subjective elements of critical knowing. Evaluation of ideas determines whether learners are gaining in the construction of knowledge in order

to improve reading comprehension. It would help them in their academic achievement. According to Hofer and Pintrich (2012:84), knowledge is background-related, meaning learners have to use their prior knowledge and background in reading comprehension to make sense of a text.

2.11.4 Evolutionist

The evolutionist view was formed by Donald Campbell (2011:18), an American social psychologist who lists the types of approaches as evolutionary epistemology of mechanism, which was formed from the abilities as constructors and sustainers of consistent knowledge. Shared characteristics of knowledge focus on capacity to learn real knowledge in collaboration with other stakeholders of the knowledge. This can be illustrated by the ability to learn and identify genres of knowledge, even if it is put in different ways, for example, being able to identify the message in the text or reading comprehension. This means accepting knowledge without making sure it is scientifically true. As learners age they will reveal poorer performances. Lenyai (2011:69) stated that an evolutionist should be motivated to search for the truth, whether by reading different books and journals or acquiring knowledge from other members of the community.

Mason (2012:105) highlights that various forms of knowledge are valid, depending on the context and knowledge being vibrant and multifaceted. Hofer and Pintrich (2012:381) add that evolutionists are more concerned with learners working together as peers in construction of knowledge. The concern is that when knowledge is incomplete, teachers assist learners in investigating and working together to evaluate whether knowledge is at the required level.

This view does correlate with this study, as it emphasises that learners also have knowledge and teachers can learn from them. Learners form part of the construction of knowledge during investigation.

2.11.5 Heuristic achievement

Heuristic can be defined as leaping across a logical gap in knowledge (Feldman, 2013:271). Teachers are motivated to teach learners in such a way that they can learn on their own and self-assess their work (Hunt, Mair & Atkinson, 2012:205). Learners in these objectives are motivated to use the critical thinking skills previously developed by their teachers and are thus able to apply new knowledge from previous knowledge.

2.12 JUSTIFICATION OF CET AS A THEORY OF CHOICE IN THIS STUDY

The theory of CET is concerned with the culture, diversity of morals, ethics, political issues and behaviour accepted in society. In its development, the aim is to transform the whole society in a democratic way (Eming et al., 2014:1–2; Rivkin 2017:756). It allows everyone, including learners, to take part in the construction of knowledge. As learners are the ones experiencing challenges in reading comprehension it is of the utmost importance that they participate in problem identification and solution processes.

Diverse countries, such as South Africa and the USA, are challenged by poor reading comprehension, so learners, teachers and scholars are invited to construct knowledge that will improve it in their society. It is the best choice in this study, as it gives teachers an opportunity to help learners comprehend the written text (Leland et al., 2014:53). According to Mayo (2013:275), a school is the place in which learning skills, critical thinking, knowledge construction, social relations and the vision necessary to teach members of the community are acquired. This allows learners to live in a critical, democratic place and practice a transformative function.

The theory also addresses language issues, for example language containing elements of consciousness and identity, genuineness and construction of meaning. Giroux (2018:32) argues that democracy strives for equity, emancipation of women, equal education for all, freedom and justice and language co-construction. The most challenging factor in reading comprehension is culture. Learners are required to be part of the co-construction of knowledge, and it would therefore be of great interest

if they identify the challenges in their culture, thus helping find a possible solution (Mayo, 2013:270).

Fook (2016:28) writes that language is part of developing cultural practice, its emphasis being on cultural awareness, knowledge achievement, reading comprehension, skills development and inductive learning. It impacts on those learners who have different cultures in terms of reading comprehension and it is important to cater for learners whose culture prevents them from achieving reading comprehension. Thus, this theory was the best choice for the study as it encompasses language comprehension, knowledge construction and learner diversity.

To improve reading comprehension, teachers should use language interaction forms and cultural responses that correspond more or less with learners' home cultural forms (Ladson-Billings, 2014:75). It is crucial for teachers to research their learners' cultural home or community background. This is more relevant to diverse countries, as this theory accommodates diversity. Construction of knowledge and assessment would cater for diverse readers by developing exercises in line with social, cultural and historical contexts.

American schools added forms of general culture to lessons to cater to their diverse learners, for example television, magazines, film, video games and music (Alvermann, Moon, Hagwood & Hagood, 2018:193). The cultural viewpoint is concerned with how individuals interpret cultural texts that appeal to their social and historical contexts. Avila and Moore (2012:30) believe that to overcome challenges in reading comprehension, EFAL instruction should include the application of skills in various lessons that are co-constructed by those concerned. This requires construction of knowledge as culture develops critical interpretative skills. Grant and Sleeter (2012:53) write that multicultural education aimed to transform the matter in schools to promote equity in education. The South African School Act, 84 of 1996 encourages cultural diversity and promotes EFAL as the international language of economics and politics.

The theory encourages teachers to be aware of democracy and its culture, which promotes critical thinking and imaginative learning skills instead of memorisation. It promotes social transformation, allowing learners to construct their own knowledge

(Izadinia & Abednia, 2010:53). Teachers should exercise this method to assist learners in becoming transformed members of society who can learn on their own as well as exercise their voices and critical consciousness to change inequitable, undemocratic and oppressive social relations.

The main goal of this theory is to encourage learners to communicate and understand power, inequality and injustice, and to question social issues. Social injustice and inequalities in EFAL reading comprehension were found to be problematic (Serafini, 2012:345). The learners who learn English as FAL are those who do not use it at home or community, meaning inclusivity should be applied when constructing reader books for them. Books should not be the same as for those learners who use English in their everyday life. Hughes and Scharber (2014:98) highlight that a fear of the theory is disrupting dominant social practices over reading comprehension. It is important to contextualise local, institutional and societal factors in academic learning, as it could assist in enhancing reading comprehension. This can be illustrated by the transformation of learners and the whole community.

The adoption of education promotes social justice that requires learners to recognise the language which is disturbed by social issues. They can analyse power relations inherent in language and values, with CET orientations of language in education, based on various opinions of language and power. It allows all types of learner to understand the language used in class without compromising English as the LoTL. The use of diverse language that reveals social identities is not allowed and a selection of lessons may be designed that caters for everyone in the class (Lombardi & Behrman, 2016:170).

Teaching reading comprehension in EFAL, using picture books, by logic of paradox, is crucial in CET transformation, which embraces real time and real space, enabling construction and co-construction of knowledge (Zacchi, 2016:610). When constructing picture demonstration, the use of text with pictures is suggested. Computer-generated pictures enhance the level of active communication in learners, thus, the written text is understood through pictures.

This theory encourages the concepts of liberation, equity and social justice of marginalised groups. Alvermann et al. (2018:249) state that reading comprehension

is based on being a critical reader and it develops psychological and cognitive development that enriches reading comprehension. It is also located in CET and sociology of reading, which is inspired by social, cultural and historical issues. These issues improve construction of knowledge and comprehension of text. This theory is more concerned with transformation of social justice and creating an equitable community through value and power.

The theory requires learners to be critical literates by demonstrating their ability to read with comprehension. Teachers should act as agents of social transformation in the communities they serve, illustrated by learners who are participants of transformation and able to voice their views in the community. Learners should be encouraged to analyse text that has challenges relating to community norms and ethics and reconstruct it to evaluate the power relations and social inequalities encouraged in the written text.

According to Van Sluys (2010:150), CET requires learners to find different reading strategies that will enrich reading comprehension, which demonstrates how comprehension is linked to culture. Learners are required to understand how social issues and justice are practically applied in the classroom. Social issues and semiotic practices form learners and communication should be applied in school and in the community. Luke (2018:170) concurs that to be an effective reader, a learner is required to learn from social experiences and participate in social activities. This can be illustrated by the reading material constructed and developed in society by various co-constructors of knowledge, including learners. Through these activities, learners become independent readers, not only comprehending text but also part of peer group and teacher-learner discussions.

CET is relevant to the study as it empowers learners in reading comprehension and they are free to ask questions if there is anything that they do not understand. They are also allowed to voice their views on problem identification and solutions. The practitioners of the theory are enabled to work with learners in a manner that allows them the chance to identify their challenges and improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

2.13 DEFINITION AND DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

This section defines and discusses the key concepts used, and how they are to be understood in the context of this study.

2.13.1 Reading

Reading is the process of using multiplex cognitive skills to decode written or printed symbols in order to build the meaning of the text (Schmitt, 2010:972). Reading is the ability or action to attain knowledge from written texts or books (Schmitt, 2010:972). Reading define it as the process of constructing meaning, involving word acknowledgement, comprehension and effortlessness or fluency from written texts. According to Hermann, Kocisky, Grefenstette, Espeholt, Kay, Suleyman and Blunsom (2015:1695), reading is the combination of decoding and reading words accurately and efficiently, with the aim of understanding the meaning of the text. Understanding of the text is the ability to answer the related questions verbally and in written words. Alkhweldeh (2013:214) adds that reading is defined as a factor that allows readers to acquire and comprehend the language encoded in text with the use of syntactic and semantic cues that are applied.

Reading has two different approaches, the cognitive and the traditional approach (Manasse, 2010:23). It is the process of decoding and encoding written symbols with the aim of comprehension. The traditional approach is aimed at decoding to pass through various studies. Reading comprehension becomes simpler for learners when the teacher uses modelling and guided practice when reading a text for the first time, specifically for word recognition. When learners fail in reading comprehension the problem is often due to the language influencing semantic processing (Feiker Hollenbeck, 2013:113).

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011:85) write that the teacher, when teaching reading, should create an environment that allows learners to use their experiences. These extend their abilities to capture the text by using simple instruction or deep approaches, including modelling, scaffolding, facilitation and participation. Qhosola (2016:58) writes that teachers usually follow teacher-centred approaches that do not permit learners to participate in the classroom, instead of using a deep

approach. It is crucial that learners are permitted to use their critical thinking ability, thus allowing them to be part of learning in the classroom and to be responsible for their learning.

A teacher's role is to influence or motivate learners to read. This becomes clear when a teacher provides learners with print-rich books and they possess language skills (reading, speaking and listening). The teacher should provide them with many opportunities to read. Brookfield (2017:45) also points out that teachers should be aware of teaching strategies to improve reading comprehension:

- Previewing: predict what the text is about, the purpose of it, to engage learners from the beginning of the lesson
- Self-questioning: teachers should ask questions throughout the reading process to see if the learners are following or understanding
- Making connections: asking what they think will happen next in the text; knowing how words should be used – using and understanding vocabulary, including the semantic cueing system
- Summarising: being able to retell the text in their own words; evaluating and making judgement – answering questions related to the text (post-reading).

In this study, reading will be understood to mean the ability to read words with the correct pronunciation. Awareness of the phonetic aspects enables learners to decode reading in the correct way.

2.13.2 Reading comprehension

According to Flexner (2010:395), reading comprehension is a reasoning development of decoding symbols to understand the gist of the meaning. Citing the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Kavanagh (2002:336) explains it as observing the written text to comprehend its contents. Orellana and Johnson (2012:79) state that reading comprehension is the ability to read a text, process it and comprehend its meaning (*Encyclopedia.com*: Online). Wright, Mitchell, O'Donoghue, Cowhey and Kearney (2015:777) define reading comprehension as the process in which one reads and comprehends what has been written.

Reading comprehension is the process of comprehending the ideas that the writer wishes to convey deliberately. It is a skill that teachers need to teach learners in their primary schooling, which suggests that reading comprehension is the attainment of all subjects academically, economically and politically (Papatga & Ersoy, 2016:125). Reading comprehension is the requirement and ability to apply decoding and verbal language skills which can influence higher achievement (Gottardo & Mueller, 2009:330–331).

Bulut (2017:23) adds that reading comprehension should be acquired as early as primary school and constructing meaning in all three stages of reading (pre-, during and post-reading stages) is required in the reasoning progress. In this study, reading comprehension will mean reading the written text with understanding, as well as being able to answer questions related to the text. According to Saleh (2016:11), reading comprehension is defined as the way the learner is able to decode the text and interpret it phonetically, which leads to an understanding of the written text.

2.13.3 English First Additional Language

According to Kernerman (2015:375), English First Additional Language (EFAL) is the language learned by a learner after his or her inherent language and, as an occupant of a community, used on a daily basis as a means of communication. EFAL is the language other than the mother tongue that learners and the community use for shared communication, particularly for education, employment and political and economic purposes. In other words, it is a non-native language formally known and accepted in a diverse country for communication (Kernerman, 2015:376). EFAL is an alternative use of two or more languages by the same individual and by learners as an education technique.

It is normally used by learners born in other countries who now find themselves using English to communicate and learn in school. It is used by learners who have their own home language (HL), other than English, which is still used as their primary means of communication, between non-native and native English speakers. English is regarded as an additional language (Jenkins, 2015:52), used as the LoTL in the majority of schools in South Africa, with non-native learners only exposed to it during school time (Hermann et al., 2015:1695). According to Macedo, Dendrinos

and Gounari (2015:45), EFAL learners are from ethnic and foreign groups whose school subjects are all taught in English. As this is not their first language they have to acquire English language skills.

2.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The scope of this chapter revealed that CET is the best choice for this study, which aims to enhance reading comprehension and construct a relevant approach to EFAL. It concluded that CET requires learners to be transformed members of the community who are able to work in collaboration with other stakeholders in knowledge construction. It recommended that learners be allowed to provide information on challenges they encounter and devise solutions in conjunction with other members of the community and stakeholders to improve reading comprehension. The concepts applicable to the study were clearly defined.

The following chapter discusses challenges and solutions in EFAL reading comprehension, as well as the most favourable conditions.

CHAPTER 3 : LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to address the challenge of improving reading comprehension in English First Additional Language (EFAL). It is a review of the literature in relation to the objectives of the study, including development of an approach to enhancing reading comprehension in EFAL, finding possible solutions to challenges, exploring conditions that will improve reading comprehension in EFAL as well as components of reading comprehension, evaluating the kind of pressures that would make an approach unsuccessful, and presenting indicators of success.

3.2 NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

There are a number of needs and challenges to developing an approach to meet the challenge of improving reading comprehension in EFAL.

3.2.1 Meaning-making or understanding text

Meaning-making or making sense is a process used for understanding the written text of life experiences. During teaching and learning, teachers are required to recognise various difficulties that cause challenges in reading comprehension in EFAL. They look for possible solutions that will improve learners' understanding of text so that they can make meaning of it. Burgoyne, Whiteley and Hutchison (2011:345) found in a 2006 study in the United Kingdom (UK) that the majority of primary schools that catered for foreign learners used EFAL. More than 66 countries are using EFAL as the LoTL, and the learners are required to demonstrate a great level of meaning-making of text in English. This is required in order to be competitive socially, economically and internationally.

McCartney, Boyle and Ellis (2015:130) concur with Puck (2013:41) that foreign learners in rural parts of the USA face challenges in reading comprehension similar to counterparts in South Africa. Challenges are spok

en language comprehension in order to make meaning of text, such as decoding and good reading accuracy. In South Africa, learners are faced with challenges similar to those in other countries, which are word formation, comprehending written text, decoding prepositions and making inferences (Yamashita, 2013:52). This illustrates that learners have limited memory, leading to low word recognition (Madani, 2016:128), and that reading with understanding rests on vocabulary skills, the greatest problem in many countries (Haicha-Abdat, 2013:10). Learners in primary school have problems of inadequate reading comprehension, eventually leading to undergraduate students reading without adequate grasp of meaning (Lendrum, 2014:52).

A study conducted in Ethiopia discovered a need to develop an approach that would enhance reading comprehension in EFAL, shown by learners with obstacles in comprehending the text (Jha, 2013:42). This is caused by limited meta-linguistic awareness and absence of common and theoretical connection, found by De Bres (2013:59) as meaning-making with a particular type of vocabulary knowledge. It is supposed to be taught in Foundation Phase through to Intermediate Phase, which would help learners to comprehend the meaning of the text and EFAL learners to read texts with understanding and connection of ideas.

According to research conducted in 2006, half of primary schools in Zambia use English as EFAL. Teachers recognised that learners experience various challenges in reading comprehension due to issues with meaning-making skills (Lendrum, 2014:36). According to Manyike and Lemmer (2010:31–32), the main challenges for South Africa learners in reading comprehension are with vocabulary skills, important because they are central to reading and predicting comprehension. Millin (2015:106) argues that improvement of literacy skills in post-apartheid South African learners has a high cost in education, with high enrolment for low quality education. The ANA figures presented by the DBE in 2013 showed that Grade 7 learners scored below the required standard in EFAL, most learners being from lower socio-economic communities (Ramalepe, 2013:180).

3.2.2 Using English as a communication tool

More books are written in English than any other language (Makiwane-Mazinyo & Pillay, 2017:10456), and while South Africa comprises many cultures and races, learners are taught in English even though their home language is, for example, IsiZulu, IsiXhosa or Sesotho. This causes challenges when they are not familiar with EFAL. A communication tool may be one of various methods of communication, for example, e-mail in distance education courses, discussion groups, and skype. In this study it is understood as a way of using language to communicate with other stakeholders. The ability to communicate in English is crucial as it is the language used internationally in most spheres. According to Vadasy and Nelson (2012:122), reading is a critical skill needed to be successful academically, politically, socially and culturally, and for learners to recite comprehension requires a multitude of skills, such as vocabulary, working memory, background knowledge and comprehension monitoring. This indicates that the purpose of reading the text would not be attained if the skills were missing.

Proficiency in reading comprehension is a requirement in other curriculum subjects (Oakhill & Cain, 2012:93), therefore it is a language of communication in class. It laid the foundation in spoken language, written texts and LoLT, with EFAL Learners required to provide answers to questions verbally and in writing. Edele and stanat (2016:163) note that reading comprehension is a requirement in academia as it establishes the acquisition of new information and thoughts. Perry (2013:75) contends that reading comprehension in EFAL is required in order to obtain new knowledge academically, socially, economically and politically in order for them to be able to communicate abroad.

The need to teach reading comprehension is important in the USA, as they have long had citizens whose ancestral language is not English, who are experiencing difficulties (Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, Decker, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Francis, Rivera & Lesaux, 2017:98). They usually experience difficulties in the Foundation Phase through to higher institutions, such as limited vocabulary, as they are unable to communicate with their counterparts. Children of visitors from other countries on business or employment may also face similar challenge. Grabe and

Stoller (2013:64) highlight the numerous Spanish speakers in the USA who experience difficulties from early school years to higher education. This is characterised by a large deficit in vocabulary that needs to be acquired along with reading comprehension to understand the content knowledge from it.

Poor reading comprehension and understanding impacts content knowledge in other subjects, and fluency in English is crucial politically, socially, academically and culturally. It requires the accumulation of skills such as vocabulary, working memory, background knowledge and comprehension monitoring (Morhan, Griffiths, Hopkins, Doak, Brown, Jenkins & Al-Sarireh, 2013:45). According to Wright, Mitchell, O'Donoghue, Cowhey and Kearney (2015:777), English is internationally spoken and should be mastered in order to comprehend written texts and communicate effectively.

Study conducted by Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2012 revealed that 17% of the USA and UK foreign learners and 10% of the Republic of Ireland foreign learners had difficulty with word recognition and language comprehension, and challenged by inability to communicate in English. More than half of foreign middle school learners in the USA struggle with communication in English. Research conducted by the National Assessment of Education Progress in 2015 revealed that Grade 7 learners performed below the required standard in reading comprehension in comparison to their counterparts (Galloway, 2016:1). This challenge leaves learners unable to communicate effectively, and it is evident that reading is of the utmost importance as it assists in comprehending what one has learnt. Thus, teachers should find ways and different teaching strategies that could develop reading comprehension in order for them to communicate effectively in EFAL. Learners in the USA use various approaches, including phoneme, decoding and comprehension modalities. It is suggested that using various reading approaches enhances level of vocabulary and phonics and improves performance in reading comprehension so that they will communicate effectively (Suggate, 2010:1558).

Development of an approach to enhance reading comprehension in EFAL is important in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal, and Vryheid in Mahlabathini circuit. It was found that most learners had not acquired their HL, which is supposed to be

acquired before second language. EFAL is a requirement to assist them to communicate with people from other countries. Using technology is a challenge, because one has to be fluent in English to use it, and often to acquire work in an international business marketplace. English is necessary to advance one's education and develop social relations. Lastly, the LoTL in most South African schools and worldwide is English.

These challenges were identified in different countries, which shows that not all learners are performing well in communicating using English. This will lessen their employment opportunities as they will not be able to present themselves, and will be held back academically.

3.2.3 Language competency

Language competency is the area of ability to use structures and rules. For instance, North American non-English first language speakers had challenges when answering questions related to reading comprehension (Abbott-Chapman, Martin, Ollington, Venn, Dwyer & Gall, 2014:105). This does not need only one-word answers but rather a full answer in sentence form, with language structures and rules followed correctly. Another problem resulting from the problem in North America was found to be the number of early school leavers in secondary schools and higher institutions (Rumberger & Rotemund, 2012:496). Reading comprehension and language competence were identified as the greatest difficulties, two skills significant in attaining educational skills and comprehending any subject academically. Also problematic were vocabulary, fluency, and reading with understanding (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2013:56). In 2008 the USA saw an increase in number of foreign learners using EFAL, resulting in a number of difficulties for Grade 7 learners (Melby-Lervang & Lervang, 2014:409).

Underperformance in Grade 7 tends to limit skills in reading (Gibson, Cartledge & Keyes, 2011:262). EFAL learners in also England struggle, with limited vocabulary and inability to grasp the text, with many having to leave school prematurely (Yamashita & Shiotsu, 2015:45, 46). Meanwhile, learners in Spain have experienced difficulties in reading acquisition (Hoff, 2013:37). According to Gottardo, Gu, Mueller, Baciú and Pauchulo (2011:333), their challenges lay in

reading comprehension caused by incapacity to build different language structures and rules. Perry (2013:81) asserts that challenges experienced by Spain were decoding and vocabulary skills.

Torres (2017:27) found that reading a text clearly for learners does not predict whether they understand the text. This is caused by inadequate vocabulary skills and limited language competence. Niu and Helms-Park (2014:369,372) advised teachers to use word future analysis and simple complex elaboration approaches, highlighting the need to advance a tactic for reading comprehension in China and Italy. Foucart, Martin, Moreno and Costa (2014:1462) used an expectancy procedure approach to identify difficulties of learners and teachers trying to be competent in reading comprehension. Some learners do not remember the words that they are predicting when they are reading and have limited vocabulary.

Kenyan learners' performance was not to the required standard compared to their counterparts in the Certificate of Primary Education (Njoroge & Gathigia, 2017:78). Failure of learners before they reach higher education institutions is caused by low performance in comprehending the written text in EFAL (Kioko, Ndung'u, Njoroge & Mutiga, 2014:18). A study conducted in Ethiopia examined improved reading comprehension by the Human Development Index in 2014, which revealed a failure rate of 63.4% (Piper, Schroeder & Trudell, 2015:19, 20). It was found that learners progressed to Grade 2 without being able to read, due to lack of a foundation in reading comprehension in EFAL (Vu & Burns, 2014:25). English was only being taught by external educators (Heugh, 2012:168), with Ethiopian teachers not meeting requirements for teaching English because it was a foreign language to them. The learners did not understand what their teachers taught them in English, and learning was largely through memorisation. This did not allow them to think critically or be part of learning (Piper & Van Ginkel, 2017:40).

According to Daly (2015:192-193), learners may only read text when combined with images, or if not understanding certain words leave them not understanding the entire text. Lessig and De Witt's (2016:661) research looked for evidence behind the poor performance of South African learners in PIRLS, below the 60% expected. A second indication was the ANA results in 2013 and 2014 (Lessig & De Witt, 2016:661). The study conducted in 2006 in Grade 7, which compared reading

comprehension in EFAL, revealed that South African learners only managed 10th position out of 14 education systems (Sibanda, 2015:2). Similarly, ANA results have been poor in the last decade, with Grade 7 showing a serious problem. The South African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) and PIRLS conducted in 2010 and 2011 found unacceptable results in language competence in South Africa compared to the 72 participating countries (Spaull, 2013:438; Matthews, 2014:31). Out of nine provinces in which the study took place, KZN came fourth provincially, and the Eastern Cape, known for its rural areas, first. This indicated that KZN had to improve. Seabi, Cockcroft, Goldschagg and Greyling (2012:244) noted that the 2011 ANA research revealed that learners in Grades 3, 6 and 7 were performing below the required standard for their respective grades.

The PIRLS conducted in 2005 saw performance below the required standard in comparison to their international counterparts (Zimmerman & Smit, 2014:2), as did the second in 2011, this time called pre-PIRLS, notably with lack of improvement of performance in reading comprehension in EFAL (Spaull & Kotze, 2015:16). The study requires learners to comprehend a text and be able to answer questions related to it. Some were in secondary schools, able to read fluently but not comprehend texts, indicating poor development as independent readers.

Reading with understanding is essential in South African learners who are performing below the required standard at different levels (Cekiso, 2012:1–3). It is important to read with understanding as it is a powerful tool for learning in any subject academically, not only in EFAL. They need to be taught different strategies in order to be able to comprehend texts. In the North West Province, the Systematic Evaluation conducted in 2008 by the DBE illustrates that learners still performed below the required standard due to low language competence. The high percentage (63%) of underachieving learners indicated that more needed to be attempted. The matric results of South African learners in rural areas in KZN and the Eastern Cape have been below standard compared to other provinces (Ntshangase, 2011:12), because learners do not have sufficient vocabulary skills. Improving their language competence would allow them to communicate with their international counterparts.

3.2.4 Lexical pedagogy

Lexical pedagogy refers to the effective use of words when communicating or able to know the meaning of words in text (Young, 2011:23). Most learners have difficulty with successful use of lexical pedagogy, hindering them from comprehending the written text (Garnder & Davies, 2013:1). In the USA, foreign learners struggling in reading comprehension are mostly known as poor academic performers, due to the conditions under which they learn as they are not provided with a dictionary to find meanings of words. Most learners in Ghana have problems in reading and writing in EFAL, with about 50% struggling with lexical words in primary school. This hinders their academic performance in reading comprehension (Ntim, 2016:2).

Difficulties in reading comprehension in learners in Botswana negatively affect their academic performance, caused by poor lexical pedagogy (Mothudi, 2015:115–116). Mispronunciation is a problem and they cannot construct sentences as they are poor in lexical pedagogy. Lumadi (2016:25) adds that the communication skills which require lexical word of learners in Limpopo needs to be improved. Reading skills build on speaking skills, illustrated by poor performance in construction of sentences, graphemes, phonology and semantic nodes.

3.2.5 Limited vocabulary or insufficient dictionaries

England uses EFAL for those learners whose home language is not English but it experiences challenges in reading comprehension among foreigners' learners due to limited vocabulary (Burgoyne et al., 2011:351; Burgoyne, Whiteley & Hutchinson, 2013:134; Lee, 2015:374). In that longitudinal research of India, Pakistan and North-Western England, the challenges were limited vocabulary skills and background knowledge, which led to poor reading comprehension. Learners faced challenges in answering questions and requisite inference skills because of poor literal understanding of the texts.

The Seychelles, Norway, South Africa and foreign North American learners experienced challenges in decoding, comprehending words while reading, and organising patterns of texts. They lacked vocabulary syntax and vocabulary skills (Galloway, 2016:22; Lervag & Aukrust, 2010:612; Pennycook, 2014:102). In South

Africa, learners do not have sufficient dictionaries in their classes and are also challenged by limited vocabulary skills. Pennycook's (2014:102) research reported that the Spanish speaking learners' underachieved, as had Vadasy and Nelson (2012:85), particularly with vocabulary skills (see Section 2.12.1). This included limited in skimming for information and answering questions related to the texts, found in Grade 7 with a quarter of the learners, also in higher education. This leads to a number of failures (Vaughn, Martinez & Wanzek, 2017:22) but a prompt approach to enhance reading comprehension would help overcome them.

Kim (2013:10) revealed that teachers in the USA spent minimal teaching time on reading comprehension and asking questions related to the text, without none on vocabulary skills, which explains why reading comprehension results in EFAL have not improved from the 1970s to today. Babayiğit (2014:20) concurs with Melby-Lervang and Lervag (2104) that challenges in reading comprehension and vocabulary are not necessarily a problem experienced only by school learners.

In Botswana, Oyentunji (2012:1) found challenges in reading comprehension were seen through to university level, with learners not motivated to be independent readers in primary school. Rather, they read material for formal education not pleasure. It is important that learners are supported and motivated by parents to read at home as lack of parental involvement in their work impedes their progress. Teachers also have to play a part in motivating learners to read for pleasure. The learners in Botswana also faced challenges with their scope of vocabulary, which made it difficult for them to comprehend texts if there were too many words in the text that were unfamiliar or unknown to them.

Tanzania has also struggled with the use of English as medium of instruction or LoTL due to limited vocabulary (Spernes, 2012:191), and a quarter of learners in South Africa leave school because of limited vocabulary. They are linguistically and culturally diverse and usually experience challenges with limited vocabulary in reading comprehension. This in turn leads them to underperform in other subjects. Early school leavers struggle to find employment, triggered by failing to comprehend what they are reading (Livingston, Klopper, Cox & Uys, 2015:6).

Learners require support and an effective approach to use in vocabulary in order to master reading comprehension. If they struggle with vocabulary and background

knowledge after Grade 7 there should be active intervention in reading comprehension (Bharuthram, 2012:210). According to Seabi et al. (2012:250), EFAL learners tend to interpret the written text in their home language, while they have to comprehend it in English, which becomes time-consuming and cumbersome. Limited vocabulary makes reading difficult and results in underachievement.

3.2.6 Pronunciation

The study of spoken sound and letters identification, phonics teaches spelling patterns that represent sounds in written words (Sibanda, 2015:204). In China learners were found to underperform in EFAL comprehension in comparison to their counterparts in other countries (Wang, Schwab, Fenn & Chang, 2013:175), lacking cognitive skills, word recognition, memory, language acquisition and vocabulary this is caused by that they are not taught in phonics. Ghanaian and South African learners have experienced challenges in pronunciation of words in reading comprehension (Otto, 2015:865 & Ofori, Duah & Mintah, 2014:49), thus preventing mastery of phonics and reading text with understanding. Nor could they comprehend written text or perform well in other subjects, problems exacerbated by having English as their LoTL. In South Africa, Govender (2015:57) found that many IsiZulu speaking learners had not mastered the grammatical rules of their home language, therefore they tended to experience difficulty when speaking a different language. This was problematic as they should generally acquire their home language before being able to acquire a foreign one.

3.2.7 Teaching strategies

Burgoyne et al. (2013:134) found that challenges in background knowledge and vocabulary skills, using Neale Analysis of Reading Ability. This pointed out that diverse cultures and societal matters were the causes of difficulties in EFAL learners grasping written text. Vadasy and Nelson (2012:74) testify that the Department for Education in the England had to work hard to help learners meet the required

educational average. Teachers were themselves facing challenges in assisting learners, which explains some of the poor academic results.

In South Africa some schools complain about insufficient resources required for reading, not allowing the reader to have books at schools because they are afraid it may be lost and learners from poor families would struggle to afford to replace them (Modisaotsile, 2012:5). Zambian learners also experience barriers in reading with teachers lacking in-service training. It was revealed that some teachers in Zambia only used the *Teacher Guide Book* (Nag, Chiat, Torgerson & Snowling, 2014:32), thus teaching without acknowledging an aim of the learning. In this case the drilling method is used instead of more effective strategies to teach learners to comprehend the written text. Resource materials were created in the United Kingdom but not modified for use in Zambia (Williams, 2014:14–16), leaving even teachers with no background knowledge of it. Teachers would be the only ones with access to books and so would read them in class to learners, making it difficult to instil a culture of reading and motivating learners to read.

It has been suggested that there be future investigation regarding suitable reading material that would benefit and cater to rural diversity learners recommend teachers and learners combat the challenges they experience in rural South Africa areas in order for learners to be equal with their counterparts (Klspeijk, 2015:90), whilst (Modiba, Matoetoe & Crouch, 2013:337). Teachers should be aware of learners' background and adapt their teaching methodology accordingly. They should also be aware of the pass requirement for EFAL learners to progress from the Senior Phase to Further Education and Training, notably an ability to identify purpose, meaning, characters, plot, background and storytelling.

Some learners are fluent in English but underperform academically (Cummins & Swain, 2014:140), caused in part by challenges in EFAL reading comprehension.

3.2.8 Word recognition

The ability to remember or recall words is known as 'word recognition' (Emmorey, Giezen & Gollan, 2016:2015). In the USA, foreign learners struggle with to reading and understanding the written text (Hiebert & Mesmer, 2013:47), with limited library

facilities adding to the problem of poor reading performance. Some Ghanaian learners also speak Pidgin English, which negatively influences their pronunciation of words then deters their performance in reading comprehension (Oppong-Sekyere, Oppong-Sekyere & Akpalu, 2013:229). Poor community had a challenge EFAL as it difficult for them to buy reading material. According to Stoffelsma (2014:23), the National Education Assessment in 2010 in foundation phase found that the reading competency level was at 35%. Socio-cultural conditions along with the home language influence the performance in reading comprehension in EFAL, indicating that Ghanaian learners were not familiar with reading, resulting in their low level of competency. In Zambia it was found that some learners were unable to read words with three to four or more syllabi. Most EFAL words contain words with multiple syllabi (Kaani, 2013:47), so Grade 6 learners achieved 50% in reading accuracy, compared to other sub-Saharan states which reached more than 70%.

Prior to 1994, statistics in South Africa indicate that 49% of black learners were struggling with reading comprehension in EFAL. Bhatia and Ritchie (2013:807) cite a statement from a former Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, that many poor South African learners are hesitant readers in any language. This includes their home language, so it will not be easy for them to comprehend EFAL. This challenge includes higher institutions, as evidence by the large number of students from universities who dropped out from 1997 and 2001 (Michel, Bosch & Rexroth, 2014:735).

3.2.9 Teaching or developing reading strategies and curriculum differentiation

Reasons for challenges in reading comprehension vary in different contexts and some learners were not taught to be strategic in their work. For example, they experience challenges in gathering central text ideas and using graphics, including identifying connections between main ideas and supporting details (Cuevas, Russell & Irving, 2012:447). Learners concentrate on reading the images in isolation and fail to make connections to the written text (Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, Bridges & Wilson, 2011:376). This means they are not familiar with written text supplemented

by images and the purpose of the images is to assist them in comprehending the written text which should improve their interest in reading

In the USA, EFAL learners also face challenges in reading comprehension skills, which make them uninterested in reading. This requires teachers to pay more attention in choosing the teaching strategy the suit learners' levels so the learners can comprehend the written text (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2010:28). According to Spear-Swerling and Cheesman (2012:1693), the foreign learners' deficit in reading comprehension would challenge them in their senior Phase (Grade 7). This lag in reading comprehension was revealed in 1992, with no improvements found in 2003 (Scanlon, Anderson & Sweeney, 2016:34). The National Assessment of Education Programme reports that some teachers do not allot sufficient time for choosing the suitable teaching approach for learners (Swanson, Wanzek, McCulley, Stillman-Spisak, Vaughn, Simmons, Fogarty & hairell, 2016:208), leading to lack of improvement in reading performance and leaving school early as they are not successful in their education.

The National Assessment of Education Programme also reports that Nigerian and Zambian teachers had limited knowledge of reading components in improving reading performance (Williams, 2014:377, Bassette & Doughty, 2013:242). For example, learners tended to ignore the meaning of the image, which resulted in them not comprehending the text, as they did not have a strategy to infer central text and use graphics to comprehend it. This shows teaching of these genres were not aligned with the correct teaching approach. Learners would have a successful grasp it if it was aligned with a teaching approach that was suitable for them.

In South Africa, learners are faced with challenges similar to those in other countries, which are word formation, comprehending written text, decoding prepositions and making inferences (Yamashita, 2013:52). They have limited memory, leading to low word recognition, required in reading comprehension in EFAL (Madani, 2016:128). Reading with understanding relies on vocabulary skills, which are the greatest problem in many countries (Haicha-Abdat, 2013:10). Inadequate reading comprehension in primary school will lead to learners reading without meaning (Lendrum, 2014:52). A requirement of curriculum differentiation is that learners be successful in all these genres.

3.2.10 Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness refers to the sound structures of words, which include syllables, spoken words and focus on individual sounds (Washburn & Mulcahy, 2014:330). Asian elements in reading comprehension are semantics, decoding, phonological awareness and syntax, which hamper attainment of EFAL. This is caused by erroneous phonology from their home language (Haager, 2013:6). The socio-economic status of learners makes it difficult for them to compete with their counterparts as they less reading material that could improve their phonological aware in reading comprehension in EFAL. Learners struggling in reading comprehension also deteriorate in speaking and phonology.

Nigerian, Zambian and South African learners experience challenges in EFAL in reading comprehension due to cultural background, phonology, semantics, syntax and rhetorical styles (Are, 2013:2; Valenzuela & Rubio 2018:3). Their home language encompasses phonology elements that vary vastly from the EFAL, hampering their performance in reading comprehension. Tan, Reich, Hart, Thuma and Griegorenko (2014:272) found that, in Zambia, English has numerous words that are phonologically more difficult than their home language and that hinder their reading comprehension.

3.3 POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS IN RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES

There are a number of possible solutions in response to challenges to reading comprehension in EFAL.

3.3.1 Meaning-making or understanding text

Lexical access skills training assists learners in reading comprehension (Yamashita, 2013:52), entailing myriad new words for reader to learn in order to make-meaning of the text. This training enhanced vocabulary skills and word recognition in Ghana (Deller & Price, 2013:114), where the training deepened reading speed and high-order text comprehension.

CET, adopted in this study (see Section 2.8), improves fluency and steadies the reading process when applied. It also enhances high-order meaning-making of text, which Zentz (2015:54) argues will improve if teachers provide learners with roughly 5000 words as a vocabulary. It is essential that various methods, such as repeated reading and extensive reading, should be applied. Computer programmes can improve fluency, richness and accuracy (Le Cordeur, 2014:144). Learners also acquire language well when they work as a team (see Section 2.3).

Reading comprehension approaches suggested by the USA, after research was conducted on enhancing meaning-making, were inquiry, elaboration of concepts, vocabulary, word images, word knowledge and word repetition (Voogt, Fisser, Pareja Roblin, Tondeur & Van Braak, 2013:110).

3.3.2 Using English as a communication tool

It is advisable to teach learners EFAL in the Foundation Phase as a subject, after which, in the Intermediate Phase, it changes to the LoTL (Spernes, 2012:193). This will help learners to familiarise themselves using English for communication in early stages. Rwandan learners had a basic foundation in their HL, and therefore fewer challenges in using English as a communication tool compared to their counterparts. According to Cummins and Swain (2014:130), those who had a basic foundation in their HL tended to have fewer challenges in their second language. The study, conducted in 2004 also in Zambia and Malawi, found that the Rwandan learners had basic foundations in their HL and thus performed better (Niyibizi, 2015:108).

According to Spaull (2013:439), South African learners performed worse than the learners in the above three African countries, decreasing each year to 25% and 27% in 2010 and 2011 respectively. This indicates that the home language is important in helping determine whether the learners are able to comprehend. It is argued by Cummins and Swain (2014:140) that learners who develop abilities in more than one language in primary school are better in using English as a communication tool of languages. They could communicate using any language effectively.

Teaching learners in their HL in FP, for example in Grades 1 and 2, then Grade 3 as LoTL will benefit learners when they are in Grade 4. This will familiarise them with English as a communication tool at a young age, so that by the time they reach Grade 7 they would be better developed in using English as a communication tool.

3.3.3 Language competency

Learners required by trainee language teachers in South Africa by trainee teachers to dramatize characters from stories (Arechiga, 2013:37) were found to comprehend text better. Learners can be divided into small groups to perform these activities, consisting of learners at different reading levels so that they can support one another. Cummins and Swain (2014:139) stated that teachers should work hard to help their struggling learners achieve language competence in reading comprehension. Brock-Utne (2015:616) recommends that reading across the curriculum be active, as when reading automatically they attain language competency.

All educators have to teach reading across all subjects in order to improve reading competency. The concessions arrangement is required for learners who are unable to write for themselves. Language competence and reading should be applied in schools (Taylor & von Fintel, 2016:77), so that BICS and CALP can be developed in their home language, before their second (Cummins & Swain, 2014:139). An approach supported by scholars that could enrich language competence in reading comprehension was one of common organisational partners (Abbott-Chapman et al., 2014:105). This was a clear and straightforward presentation before and after reading the text, reinforced because learners who had it applied to them displayed great improvement in language competence. Orthographic transparency is an important component used successfully to acquire language competence (Albeheri, Evaratt, Mahfaudhi, Al-Diyar & Taibah, 2011:125). Orthography is used to look at the consonants and vowels that make up a word, and transparency at the openness to read written letters with accuracy in pronouncing language sounds.

3.3.4 Lexical pedagogy

Lexical pedagogy is an approach to teaching foreign language through understanding grammatical patterns and use of words. In this study it is understood as ways of teaching learners EFAL in a conducive environment. This means learners are not afraid of being humiliated and laughed at by peers. It was discovered that the limited lexical pedagogy of EFAL foreign learners in the USA required teachers to teach them more educational lexical pedagogy. It should be relevant to their other subjects, for example, Mathematics, History, Economics and Sciences (Gardner & Davies, 2013:2). It is suggested that undertaking this task would consequently meet educational requirements. Gyllstad (2016:24) highlights that this approach suggests that learners be taught lexical pedagogy to predict various conditions. The activities that improve reading comprehension in EFAL include listening, reading, use of dictionaries, summarising, predicting meaning and lexical pedagogy.

Lin (2016:196) states that if learners understand the aim of reading it will help them to master reading skills. It is vital that teachers allow learners to share vocabulary, language structures, rules and conceptual ideas, as it would contribute to lexical pedagogy. This can be carried out by exemplary reading, predicting, making inferences, scanning, reading titles and viewing images of text (Van Staden, 2016:307). According to Bokhorst-Heng (2012:65), the lexical pedagogy approach improves learners' proficiency in grammatical and language structures which will assist them in answering questions in reading comprehension. Proficient reading enriches them in reading written text, so they should be taught based on the idea of language production, which can be illustrated by understanding designs, guessing how they were pieced together and how they differ. This strategy acknowledges the activities that enrich reading comprehension, such as recycling of activities, guessing the meaning of vocabulary and using dictionaries.

3.3.5 Limited insufficient dictionaries/vocabulary

To support the limited vocabulary, EFAL learners around the world should use the repeated reading approach (Gorsuch et al., 2010:28), which provides learners with

an opportunity to read along with an audio model, thus reducing the amount of difficult vocabulary. This could advance fluency and result in enhanced reading comprehension, leading to independent readers. Alkhweldeh (2013:217) notes that the development of vocabulary skills should be taught separately, with semantic and syntactic cues excluded. It is vital that learners be provided with reading material according to their level of reading as this motivates learners to learn other language skills, for example, grammar.

Research conducted by the University of Oxford on the advancement of an approach in EFAL reading found learners in blogs being required to build knowledge and work collaboratively in improving their vocabulary (Lee, 2015:375). Paired reading motivated them to read for both curiosity and pleasure, as they assisted one another with unfamiliar words in the text. This assisted them in comprehending the text and asking for assistance when they encountered problems. A similar method helped Ethiopia EFAL learners to perform better in reading comprehension, making them and other co-constructors see the importance of reading comprehension (Kostewicz & Kubina, 2010:46).

Puck and Alkhweldeh (2013:41) agree that teachers in the University of Ecuador in USA should give learners definitions of unfamiliar words from the text. This prepares them to comprehend text more easily. It is suggested that content teachers provide glossaries so that learners can increase their vocabulary skills, even if they are not keen (Kesler, 2011:275). It is important that teachers focus more on vocabulary, text features, structures and comprehension, so as to improve vocabulary. Word meaning is a more useful method that could lead learners to becoming independent readers (Lervag & Aukrust, 2010:615).

The first approach is 'possible sentence', which motivates strategic thinking before, during and after reading. It improves comprehension by requiring learners to talk about words and predict the text. This could be achieved by counting how many times a particular word appears in the text (Swartz, Eichstaedt, Dziurzynski, Kern, Blanco, Kosinski, Stillwell, Seligman, & Ungar, 2013:75). Learners should say how many times they used the new words in their communication with peers throughout the day, and give examples of how they used it.

The second approach, 'context clues', is used when the teacher leaves a space open in a sentence and lets learners predict which word should fill it, leading to more vocabulary use. The third approach is 'repeated reading', which leads to fluency and improves comprehension by teachers modelling the words as they read the story and asking learners to follow suit (August & Shanahan, 2017:434). According to Hedgcock & Ferris (2018:38), this would allow learners to present synonyms for words used, making it easier to comprehend the text and become fluent. The last approach is 'using body language, which demonstrates what is said in the sentence, for example, "I wonder who paints the rainbow in the sky and formed all the stars in the sky."

Moses, Buseti-Frevert and Prichard (2015:437) stress the challenges experienced by teachers, such as assessing reading comprehension in EFAL. The teachers were encouraged by researchers to use the inquiry-based approach and allow learners to co-construct new knowledge in EFAL to improve their limited vocabulary, content knowledge and academic vocabulary as their main challenge. In the process, learners were advised to rebuild knowledge with their peers and ask questions to teachers and write what they had learnt. At the end, learners improved as they gained knowledge, being able to share their new knowledge with teachers and other learners. This approach could be used to enhance performance in EFAL.

It has been suggested that teachers focus on the vocabulary of learners and explain the difficult words (Salamon, 2015:39), perhaps by asking related questions about the text to gain more vocabulary. Dolan (2014:94) recommends teaching learners different kinds of sentences, such as complex ones included in grammatical conversations. Another solution that the teachers can investigate is the level of cognitive development, structural complexity in spoken language and the understanding of complex sentences. The most popular procedure recommended by other researchers that improve reading comprehension is the 'think aloud' technique, valuable for giving learners time to pronounce the words correctly.

Namibian learners who were assisted using Promoting Adolescent Comprehension Text (PACT) improved in acquiring knowledge on content-related reading comprehension, especially in vocabulary (Schweisfurth, 2011:427). According to O'sullivan (2018:15), PACT is well known for improving the results in learners who

experience challenges in vocabulary, content acquisition and peer discourse in learners learning English as FAL. According to Sweet and Snow (2003:5), PACT deals with assisting learners from Grade 7-12 in improving reading comprehension through vocabulary. Graves (2016:2) found that improved vocabulary leads to verbal ability, phonological awareness, improve reading comprehension for both HL and EFAL, so teaching vocabulary lessens the challenges for EFAL learners.

Crystal (2013:56) highlights that it is crucial that learners in South Africa are taught more words in their early school years to improve their vocabulary skills. This would assist them in life with decoding and oral skills. Sailors, Hoffman, Pearson, Beretvas and Matthee (2010:212) contend that vocabulary skills, academic language discipline and different strategies for comprehending words are needed for learners in order to succeed pedagogically. It is suggested that teachers who assist learners with vocabulary skills (grammar and words) require comprehensive development. The Systematic Functional Linguistic (SFL) approach is also suggested to enhance reading comprehension as it motivates learners to read more, significant in that it provides teachers with enquiry about more vocabulary and enriches learning different text. The more learners enquire about vocabulary the more of it they gain.

3.3.6 Pronunciation

The United States government, after discovering the learners' challenge in reading comprehension, used e-book readers to assist learners with reading comprehension and correct pronunciation of words (Shraim, 2014:25). E-book readers are more valuable rather than paper-based books for improving and enhancing language knowledge, especially in reading comprehension. They provide learners with an opportunity for word pronunciation, built-in vocabulary and more features that assist in sharpening reading comprehension skills.

Reading comprehension is a powerful tool to assist in learning pronunciation in EFAL (Murphy, 2014:352), helping with recognition of words when the text is coupled with pictures and read aloud. In addition, using a good dictionary helps, particularly if it provides guidance on pronunciation. Reading aloud also plays an important role in reading comprehension competence, as it raises awareness of phonemes and graphemes.

3.3.7 Teaching or developing reading strategies and curriculum differentiation

When teachers use different reading comprehension strategies, learners show rapid improvement in their reading comprehension, notably questioning, elaborating concepts, vocabulary or explanation, use of pictures, word learning techniques and word knowledge (McCartney et al., 2015:134–135). According to Muzoora (2016:75), when learners are taught to use different strategies, such as use of visualising, vocabulary, drawing inferences, questioning, summarising, curriculum differentiation and monitoring understanding, their reading comprehension improved. Muzoora recommended that teachers use different teaching techniques as some would work for some learners but not for others. Another solution, suggested by Kamaruddin (2013:2) in Uganda, was professional development and coaching provided to teachers, to improve their teaching comprehension strategies. It is critical to use various teaching strategies to assist and cater to different kinds of learner in the classroom.

Kim (2013:13) found that prediction, visualisation, generating questions related to the text, interpreting the text and summarisation could help learners to read with understanding. This is important as the teachers are able to see the challenges that the learners experience, and apply curriculum differentiation to the level of learners. Learners can learn better if more attention is paid to comprehension monitoring (Cekiso, 2012:2), which increases the level of understanding and develops insights. Learners can learn to comprehend text by using different approaches, for example, explicit and implicit. It is suggested explicitly that learners be allowed to talk more. Implicit approach significantly allows learners to acquire knowledge and gives them different immersion features to assist in comprehending the text.

A proposed solution to South African teachers is that they be provided with in-service training on how to implement multilingual strategies in order to create a positive environment in their EFAL classroom (Caddy, 2015:31). This will help them to understand challenges encountered by multilingual learners. Zimmerman and Smit (2014:2) add that teachers should use different strategies in order for learners to be able to comprehend the text, for example, monitoring, asking questions while

reading, making use of prior knowledge, visualising the text, predicting what the text is about, retelling and summarising text (Cekiso, 2012:2). Learners should also be provided with more vocabulary. It is crucial that teachers ask questions while reading to see whether learners are paying attention. This makes it easier for them to comprehend the text, increasing the level of understanding and developing insights.

To motivate learners to be independent readers they have to be taught to decode and work out the text to construct its meaning (Malin, 2010:121–123). It is suggested that teachers assist learners with adequate reading skills and motivate them to have an interest in reading. This would result in them being interested in constructing meaning and improving comprehension. Teachers should also make use of dramatic readings of short stories and annotation of images and video in combination with reading aloud, which improves vocabulary skills and enables them to use their background knowledge and become independent readers. According to Seabi et al. (2012:260), video assists learners to attach meaning, that is, visual, oral and written, and experience the story independently. They pay attention to important information and enjoy the text, because annotation assists learners with summarising the text. They can be encouraged to imagine themselves as part of the story by analysing the setting and being one of the characters.

Teachers can teach learners to read the text with the images and visuals in order for them to comprehend it (Völkel, Seabi, Cockcroft & Goldschagg, 2016:322, Wang, Lowson & Curtis, 2015:440). Providing text with images is recommended and with simplified instructions, as it has positive results in improving decoding, vocabulary and listening skills, which are the main causes of underperformance in reading comprehension (Muchau, 2015:38). Text with images is a good motivator for learners to read with the eventual outcome of being independent readers and able to talk (Thornhill, 2014:30, Thornhill & Le Cordeur, 2016:106). This also improves learners' comprehension and vocabulary development skills. It is significant that learners are academically proficient, and they need to acquire CALP. This includes analytical thoughts and factual, formal pedagogy. BICS are various forms of communication.

China saw the importance of developing a framework for reading comprehension and started using an imagery approach (Wang, Lawson & Curtis, 2015:440), considered valuable in improving reading comprehension for EFAL learners through the use of images or visuals. EFAL learners have shown improvement in reading comprehension when teachers showed what is required in the text and provided simplified instructions of what to do in the given activity. The approach had simple guidelines on how the learners should be guided in the classroom in order to comprehend the text that they had read (Muchau, 2015:38).

Thornhill (2014:30) states that closed questions should be minimal, as they do not permit learners to talk in class, unlike open questions. This would illustrate whether learners comprehend the written text or not (Thornhill & Le Cordeur, 2016:106). Teachers should make use of guided reading books (Caddy, 2015:32), which make it easier to implement diverse approaches that could help them. Teachers should be provided with sufficient in-service training to create a positive environment in EFAL reading comprehension (Ono & Ferreira, 2010:65).

3.3.8 Word recognition

If learners are taught reading in early grades it would lead them to become independent readers and comprehend written text in EFAL. Teachers should model reading and do guided reading by employing different strategies to help with detecting challenges learners are experiencing and remedying them (Grabe, 2013:45). Reading comprehension should be developed in the Foundation Phase in order to lay a good foundation in early age (Abadzi, 2012:5). There should be no problem in senior primary and onwards if the reading skill is well-developed earlier.

For learners to be able to read with comprehension, it is suggested that they be able to decode new words, develop fluency and recognise phonemes (Schroeder, 2012:1–2). This can be illustrated by learners who are able to recognise words and find their meaning, evidence that they are able to read with understanding. The most common factors that improve word recognition in reading comprehension are length, promptness, uniformity, homophony, high frequency, picture naming and number of meanings (Diependaele, Lemhofer & Brysbaert, 2012:1-2).

3.3.9 Reading strategies

Reading strategies are techniques with stages that are used in order to improve reading comprehension based on learners' ability level to read the text (Saleh, 2016:21). It is important that the pre-reading stage assists learners to construct the meaning of the text. In the during-reading stage, the learner is reading for comprehension, while the post-reading stage reveals whether they did comprehend the written text. Comprehension has been achieved if the learner is able to answer the questions related to the written text. Gottardo et al. (2011:120) explain that successful implementation of SVR in Spain improved reading EFAL comprehension in younger learners, which indicates that it provides learners with a unique educational experiences of early structure and systematic phonetic instruction. It is crucial that the teachers articulate, read and write stories for their learners to arouse their interest of reading.

In Uganda, bedtime stories are provided to learners according to their level of reading (Akyeampong, Lussier, Pryor & Westbrook, 2013:274). It is suggested that such stories suit their background and environment. Kersaint et al. (2014:154) found in Zimbabwe that learners tell their stories to their teachers and peers while they listen. When the learners listen to the stories they use different senses, for example, sight, smell and touch in order to imagine it. According to Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2013:220), for learners to improve reading and listening of written texts they should be good imaginers of the stories and also improve their vocabulary, which has been established as the main cause of poor understanding in EFAL.

It is suggested that the alphabetic phonics approach could assist teachers in teaching reading comprehension, attainable if they increase time spent on reading components (Pressley & Allington, 2014:54). It improves reading comprehension through decoding grammar and composition and teachers should use it in order to enhance their learners' performance in reading comprehension. According to Nord (2014:58) and Telebi (2013:434), it was the recommended approach for teaching reading comprehension, especially in decoding grammar and composition.

3.3.10 Reading and building meaning

Morphology enables acquisition of accurate, comprehensive vocabulary. Sight word fluency and passage reading fluency enrich reading comprehension in learners with challenges in this regard (Kieffer, Biancarosa & Mancilla-Martez, 2010:697–701). According to Kieffer et al. (2010:697–701), morphology enables the development of efficient word reading, and so permits the improvement of reading comprehension. Lennox (2013:381) adds that reading aloud, which includes enriching academic knowledge, acquisition of vocabulary and inferential language skills, also plays a crucial role in improving reading comprehension. Bhatia (2014:92) asserts that phonics retains morphological evidence, that is, looked and worked, despite the shift of pronunciation. It is suggested that morphology offers the reader an understanding of syntax and structure and assists in effective reading comprehension.

In Zambia, a primary reading programme presented from 1999 to 2013 to enrich reading comprehension (Sampa, 2016:25-26) was significant because it specialised in teaching the oral, lexical and structural elements of language. Goldenburg (2013:6) and Lennox (2013:383) write that the distinguished components that improve reading comprehension are vocabulary instruction and early reading involvement. Therefore, learners who indicate low performance in the Foundation Phase do not usually improve their limitations academically, especially in terms of vocabulary.

3.3.11 Phonological awareness

Promoting teaching phonological awareness in the UK is important since it was revealed that non-English first language learners need to be taught systematic phonics and spelling to attain reading comprehension in EFAL. Without teaching spelling and systematic phonology there is no other way that learners could be taught reading comprehension in early grades (Pressley & Allington, 2014:521–522). In Ghana, the government used the book floods approach, which consisted of providing schools with colourful books to read at home and at school (Apoku-Amakwa, Brew-Hammond & Mahama, 2012:2–3). This improves learners' comprehension through shared reading, providing time for them to have discussions

about what the teacher taught them and how to answer questions related to their comprehension.

Okebukola, Owalabi and Onafowokan (2013:2–3) assert that teaching phonology in early grades leads to improvement in reading comprehension. It is important as it enhances the pronunciation of words by teaching spelling activities, word reading, reading comprehension and vocabulary. Karan (2013:4) emphasises that teaching phonology in collaboration between parents and teachers assists them to predict unknown words and comprehend the meaning. For learners to be conscious of phonology, semantics and syntax they should have parent-teacher support and involvement. This facilitates word reading level and fluency.

3.4 COMPONENTS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION IN EFAL

There are a number of components to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

3.4.1 Pronunciation

The two components of reading comprehension in EFAL in China are pause times and articulation times (Li & Kirby, 2011:7–8). It is suggested that pause time assists learners to retrieve phonological codes, word recognition and correct pronunciation of words, while articulation time enhances the pronunciation of words in the challenged learners. These components deal with how much or how fast information can be stored in working memory.

Kenyan learners experience challenges in vocabulary as they use traditional lexical pedagogy and crossword puzzles to improve vocabulary skills in their learners. Vocabulary dearth is a contributing factor to limited reading comprehension in EFAL (Njoroge, Ndung'u & Gathigia, 2013:33). According to Sailor, Pearson and Mcclung (2015:259) for proficient reading in Malawi more attention should be given to their second language. It was recommended that learners be more proficient in their first language. Word spelling, use of a dictionary and playing with puzzles helped learners improve their vocabulary and pronunciation skills.

The PIRLS test, administered every five years, revealed in 2006 a lack of reading comprehension in South Africa. The results indicated that learners could only pronounce a maximum of seven words in the present tense (Nel & Muller, 2010:635–636). Contributory factors were inadequate contact with newspapers, limited reading material at schools and homes, and inadequate language of teachers as their own English proficiency was insufficient. It is suggested that learners be supported at home with reading material to become familiar with reading. Teachers need to motivate and encourage learners to be independent readers by providing them with books.

3.4.2 Background knowledge

Background knowledge, which is aroused by the teacher in the pre-reading stage, contributes to the reading comprehension approach (Perry, 2013:76). Resources such as a dictionary should be used to comprehend reading and build background knowledge. Barnawi and Le Ha (2015:262–263) state that text initiated as the component of reading will improve reading comprehension in EFAL. When employed in the text, it forms vocabulary skills, which allow the learners to comprehend the written text in EFAL.

Montero, Peters, Clarebout and Desmet (2014:120) found other components to be the translation component, which could improve reading comprehension by explaining the meaning of one or more words as it provides learners with synonyms and antonyms and how they are used in a sentence structure. A second component was linguistic knowledge, making use of language rules. This is also significant as it assists learners to improve background knowledge in EFAL. According to Winke, Gass and Sydorenko (2013:255), integration employs local content and connectors in order to establish the meaning of texts. The text-based background knowledge component is important as it helps predict what would happen in the next paragraph.

For learners to be able to comprehend what they are learning it is important to maintain their background knowledge and understand the meaning of some words. It is suggested that learners use background knowledge when reading, so teachers have to allow them to think about what they already know. This will make it easier for them to understand what they are reading (Shapaka, 2015:20–24).

3.4.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary as a component of reading comprehension in EFAL requires profound development (Dressler, Carlo, Snow, August & White, 2011:245). It significantly influences the levels of language processing, such as grammar, phonology, orthography, morph syntax, construction of schemata and text model. Burgoyne et al. (2011:346) outline the other components in reading comprehension used in the UK as vocabulary skills, working memory, background knowledge and processes that include inferential processing and comprehension monitoring. For this to be successful, dictionaries should be available at school and made use of.

The more vocabulary that is unknown in the text the less motivated the learner will be to continue reading (Richards & Rodger, 2014:154). The challenge of vocabulary skills is experienced world-wide, not only in South Africa. Japan, Spain and the Americas experience the same challenge. Having discussed various methods of teaching vocabulary skills, Pennington (2014:132) recommended that learners be given an explanation of words before they began reading the written text. Milligan, Clegg and Tikly (2016:330) believed that the learners should be given picture cards that showed the meaning of the words. The other suggested method for enhancing vocabulary skills was to give learners a few words each week that are used rapidly. This successful method was to explain the words after shared reading, which increased their fluency and comprehension (Makalela, 2015:205).

3.4.4 Language comprehension and curriculum differentiation

Language comprehension is explained as the ability to define the words (vocabulary) and be able to respond to listening comprehension (Kanaki, 2015:1). It is evident that language comprehension is the ability to understand written words and sentences in different languages. The authors further mentioned that decoding is the expression or fluent pronunciation of words and accurately turning the alphabet into spoken or written form. A learner who is able to decode and pronounce words correctly has the ability to comprehend written text.

The use of 69 mother languages in Kenya is a reason for poor reading comprehension in EFAL, which is primarily used as LoTL. However, learning many

languages at the same time contributes to postponing the mastering of a second language (Trudell & Schroeder, 2016:135-147). About 60% of time used for English classroom teaching contributed to a better percentage of comprehension. Mkohlwa and Abongdia (2015:223) found that South African learners from disadvantaged economic backgrounds are less likely to be exposed to reading books than learners from middle class or affluent backgrounds (Vally, Murray, Tomlinson & Cooper, 2015:866). This is evident in the targeted school learners as it is situated in a deep rural area. There is no library in the community in which learners could have been exposed to different types of books. Teachers have to be versatile and bring newspapers and magazines to class, and record radio stories to familiarise learners with reading and motivate them to become independent readers.

3.4.5 Phonological awareness

Alignment of teaching and the policy for teaching phonological awareness by using spelling could improve reading comprehension in UK second language English speakers (Hoff, 2013:4). Phonological awareness is the methodical association among sounds (Nchindila, 2011:87-88). According to Roy-Campbell (2015:2), there are more than 40 languages in Tanzania spoken as mother tongue, making it difficult to teach phonological awareness, also as the rules differ in EFAL. It is important that the learners be proficient to network in English as the language of communication. Texts from phonology to grapheme are not flawlessly reliable due to phonological variances.

The term 'grammatical' can be phonological, although spelt differently (Lyimo, 2015:32). It is evident that phonological awareness improves spelling because as soon as learners are able to pronounce the words it is easier to write them. Phonological awareness is significant as it is utilised for sounds of spoken words (Butler, 2015:305). Butler found that in South Africa construction of phonetical skills and reading acquisition enrich phonological awareness, thus constantly improving reading comprehension. Phonological awareness is established when a learner shows the ability to use resounds as spoken words (Melby-Lervang & Lervang, 2014:410-414). It is one of the barriers to reading comprehension, and calls for teachers to pay more attention to it in their teaching of spoken words and syllabus.

Teaching of phonological awareness takes place in the Foundation Phase, but if a teacher identified a learner with problems in the Intermediate or Senior Phase it should be taught.

3.4.6 Oral or listening comprehension

EFAL learners should be able to partake in a social context in the classroom, in particular through interaction and building knowledge (Kibler, Walqui & Buch, 2014:14-15), as they may be unacquainted with interactional norms and actions expected in the classroom (Barnawi et.al, 2015:269). According to Bartlett, Dowd and Johanson (2015:310), fluency is clearly related to comprehension, illustrated by the ability to comprehend and communicate meaningfully from what is read. For example, learners have to respond to teachers' questions after listening to what was read from the text.

This early effectiveness of storybook effects of an automated intervention is designed to promote school readiness listening and speaking towards at-risk young EFAL learners (Mwanza-Kabaghe, 2015:86). Peer learning in stories is a small-group intervention in which vocabulary and question-answering lessons are fixed in a series of storybooks (Kelley, Goldstein & Spencer, 2015:50). This is happening to Grade 7 learners, as they may answer low-order and some middle-order questions, but fail to answer high-order questions in some instances when they have to make a presentation to their classmates. Much has to improve in listening comprehension in order for them to be able to answer high-order questions.

3.4.7 Decoding components

In the UK, non-first language English learners who are struggling with phonological awareness also experience difficulty with decoding skills. It is thus worth noting that phonological awareness is the best predictor of decoding skills. Learners usually show problems in decoding from Grade 7 (Ellis, 2015:44) and those who are better at listening and decoding tend to be achievers in reading comprehension. According to Petersen and Gillam (2015:10), listening comprehension contributes greatly to the reading development of a learner, once they have acquired decoding skills.

According to Gillon (2017:70), learning and interactive activities, such as matching the parts of speech and figures of speech, are activities that could assist non-native learners. It is suggested that decoding, with alphabetical knowledge and reading fluency, added to language comprehension skills, notably, vocabulary and listening skills, are the most influential contributors to decoding in EFAL (Carson, Gillon & Boustead, 2013:150). It is important to make sure learners understand figures of speech, decoding, and thus vocabulary skills.

3.4.8 Working memory

The working memory with its limited capacity for keeping information is needed for cognitive skills (Yamashita & Shiotsu, 2015:47). According to McVay and Kane (2012:302-303), it predicts performance in the area of simple cognitive tasks to complex intellectual pursuits. Learners with lower working memory can be characterised by more reading comprehension difficulties. August and Shanahan (2017:435) claim that learners who perform well in their home language can perform better in EFAL, easily transferring their knowledge. Yamashita and Shiotsu (2015:45) assert that the metaphor of transfer was wrongly used regarding specific reading skills. As learners had difficulties in reading comprehension of the text they have challenges in EFAL, particularly if not having mastered their first language.

The difficulties in recognition of words and language comprehension in EFAL illustrate that there are challenges in the mother tongue. This shows that in the language comprehension component the learners who do not comprehend texts are those who have not acquired the decoding skills. This is evidenced by poor performance in communication skills (Wright et al., 2015:777).

3.5 CONDITIONS SUITABLE FOR IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN EFAL

There are a number of conditions suitable for improving reading comprehension in EFAL.

3.5.1 Vocabulary skills

Lesaux and Crosson (2013:193-195) highlight that academic connectors were not clear or easily understandable among learners from rural areas. Barnawi et al. (2015:272) indicate that teachers should show the learners this important concept so that they are able to know what is important in the text. For example, teachers should show learners words, structures and images that could improve their vocabulary skills. Proficiency in vocabulary is one of the most important concepts in reading comprehension in EFAL.

3.5.2 Reading strategies

Home language learners better understand the connectors and find it easier to read with comprehension. These skills could be transferred to the second language if the grammar rules are similar. Mozambiquean university students revealed that a text is easily comprehended when using the images as a strategy in EFAL (Nhapulo, 2016:56). Stories prepared for learners should be coupled with images as they improve reading skills, and therefore reading comprehension in EFAL. Providing this will motivate them to be independent readers and improve vocabulary skills.

3.5.3 Picture books

Deterding and Sharbawi (2013:120) advise teachers to teach learners to read the text together with pictures for thorough understanding. It is importantly suggested that providing different structures and pictures to learners holds their interest. It makes them more committed to their development in reading comprehension.

3.6 RISKS (THREATS) RELATED TO AN UNSUCCESSFUL APPROACH

There are a number of risks related to unsuccessful approaches to strategies for improving reading comprehension in EFAL.

3.6.1 Time to implement

Even though teachers may now have knowledge on how to implement the different strategies, it is time-consuming as they are not only teaching one subject or EFAL. They end up with a high duty load with restricted time to implement strategies for reading and teaching (Ellis, 2015:73). Teachers complain that time to complete the practical work is insufficient and helping learners to find the meaning of words in a dictionary is time-consuming. Few learners have dictionaries at their homes (Olivier & Simasiku, 2015:246), whilst Chavalala (2015:107) found that some teachers sometimes had to perform managerial and administration duties, which are time-consuming. Chavalala's study was based in Tswane, South District, but the findings are similar to what is happening elsewhere. Teachers are willing to work, but time is against them. Parents are asked to take responsibility to support their children but some are still not used to visiting their children's school. This is seen especially in those parents who are required to support their children.

3.6.2 Parent involvement

Teachers in California have had an unfavourable outlook towards the new development of technology. Some were willing to adapt but were challenged by their lack of knowledge and skills, while some were irritated by the noise caused by the technology in classrooms (Dobson, Asselin & Abebe, 2018:135). In Rwanda, the time supported by PRIMR for reading is 40 minutes, however, due to teacher strikes, learners' absenteeism, unscheduled school closure and time off task in many African countries, the actual time for learning is limited (Welch & Glennie, 2016:35-36). According to Ohene-Larbi (2015:34), inviting parents to open days would increase their involvement with those learners who are excelling, though some parents are reluctant to visit schools.

There are fewer teachers who are trained to teach EFAL, yet they are more needed than first language or mother tongue teachers. EFAL also requires more reading material than a home language. Resources are needed but principals complain that the government provides too little to meet all the needs (Zaheer, 2016:5). It is for this reason that many schools in South Africa have limited resources. Government

does not provide libraries to rural schools, so these learners have limited reading material.

3.6.3 Resistance to change

In India, parents also resist reading with their children, saying that they do not have time (Bajaj, 2012:74). More languages are recognised but the requirement is that the learners learn at least three. Only a few do not use English as their home language but they are unwilling to assist learners to use it. In Kenya, it was revealed that some learners are not enthusiastic to learn and do not have a positive attitude towards EFAL (Le Grange, 2016:4). If learners do not have a positive attitude towards learning there will be no learning. The insight of the teacher combined with an enthusiastic learner produces optimal results in language learning (Ouya, 2015:14). The author further states that if the learners are prepared to learn it will be confirmed by them by requesting help from others, making errors and being prepared to make corrections.

Some teachers are resistant to change and continue using methods that do not help learners improve reading comprehension in EFAL. Shrestha and Krolak (2015:403) found that teaching language in modern times requires technology, however, most teachers are unwilling to learn about the new developments even when provided with in-service training and workshops. Some reasons teachers are resistant to change is that they are unmotivated and have limited professional development or reading material to implement various teaching methods (Dlamini, 2015:20-21).

3.6.4 Monitoring

According to Burgoyne et al. (2011:346-351), learners who experience difficulties in reading comprehension do not mention it. The best solution is to refer learners for special support and monitoring. Igboanusi (2014:560) revealed that decoding skills are not the only skill that will help learners comprehend a text. Some are able to decode but still unable to comprehend the written text. Bango (2015:63) found that background knowledge is not acquired because of limited explanation of the text.

According to Akyeampong *et al.* (2013:276), computer programs will not work well if there is no demonstration to learners. Assistance requires teachers to be steady and not too fast since some learners are slow by nature. The program may examine some components of reading besides phonological awareness but training may be considered as time-consuming. Some teachers do not have knowledge of computers, thus management of the school should monitor this.

3.7 SUCCESS INDICATORS

There are a number of indicators to be considered.

3.7.1 Repeated reading approach

Repeated reading approach assists the teachers in the UK in the growth rate in reading comprehension. Decoding and orals are the predictors of repeated reading comprehension and show how learners progress, often revealing that learners have limited vocabulary (Oakhill & Cain, 2012:112). The more learners read the more they become independent readers, confirming that being well-versed in the mother tongue contributes to mastery of a second language.

The Kenyan government suggested that if learners are still struggling with reading at a certain level they should repeat that level or grade. This was found to improve reading in Kenya as the learners moved to the next level or grade only when their performance allowed it (Piper, Zuilkowski, Kwayumba, & Strigel, 2016:210). The Tanzanian government provided schools with various books that helped learners to read at home (Anangisye, 2020:23). They also requested the British government to donate books to them, in a project aimed at ensuring learners did not have to share books and each learner had at least one to read. Currently Tanzania could be compared with other countries that are rated as high or independent readers, because of the many books they have (Stranger-Johannessen, 2014:95). This can be illustrated by relatively high fluency levels. They are perceived as fluent because they reveal cognitive fluency after repeating a reading several times (Kevane, 2014:2).

3.7.2 Guided reading approach

The USA non-first language English learners demonstrated that they were underachieving at the basic level of reading comprehension in comparison to their counterparts. With the use of the guided reading approach, policymakers and teachers taught prescribed letter sounds, language skills, vocabulary and related background knowledge to improve reading comprehension in EFAL (Dickson, Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2010:305).

In Kenya, the guided reading approach by repeating class was successfully implemented and learners improved greatly (Ntim, 2016:1). It is important that learners be provided with a reading book during the process of implementing guided reading approach so that they will benefit (Piper, 2014:12). The author concurs that this resulted in improved reading comprehension in South Africa. In line with the Constitution of South Africa, learners enter the next grade even if they have to perform the work of the previous grade, thus keeping him or her in a class with his or her peers, especially in so-called full service school that allow it and apply curriculum differentiation (Bothma, Cant & Du Toit, 2012:895). Reading in a vacuum does not assist learners. Parents, community members, teachers and peers should work together in assisting and supporting their children in reading with comprehension.

3.7.3 Communicative approach

Since schools in the USA started applying the communicative approach the number of early school leavers decreased, indirectly proportional to performance (Jimenez, David, Fagan, Risko, Pacheco, Pray & Gonzales, 2015:250). Learners learn better if they communicate in the classroom, not only in EFAL but also in other subjects. Ghanaian learners demonstrated some difficulties in comprehension, but using the communicative approach in class increased their academic performance (Bishop, Davis & Seah, 2015:584). According to Van Staden (2016:22), learners in Lesotho are struggling with how to use different language components comprehensively, for example, oral, reading, vocabulary and reading comprehension. Hobbs and Frost (2013:333) concur that through using the communicative approach, such as

vocabulary, verbal communication and working memory, learners are able to comprehend the meaning of written words and read any text they come across with understanding. The words are retained in their memory, evidence that they learn better and do not easily forget when they communicate with their peers.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature review in this chapter revealed that improving reading comprehension in EFAL is important as English is an international language, economically, socially and communicatively. In most countries, learners are experiencing challenges due to limited vocabulary, which is seen as the most important component in reading comprehension in EFAL. Teaching phonemes and morphemes and other components in language for learners to be able to recognise words could assist them with reading comprehension.

Learners who are able to comprehend when reading will succeed academically, since EFAL is viewed as the *lingua franca* (language of communication) worldwide. Learners should be motivated to read and be aware of its purpose, which is to comprehend. The possible solutions to reading comprehension applied by other countries should also be used here in South Africa to help learners in class and later in a society facing numerous challenges.

The following chapter will focus on research design to explain how data was generated in order to clarify the issues stated as the main objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Integral to formulating an approach of reading comprehension in EFAL to create a sustainable learning environment (SuLE) for Grade 7 learners using various components of EFAL in KwaZulu-Natal's Vryheid District, Chapter 3 presented a literature review concerning mitigating the necessity and advancing an approach for enriching reading comprehension in EFAL. This chapter presents and discusses the research design and identifies co-researchers in participating schools in the 587 District in the Louwsburg area. In explaining why and how the co-researchers were selected, the criteria of identification and detailed profiles of each are presented. Participatory Action Research (PAR) as an approach and reasons for its selection are discussed, with conceptualisation of the research processes, tools and instruments used in data generation. Free attitude interviews (FAIs) were used as a technique to induce and probe discussion, with data then subjected to critical discourse analysis (CDA). Analysis was on three levels, namely, textual, discursive practice and social structure.

4.2 DEFINING PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

PAR is socially democratic and involves organisational transformation action in which co-researchers learn and reflect on their learning in different periods. This produced fruitful knowledge that can enhance economic, political, psychological factors to encourage equitable and sustainable learning for all (Wicks, Reason & Bradbury, 2008:2). Fruitful knowledge arising from the research should allow learners and teachers to work together while learning at the same time. According to Wimpenny (2013:4), PAR allows the inclusion of values that everyone is equal and no one has power over another. Kemmis et al. (2013:115) write that co-researchers should be a practical part of planning, action, observation, reflection and evaluation of the outcomes of practical exercise during a PAR cyclical protocol.

4.3 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AS AN APPROPRIATE APPROACH

This study adopted PAR because it requires the co-researchers to share ownership of improving reading comprehension in EFAL in Grade 7 learners, and encourages all users of EFAL to help find possible solutions regarding the identified challenges (Edwards-Groves & Kemmis, 2016:85). PAR requires co-researchers and stakeholders as partners in the knowledge production to share discourse during the cyclical process of constructing knowledge (Schwartz, Estein, Komaroff, Lamb, Myers, Stewart, Vacaflor & Park, 2013:113). Learners being part of the cyclical process of PAR should improve their reading comprehension in EFAL.

This study used CET as the theoretical framework, which also requires and guides the stakeholders and social members of learning to be part of the construction of knowledge. Benson (2013:74) stated that CET requires learners, parents, teachers and policymakers to participate practically and equally in a collaborative way to construct knowledge. PAR enables its practitioners to contest power, construct knowledge and enable full participation in decision-making, which leads to learning, emancipation and independent and social transformation for both the researcher and co-researchers (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014:38).

The spiral cyclical process of PAR allows people working with others to observe and gain knowledge, to reflect on the knowledge that they have collaboratively co-constructed as a team, and learn from it (see Figure 4.1) (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 2007:277). This shows that the co-researchers had a chance to learn in this process while finding the challenges in EFAL reading comprehension. It is crucial for learners to be included in this process as they are the ones who are challenged with reading comprehension in EFAL. During the observation, revision and reflection, they would be able to see where they went wrong and be able to reflect.

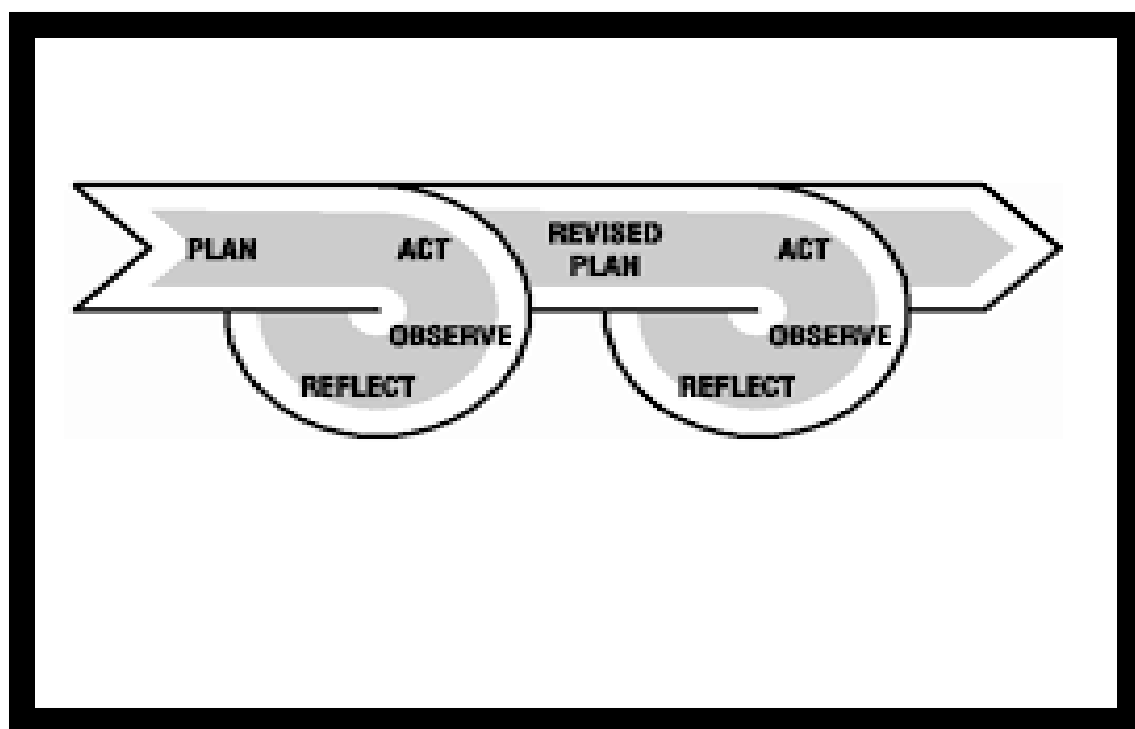


Figure 0.1: PAR spiral conventions (Source: Kemmis & MacTaggart, 2007:278)

According to Goldkuhl and Cronholm (2010:190), PAR is also said to have two aims. The first is to convey improvement to the old knowledge as the learners are not *tabula rasa*, while the second is to construct new knowledge and understanding. This study is about finding solutions that could improve reading comprehension in EFAL. It acknowledges that PAR is a practice that allows co-researchers to work in collaboration and learn from each other in addressing the said phenomenon. Kemmis (2010:220) asserts that co-researchers learn collectively in different ways to improve reading comprehension. They use different methods and strategies in order to be socially transformed, combining their culture and economic status in their values and skills.

Vickers (2016:3) notes that PAR is an approach to making co-researchers feel they are being developed in such way that they can create power and express multiple realities and new knowledge. By educating social practice and finding solutions in a transformative way of learning they can then relearn from the results. The co-researchers learn in various ways and on various levels, significant as learners are sitting in a room with the subject advisors, teachers from other schools and their parents. This allows them to learn from various people, not only from their teachers.

PAR as an approach was originally developed from social science research to remove traditional positivism and ensure the recognition of human and social matters, such as equal and active participation, emancipation, liberation, empowerment, and reflection of knowledge of marginalised or minority groups (Eruera, 2010:1). According to McGuirk (2012:144), PAR is a cyclical approach that recognises all members as knowledgeable and allows their voices to be heard when providing knowledge and learning in order for them to be transformed.. Tshelane and Mahlomaholo (2015:195) concur that co-researchers are developed by working in collaboration with the researchers to construct social transformation knowledge. The poor performance of reading comprehension in the school does not mean these teachers had no knowledge, but rather that they need assistance when they lack insight to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

According to Reason and McArdle (2008:4), PAR places co-researchers and members of the community in partnership with other stakeholders, investigating problems and finding solutions. When constructing knowledge on how reading comprehension in EFAL could be enhanced and how the challenges encountered by the stakeholders or co-researchers can be overcome, they work with parents who are usually challenged by the learners' homework and have an opportunity to mention what they find challenging. These parents would learn through expressing their views while the teachers would also see where they are making mistakes.

According to Gunzenhauser (2015:6), the cyclical nature of critical reflection in PAR provides an opportunity to see where it went wrong and take diagnostic steps as required. This is crucial as it gives the teachers opportunities to change those teaching strategies which might be the cause of low performance in reading comprehension in EFAL. Wimpenny (2013:10) believes that working in collaboration and explaining steps of learning transforms co-researchers socially and helps share knowledge.

Reason and McArdle (2008:6) found that PAR develops emancipation to equalise and provide an opportunity to participate practically in the construction of knowledge, educating, enhancing self-esteem, and motivating unity in the community. Tsotetsi (2013:141) saw PAR as having been developed to remove social injustice and inequity in power relations and embrace the empowerment and freedom

of the oppressed, marginalised and voiceless people. This allows co-researchers and community members to successfully mention what they wish about their knowledge, since they are the ones experiencing the challenges and know what could be done to overcome them and transform their knowledge process.

People who are involved in EFAL challenges are required to be part of the study in a democratic, equitable and liberated way, which is adopted by PAR. In this study, learners and teachers were the ones affected by the challenge of reading comprehension in EFAL, hence their inclusion as co-researchers (Wimpenny, 2013:4). In helping to identify the challenges and practically construct knowledge they would be socially improved and transformed members, as required by the theoretical framework of CET (see Section 2.2). As co-researchers, learners made sense of their own learning practically, in a written and oral way that was social, economic and political. The aim is to overcome power-imbalances with focus on consciousness to employ knowledge. Loewenson, Laurell, Hogsted, D'Ambruoso and Shroff (2014:12) contend that in PAR those who are experiencing challenges should fully participate in the process and be co-researchers. Learners are therefore called and included as co-researchers, along with parents, teachers and all other stakeholders involved in the creation and co-construction of knowledge.

PAR requires people to gain knowledge in a socially practical way that they can use to conduct their lives in an equitable and liberal way (Gearty, Bradbury-Huang & Reason, 2015:47). According to Freire (2018:23), it is an emancipatory, participative method of learning, as co-researchers are learning various skills, such as co-constructing new knowledge. They should revisit previous activities if there are some challenges and be able to reflect on them and re-construct other knowledge in a practical way. This is vital as it would lead them to learn and re-learn and become socially transformed.

4.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PAR AS AN APPROACH

PAR in education can be traced back from the Highlander Research and Education Centre in Tennessee from 1932 (Brydon-Miller, 2012:161). Social scholars from Tanzania who used the term PAR from action research have re-conceptualised it to address issues of

education empowerment and value-free knowledge construction (Weeks, Sgro, Young, Frankham, Mitchell, Miller, Byrne, Coates, Eldridge, Sunnucks & Breed, 2011:712).

PAR was created by Aristotelian thinking as action research by Dewey Collier to enhance social and democratic values, to ensure equality and justice, and to teach people self-advocacy with which to construct knowledge (Aasgaard, Borg & Karlsson, 2012:5). After a decade it grew in two places, the first through action by scholars in Europe and North America, which were concerned with social discourse. Scientific knowledge was dominated by those in power and procedures were required to permit the oppressed and powerless to have equitable access to scientific knowledge (Silverman, 2013:124). The first generation of PAR that was influential was led by community activist, J.L. Moreno, who used the term 'interaction research' in early 1913. It worked more on charisma and intuition, with Kurt Lewin taking over as social psychologist in 1940s. According to Kemmis et al. (2013:117), Lewin required members of construction of knowledge to be flexible, responsive and to learn from each other. The most important ideas in this Lewin period was dedication, improvement and commitment in constructing new knowledge. It was important for everyone to be responsible and committed to their learning. (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2013:116,117). According to McNabb (2015:16), Lewin was the first creator of action research with the purpose of raising confidence of marginalised groups for them to pursue freedom, fairness and teamwork. They saw the need to include active participation of the co-researcher, and the insight of PAR improved self-esteem for learners in their learning and equality in their education, such that they would be able to compete worldwide. This was crucial as English was the LoTL in many schools and was used as the language of communication worldwide.

The second generation of PAR originated in the USA in 1944 by Kurt Lewis, a Prussian psychologist and Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany. It is related to community action programme and with an aim of learning in a democratic, liberationist, transformational and participatory way (Lichtman, 2012:32). As noted by MacDonald (2012:37), Lewis aimed to allow all people to be practically involved in decision-making of solving social problems, such as segregation, discrimination and assimilation, and helping people to be socially transformed. This is important for the current generation to learn in their early age to make decisions and be able

to be part of their learning. Learners are taught to be responsible for their learning, which shows that they would be able find solutions to their challenges of reading comprehension in EFAL.

The third generation of PAR saw Paulo Freire advocating empowerment, consciousness of political issues and socio-economic circumstances of marginalised people. He was against dominance and power relations (Nkoane, 2010:320). According to Levin and Greenwood (2016:170), features of PAR are the liberationist movement, committed to honouring the experiences and knowledge of oppressed individuals. Nelson, Janzen, Ochocka and Trainor (2010:47) regarded PAR as working with the oppressed to participate fully in the construction of knowledge, since they are experiencing challenges to being agents of their own change. In order to be transformed in reading comprehension in EFAL there are four important values. First, *empowerment* emphasises the empowerment of the voiceless. Researchers are advised not to take a leadership role, but encourage co-researchers to participate fully in the construction of the knowledge process (Nelson et al., 2010). Second a *supportive relationship* focuses on the researcher working collaboratively and equally sharing knowledge with co-researchers. Learners from rural areas who are mostly challenged by reading comprehension are motivated and encouraged to lead in the process of learning, while teachers assist and support them. Third, in the 1970s, *social change* valued emancipation and allowing equal participation in sharing knowledge and in the development of community members. Fourth, was *learning as a continuing process*, with learners and social community members becoming conscious of the construction of knowledge (Edwards-Groves & Kemmis, 2016:77). The fourth generation of PAR originated in Britain, at Tavistock Institute in 1980 directed by John Elliot and Clem Adelman. It focused on critical thinking, liberation and realisation of achievement in action research. Researchers and co-researchers would participate in a social programme (Edwards-Groves & Kemmis, 2016:80), and they emphasised development and participation in the long-term (Levin & Greenwood, 2016:169).

A fifth generation began in the 1990s and continues to this day, with attention paid to construction of critical liberation and PAR. It is a social movement, using participatory action in solving challenges in a practical way that involves the learners,

teachers and other community members in the construction of knowledge.. Prominent scholars have been Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals, Rejesh Tondon, Anisur Rahman and Marja-Lisa Swartz (Wicks et al., 2008:3). Advocating liberation of the oppressed and underprivileged it includes gender and race equality to ensure equal education for all. Minkler and Wallerstein (2011:94) emphasise transformation, whilst for Wimpenny (2010:66) the medium is community-based action research, including critical emancipation, and participation characterised by analysing the social problem concerning social and shared ownership. For reading comprehension in EFAL, learners are encouraged to take responsibility and ownership of their learning with the support of their parents.

4.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF PAR AS AN APPROACH

The following are characteristics of PAR that are both transformative and emancipatory.

4.5.1 Participation

Participation is a social practice in which all the co-researchers and researchers have knowledge. They have identified the problem and evaluate it in order to enhance reading comprehension and hence social transformation of participants (Reid, 2017:52). Co-researchers learn on a level equal to the researchers in order to transform their critical understanding of challenges (see Section 3.2). It allows them to scrutinise their knowledge and apply the findings and solutions to the process of practical construction of new knowledge (Edwards-Groves & Kemmis, 2016:82). Possible solutions should be applied to reading comprehension in order to improve reading comprehension (see Section 3.3).

Bernstein (2014:26) contends that PAR involves co-researchers in finding knowledge and using their individual intellect to reflect critically on constructing knowledge structures and challenges in the project. For example, in this study, co-researchers may implement the solution and after some time see that it is not working, reflect on it, then construct other structures of knowledge that will be successful in overcoming their challenges (see Figure 4.1). According to

MacDonald (2012:37), participation allows multiple realities of knowledge that the co-researchers share by solving their own challenges in life. This can be illustrated by learners and parents informing teachers of challenges they encounter in reading comprehension in EFAL. This shows that they are sharing knowledge rather than undermining them.

Those who experience challenges are given the opportunity to construct academic knowledge in an emancipatory way to find a solution (Aldred, 2013:261). This could involve combining different levels of personnel to work in collaboration, creating new knowledge by actively participating in different stages of the cyclical process of PAR. No mistakes are made by involving various types of co-researcher, but rather through collaboration they are learning and finding possible solutions to problems in reading comprehension in EFAL.

Through the participatory approach the researchers viewed the co-researchers as equal partners, with the same goal of overcoming oppression and social injustice for social transformation (Silverman, 2013:123). According to Abraham and Purkayastha (2012:125), the researchers are concerned with empowerment of co-researchers and for them to gain more knowledge by being involved in the research process. They become familiar with how to gain and share knowledge and reflect on it, so as to be able to recognise a problem when it arises. This characteristic taught the researcher to involve all co-researchers, such as teachers, policymakers, social community members and learners, to find possible solutions to challenges encountered, especially in Grade 7 (see Section 3.2 & 3.3 respectively) in teaching reading comprehension in EFAL.

4.5.2 Collaboration

PAR is collaborative in nature and allows learners as co-researchers to actively participate and have their voices heard (Ozer, Rittnerman & Wanis, 2010:46). It was intended that they be provided with academic development as transformation agents and given power to make decisions on their challenges in an equitable way (see Section 3.2). During their meetings they should be able to raise the issues of oppression, improve relevant skills to enhance reading comprehension and, importantly, deliberate on the socio-political issues.

Sein, Henfridsson, Purao, Rossi and Lindgren (2011:45) highlight that this characteristic is aimed at construction of new knowledge skills that will lead to problem-solving. Sein et al. (2011:42) found that working in collaboration helps to solve the problem practically and enhance scientific knowledge to be socially transformed through observing and reflecting on the cyclical process of PAR. This characteristic also reveals how knowledge is practically constructed. Collaboration of teachers, parents, learners and subject advisors leads in finding possible solutions that could enhance performance in reading comprehension, hence even teachers' skills are improved in tackling each challenge.

PAR emphasises the practical communicative relationship between researcher and co-researchers when collaborating to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. This would lead to empowerment and transformation (Mokone, 2014:189; Peppenene, 2016:152), with practical solutions provided by co-researchers and teachers assisting in developing teaching strategies for reading comprehension in EFAL, as well as in other subjects that require learners to read a written text with understanding.

4.5.3 Support

Supporting is helping one another in the process of reflection and assisting those who experience challenges by enhancing the abilities and skills of the individuals in the team. The co-researchers receive support from the peers who have a similar challenge, making sure that each is learning and sympathising with each other and the task suits them (Nelson et al., 2010:47). With the team providing mutual support the stakeholders could make sure everyone was learning in each step. If someone fell behind reflection occurred and support was given. The most important part of PAR, to build a strong relationship among co-researchers, led them to work together after the process as challenges arose. This should develop freedom and lead to radical social transformation. Challenges that teachers and learners face in reading comprehension in EFAL could be solved if they communicate with each other by sharing critical knowledge (see Section 1.5).

4.5.4 Cooperation and appeal to equal community status

Being cooperative in nature, PAR co-researchers and researchers work together with similar ideas, concerns and interests in learning (Marshall, Coleman & Reason, 2017:149). Stringer (2013:46) states that through cooperation PAR applies research *with* people rather than *on* people, so that the co-researchers' ideas could work practically and their knowledge be transformed. Recording the process of knowledge construction may help determine whether they understand what they have achieved and see if they have been transformed. Reason and McArdle (2008:5) believe that when co-researchers are involved in the cyclical process of PAR they also gain practical experience in the creation of knowledge that concerns their wellbeing and academic attainment.

To achieve holistic development, all the researchers and co-researchers are involved in the process of solving and constructing new knowledge (Blegen, Hummelvoll, & Severinsson, 2012:422). Regarded as equal in terms of power and authority in the cooperative nature of PAR, they are given an opportunity to share judgements and contribute to developing ideas. Using possible solutions from other countries they work together and employ a democratic style in order for everyone in the project to actively learn and ensure social transformation (Minkler, & Wallerstein, 2011:80). Everyone has the ability to contribute to the construction of knowledge in improving reading comprehension in EFAL.

4.5.5 Instilling system development of social community change

With emphasis on the social nature of PAR, the minority of learners who learn English as EFAL in the curriculum should be catered for by using teaching and learning strategies that suit them (Stringer, 2013:37). According to Nelson et al. (2010:42), it is more concerned with the valuable knowledge and social change to understand what is required of them. No one should be oppressed or undermined (Stringer, 2013:39) especially the voices of the co-researchers, as they have an equal opportunity to contribute to the project (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011:84). The co-researchers have to be transformed in order to improve reading comprehension by applying strategies and principles of PAR in EFAL.

4.5.6 Empowerment

Empowerment is explained as the process of researchers, community members and co-researchers working together to improve mastery of their knowledge activities (Silverman, 2013:120), having multiple and constructed realities to share with the researcher. Aasgaard et al. (2012:4) defined empowerment as the education of consciousness or learning on one's own, so co-researchers as the ones experiencing challenges in reading comprehension (see Section 3.2) have to be involved in finding possible solutions (see Section 3.3). In order for them to know their strengths and be able to enhance their abilities, such as culture and social, in reading comprehension. Empowerment is the main goal of PAR, letting the voiceless be heard and expanding opportunities for the marginalised (Nelson et al., 2010:40). It is crucial that the co-researchers be actively and practically involved in the process of finding possible solutions in reading comprehension in EFAL. They are not just there for the sake of involvement.

Sein et al. (2011:41) add that empowering collaboratively increases skills and knowledge through emphasis on working together. Stanton-Salazar (2011:1068) concur that it occurs when co-researchers are given a chance to be part of the process of overcoming the challenges they encounter, such as those discussed in Section 3.2. Sharing of knowledge by the researcher could be achieved at the best level of performance through working with co-researchers and learning various skills and components (see Section 3.4). These are related to the use of language and provision of solutions and taking decisions on reading comprehension.

Nelson et al. (2010:47) concur that empowerment occurs when co-researchers are not forced to be part of the process and his or her input is valued in gaining knowledge. It is important that inclusion is facilitated by allowing the co-researchers to share in decision-making and responsibilities, and to not use difficult language during the process. Buettgen, Richardson, Beckham, Richardson, Ward and Riemer (2012:607) state that reflecting on the cyclical process of PAR helps the co-researchers to share power equally through positive learning.

According to Balcazar et al. (2012:327), the primary purpose of empowerment is sustainable learning of marginalised learners, giving them an opportunity to voice their opinions during the collaborative negotiation of constructing new knowledge,

which will lead to their social transformation. Smits, Champagne and Brodeur (2011:220) further state that researchers must recognise and address inequalities of power and voice through co-researchers. In nature, PAR is empowering, in that co-researchers work collaboratively with the researcher and are given equal status of authority to develop skills. This would provide ideas on how challenging issues could be solved and quality of education improved, impacting on policymaking in reading comprehension in EFAL.

4.5.7 Emancipation

Emancipation is described as allowing the co-researchers to have control over the practical construction of their knowledge, the main goal of PAR being to emancipate the co-researcher to construct knowledge, be able to solve challenges and learn while solving challenges (Aasgaard et al., 2012:2). They would thus be able to make decisions on constructed knowledge (Kemmis et al., 2013:116). The main goal of emancipation is social justice, through education and development, in order to be transformed, and having equal power to govern the group in the process of constructing new knowledge. Zuber-Skerritt (2013:41) see the main purpose of emancipation as being to assist co-researchers in finding the best solution they could apply (see Section 3.3), whilst according to Barbour (2013:137), the researchers and co-researchers use opportunities in an emancipatory way to learn, improve themselves in learning, and construct new knowledge in transforming curricula. The relationship between principals, teachers, policymakers and learners is transformed and constructed in such a way that, through reflection, they better understand their challenges and how to overcome them. They could thus help themselves to find solutions to improve reading comprehension.

Edwards-Groves and Kemmis (2016:77) argue that co-researchers and researchers have knowledge that they have to share. As stated above, a culture of authority is not accepted and political constraints are removed so that everyone is equal in terms of power and status. In the researcher it was evident that reflection provides insight into what can be improved and working in collaboration with the co-researchers was valuable as they had knowledge they could add to what one knows as a researcher.

4.5.8 Transformative in nature

PAR permits the co-researchers to communicate equally with all partners in finding realities and discovering construction of new knowledge (Askins & Pain, 2011:805), thus collaboration and negotiation is viewed as transformative action and also builds a strong relationship between the groups. Gubrium and Harper (2016:33) highlight that the collaborative process empowers the co-researchers to be acquainted with the construction of knowledge, build negotiation skills, increase the democratic method, enhance involvement, share knowledge responsibilities, and value differences in a powerful way to achieve the goal of transformation. Kotter (2012:3) concurs that sharing commitment to the construction of knowledge, working in collaboration and sharing knowledge and problems all lead to the desired social transformation.

A main aim of PAR is to transform every member and transform society (Edwards-Groves & Kemmis, 2016:78), whilst Sein et al. (2011:41) assert that knowledge transformation enhances consideration of social problems and the realisation of learners' multiple skills of social learning in order to be transformed. For learners, teachers, principals and policymakers to be successfully transformed they all need to work in collaboration and share responsibilities without exercising authority. This would be shown by their transformation in new construction of knowledge and overcoming all challenges that they encounter in reading comprehension (see Section 3.2). It could be enhanced by implementing the possible solutions in solving their problems (see Section 3.3). As a teacher, PAR helped me to become acquainted with critical consciousness, social justice and emancipation in understanding the transformation of reading comprehension in EFAL. This motivated me to find various approaches that I could use towards the improvement of reading comprehension and minimise the challenges to learners.

4.5.9 Reflection

Reflection begins by introspection and corrective steps when required (Burgess & Green, 2013:424), working in collaboration with co-researchers and understanding how other people participate in the reading comprehension process. According to Peppenene (2016:156), the researchers and co-researchers have to reflect on their

process of learning and transforming through the spiral cycle of PAR. This will be shown by achieving their goal of learning the components (see Section 3.4) that will lead to improved reading comprehension in EFAL.

As a cyclical and spiral process of learning aimed at assisting the co-researchers in examining knowledge of reality then transforming it, PAR is not a straightforward or easy method of learning to follow (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015:342, Wimpenny, 2013:9). Research by Ross, Mathison and Vinson (2014:90) found that in the beginning the other co-researchers found they did not benefit from it, but eventually they saw positive results, as they could change their practices.

Removing all challenges and working on successful solutions motivates the users of PAR to employ various practical learning spaces. For example, meetings are base models and involve them in the process of constructing knowledge, while individual practical learning and reflecting knowledge transformation on what has already carried out informs the process. This is crucial as sharing of knowledge and cooperation as part of practical learning reflection builds transformed learning knowledge.

As a teacher and a researcher, using PAR is self-reflective in nature. I learnt to share knowledge with learners and other teachers and researchers about empowerment and social inequalities, and developed a network with other researchers, as well as an ability to approach new knowledge, which transformed me and my learners.

4.6 PHASES OF PAR

This section discusses the phases of PAR and how they unfold, the purpose being to assist the co-researchers to transform their educational and social realities by reconstructing their knowledge of reality (Burmeister & Eilks, 2013:65). It outlines the phases of PAR as seen by Wilkinson and Kemmis (2015:345), not to be followed exactly as it is the decision of the researcher and co-researchers as to how they wish to proceed.

4.6.1 Planning transformation

The phase of planning transformation is regarded as the initial phase that deals with choosing the co-researchers from different groups in the community and have to work together to acknowledge the realities of reading comprehension in EFAL (Cohen, 2014:62). In this study some were reluctant to be part of the project because it was the first time they had heard about it or a teacher requesting information from them. They included the parents, SGB, learners, teachers, SMT and subject education specialists (SES) who were requested to be part of the project. The main aim of the phase was to reveal various functions of the co-researchers and learners, guiding them to voice the challenges they faced with reading comprehension in EFAL. The SGB, parents, SESs and SMTs were to provide various possible solutions to the challenges and issues pertaining to the policies of the DoE.

In this study, the challenge of reading comprehension was identified by the researcher, who brought it to the attention of the co-researchers to investigate the main causes of underperforming in reading comprehension in EFAL (Farr, Stoll & Beitzl, 2018:312). The researcher helped the co-researchers identify the main causes and find possible solutions. Bellman (2012:83) writes that this phase in PAR considers their previous knowledge and finds the real cause underperforming reading comprehension with mediations or programmes and (Aasgaard et al., 2012:2) whether they can improve reading comprehension.

4.6.2 Acting and observing

The discussion drove the researcher to employ FAls to gather more information, which was confidential as per the request of one co-researcher (Farr et al., 2018:319). According to Eilks and Markic (2011:149), adding co-researchers in each phase will assist in the co-construction of knowledge as it encourages and motivates teachers to use new approaches in reading comprehension in EFAL and forces them to reflect on their teaching practices. According to Wimpenny (2010:92), PAR does not require the co-researchers to follow the phases as steps, but the main aim is to learn and develop during the cyclical process and for transformation to take place. For example, in this phase, co-researchers learn by practically observing

the activities of the process followed by reflecting on what is good or not by means of consciousness of the co-researcher and understanding that they are learning.

4.6.3 Reflections and results

In this phase, researcher and co-researcher should find out whether the possible solutions implemented in class are helpful. If not, the co-researchers should reflect and try to find other ways to improve (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015:343). According to Farr et al. (2018:319), the co-researchers and researcher analyse the knowledge gathered during the previous phase, such as challenges and possible solutions then implement them to see if they are useful. If not, re-planning is required, starting the phases afresh and making corrections when needed. Eilks and Markic (2011:150) believe that new teaching methods and material should be assessed to find some more relevant to the learners, so that they can benefit.

Friesen, Cross, Jivanjee, Gowen, Bandurraga, Matthew and Maher (2012:96) write that including parents and teachers in the study is useful as they provide information about their real situation in assisting learners. Teachers reflect during data generation and involving learners provides them with the opportunity to learn, share and voice their real challenges, including possible solutions they think might be useful (Nelson et al., 2010:40). This gives teachers and learners the chance to be observed by diverse structures pertinent to education. They were required to articulate the content and seek support where required.

The sub-topics to be discussed during the meeting were challenges that faced learners in reading comprehension in EFAL, what teachers, learners and parents could do to improve it and challenges parents faced when assisting their children in their homes. Parents were more interested in the issues of teachers, the way they taught and motivated the children. The SES emphasised the approaches and teaching strategies.

4.6.4 Implementation

The implementation phase entailed transcribing all the opinions raised and reading them to the co-researchers. These transcriptions are then studied to determine where improvements are needed (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012:290). Wimpenny (2010:95) highlights that during this phase when the knowledge is implemented successful can be evidenced by share practical knowledge, skills, competences and ability to solve their challenges. This involve discussions, reflections and results of practical and newly reviewed practices that showed they have learnt.

Part of the implementation in this study were various approaches to reading, including “drop everything and read,” “read to lead,” “communicate,” “repeat reading,” and “structure reading.” After teaching and assessing learners the appropriate and relevant approach was adopted, that is, the structured instructional one. It was chosen after all the abovementioned had been followed in Grade 7. The results analysis informed the decision as having the best results and qualities likely to improve reading comprehension in EFAL for the most learners.

4.6.5 Re-planning

Once the researcher was accustomed to working with the co-researchers they found it easier, based on their reflections, to start afresh and plan a new. In the re-planning phase, all the information that was presented in the project was checked to see if it is in line with the policies and regulations of the DoE (Nelson et al., 2010:40).

4.6.6 Evaluation

Evaluation of whether the co-constructed knowledge determined whether it would transform the learners into members of the social community who would be competitive worldwide, economically and politically, since EFAL is an international language (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012:289).

4.7 THE COMPONENTS OF PAR

The purposes of PAR are to nurture transformative community development, social justice, equality, empowerment for all, freedom, sustainable transformation and equal access and democracy (O’Gorman, Smith, Martin, Oliffe, Leggo, Korchinski & Martin, 2012:12), each one of which is discussed in this section.

4.7.1 Transformation

PAR requires members of the community to be transformed by the process. Brown and Lambert (2012:86) note that transformation as a continuous process is part of the learning phase in life that every individual should undergo. Nelson et al. (2010:40) regard it as a learning process concerned with how co-researchers are developed to shape social conditions.

4.7.2 Participation

Participation is explained as the full process of being part of what is carried out in the project from beginning to end, including powers in decision-making and ability to make sound decisions in the group (Reed, Evely, Cundill, Fazey, Glass, Laing, Newig, Parrish, Prell, Raymond, & Stringer, 2010:4). According to Fazey, Evely, Reed, Stringer, Kruijsen, White, Newsham, Jin, Cortazzi, Phillipson and Blackstock (2013:22), participation in PAR requires making sure that there are no inequalities in terms of gender, age and background that might minimise the confidence of co-researchers being actively involved in the project. For example, in this study some co-researchers were learners, therefore equal status would be applied so that they were free to provide their input. Inputs in PAR should communicate and be disputed until an agreement is reached, which leads to co-researchers being transformed to the identified issues, motivating them to participate actively in the project.

The co-researchers and researchers were required to be actively involved in the project firstly by identifying the problem and analysing it. For example, limited vocabulary and poor pronunciation were some of the leading challenges (Balcazar et al., 2012:285). According to Balcazar et al. (2012), this assists in finding relevant

solutions as it is identified by those involved in the problem. It allows more accurate knowledge of social realities, enhances the acceptance of possible solutions and fosters the empowerment of the social members of the community as they are part of the decision-making in their challenges in reading comprehension. Full participation of those involved in the challenges is required so that they learn from them and are given a chance to reflect on the processes, enabling them to answer questions related to the written comprehension text on EFAL.

4.7.3 Commitment

An example of commitment would be full participation and learning in the process of cyclical PAR (Sarkissian & Wenman, 2010:24). According to Brown and Lambert (2012:86), the co-researchers have to be prepared to learn at each step how to solve a particular problem and reflect upon it. MacDonald (2012:36) contends that they should be committed to searching for knowledge and understanding in challenges they are encountering. This will lead them to accessing effective knowledge and solutions for improvement. In this study, the learners were challenged by pronunciation and limited vocabulary in reading comprehension in EFAL. Learners, as co-researchers, were required to improve their situation in this regard and share and dispute knowledge they gained, with the aim of leading them to be social transformed community members.

4.7.4 Introspection

PAR involves reflection, emancipation, power sharing, self-transformation and support for a new system that teaches democratically (Coghlan, 2011:67). According to Langlois Goudreau and Lalonde (2014:227), it fosters free and informed choice so that everyone in the project gains knowledge and becomes transformed. Wood and Zuber-Skerrit (2013:7) believe that it requires co-researchers to learn at their own pace and be responsible for their own learning in the project. For Wicks et al. (2008:383), all co-researchers actively participate in the project, while at the same educating and solving problems of reality. As well as

being cyclical it also provides an opportunity to make corrections when it did not go well.

4.7.5 Consent

Consent involved the agreement of co-researchers in identifying challenges they encountered in their wellbeing during reading comprehension. Priorities included their needs and finding means to meet them with solutions that could assist in reading comprehension in EFAL (Jacobs, 2010:368). They actively participated in the project, encouraging democracy, empowerment and acquisition of knowledge and support from the community members. According to Blegen et al. (2012:421), the concern in PAR is that all co-researchers are offered practical learning and the challenges are prioritised, implemented and evaluated. Lastly, they reflect so as to construct reliable knowledge which contributes to creative thinking.

4.7.6 Collaboration

Working in collaboration as co-researchers in PAR, no one has power or superiority over anyone and everyone has the responsibility to contribute to overcoming the challenges and reflect on the process (Sarkissian & Wenman, 2010:22). Brydon-Miller, Aranda and Stevens (2015:560) write that PAR supports a value-free approach of knowledge construction with all co-researchers valued in such way that they are involved in all processes. Their inputs are valued and respected, as they are able to identify challenges in reading comprehension, which means they can provide valuable possible solutions in their social environment that will suit their cultural context. Collaborative work between researchers and co-researchers should lead the community to transformation and provide positive results in the project. A fundamental part of PAR in collaboration is the construction and social change of meaningful knowledge, in the setting of human relationships that do not include cross-questioning (Brydon-Miller, 2012:160). The improvement of education practices and the relationship of teacher with learners requires frank collaboration, as with members of the community

4.7.7 Anti-segregation

PAR is a social justice approach that is against inequalities in terms of race and gender in social members of the community (Houck, 2012:1475). This assists learners and teachers in the same class to help each other face challenges in reading comprehension and come up with possible solutions that could enrich reading comprehension in EFAL. McDermott (2011:83) states that social justice requires multi-conscious requirements for cultural awareness and equality, making sure that every culture is recognised in their challenges so that possible solutions can be found. Segregation is not allowed in terms of gender, colour, religion or education, while all humans are to be treated equally and empowered without segregation (Phori, 2016:170). This study required all learners to be given equal treatment to better their performance in reading comprehension, so that all would have equal employment and economic opportunities.

4.7.8 Anti-oppression

Social oppression is defined as the suppression of a specific group of people, who have less, or no, power and authority, whilst conversely, anti-oppression is concerned with how people should have equal opportunities, freedom from oppression, membership of a transformative community, and a part in the decision-making process (Strier, 2011:4). It requires all learners and parents to participate in a process of finding solutions to challenges of reading comprehension in EFAL.

Against the oppression of the poor and previously marginalised individuals, PAR places researcher and co-researchers as equal, sharing responsibilities and roles in the research process. The main aim is to empower co-researchers in political and economical issues, which includes consciousness and working collectively to create more knowledge (Healy, 2014:74). In reflective forms, action is taken to gain critical reflection in social realities, liberation and mobilisation to solve their problem in reading comprehension in EFAL. PAR aims to advance critical awareness amongst oppressed people of the construction of social justice.

4.7.9 Pro-democracy

According to Aasgaard et al. (2012:2), in participatory democracy the researcher and co-researchers actively learn in the project by actively participating in gaining and constructing knowledge through being equally part of the project. Transparency is required from every co-researcher during decision-making proceedings in the PAR cyclical process and all voices must be heard without any power relations (Phori, 2016:171).

4.7.10 Pro-empowerment

Empowerment is the process by which co-researchers and members of the community learn critical socio-political issues and skills of transformation (Stanton-Salazar, 2011:1067). According to Cattaneo and Chapman (2010:649), active participation of social members of the community in learning process with researchers and co-researchers as equal is required. Construction of knowledge and action requires the co-researchers to be developed by full participation in the construction of their knowledge in areas in which they encounter challenges, so that the solutions gathered are acknowledged and owned by them (Amaya & Yeates, 2015:9). PAR is more concerned with the transformational knowledge base, empowerment, motivation, collaboration and enhanced self-esteem of those involved in EFAL challenge. It also emphasises the inclusion of co-researchers from the beginning and reflection and construction of the project so that transformation of learning and contribution of ideas can take place. PAR acknowledges that since the challenges are experienced by the community it is easier to be solved by them.

4.7.11 Conducive conditions

One of the objectives of the study was to respond to challenges to improving reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 3.2), and the success indicators revealed that when using various approaches (see Section 3.7), it could be achieved. The conditions conducive to PAR are outlined by Cross et al., (2011:95) as being to encourage the applicable research to concerned co-researchers, giving time to the co-researchers to plan what they are going to do in each and every phase, and raise

challenges such as limited vocabulary and meaning-making of text to find the possible solutions towards it and so increase the chances of implementing PAR that affects them. Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013:69) write that an advantage of using PAR is an increased chance of co-researchers being part of decision-making towards their challenges and having a chance to be empowered. It will thus be easier for them to accept and implement.

PAR also has the advantage that many co-researchers involved in it are happy as it recognises that they are not subjects but human beings in the particular economic and social contexts who are willing to be developed, empowered, liberated and transformed, in a consciousness-nurturing project (Herr & Anderson, 2014:30). Parents in this stage will actively help their children at home, as they are empowered, and it allows co-researchers to be actively involved in decisions, build their ability to share knowledge and have a chance to learn. Learners as co-researchers are also learning in the project, making it easier for them to assist those who were not involved.

The conditions conducive to PAR can support research issues initiated by the community members as co-researchers, to research about underperforming of learners in EFAL from primary to higher education level. It prevents them from being competitive, resulting in high rate of unemployment. PAR enhances the chances of involving various kinds of co-researchers in one place, with one aim (Minkler, 2012:162).

4.8 EPISTEMOLOGY OF PAR

Since learners as co-researchers are affected by the challenges to reading comprehension in EFAL, they can say which approach and strategy they best understand. Parents can assist their children at home by giving them time to read, reading different books and buying some, also helping with homework. This will show that they are concerned to give a voice to the voiceless and offer opportunities in the co-construction of knowledge (Nkoane, 2010:99). They will see which strategy or approach is the best for their children. The SGB should make sure the relationship between parents and teachers is good so they can help where needed.

The SMT should make sure that the required teaching and learning material is available. This study seeks to give the co-researchers who are affected by the challenges of reading comprehension a chance to find possible solutions, so that the approach that is the best is identified and implemented. PAR in epistemology that each co-researcher should share multiple reality in a social community in reading comprehension in EFAL.

4.9 ONTOLOGY OF PAR

In PAR, reality is complex and not in favour of researchers who wish to exercise power relations over the co-researchers (Kincheloe, 2012:108). Tobin and Llena (2010:80) state that PAR and CET share a view that the co-researcher be given an opportunity to learn by actively participating in the study in a collaborative way, to co-construct the epistemological knowledge with an ontological stance. Involving SESs and other co-researchers in this study provided suitable knowledge about strategies and approaches, aimed to improve reading comprehension in EFAL and revealed dedication to the vision of socio-political education research and consciousness of the research design (Kincheloe, 2012:111). Teachers are the implementers of strategies and approaches, contributing the most to how learners perform (Roth & Tobin, 2010:810).

4.10 ENSURING COMMON UNDERSTANDING WITH CO-RESEARCHERS

The first meeting with the co-researchers, that is, principal, deputy principal and the HoD, learners, parents, SGB and SESs, was held to establish a common understanding of reasons behind conducting a study of this nature and communicate its objectives. The purpose was to agree to a clear picture of the proceedings, with all co-researchers allowed to comment on how the processes would unfold. They also raised issues to be discussed in the next meeting as the HoD and deputy principal were also teaching English in the school. The second meeting between learners and teachers was held to discuss the issues in and causes of poor EFAL reading comprehension, challenges the learners faced in

reading comprehension and the approaches that could be used in order for them to understand EFAL. The profile of co-researchers and their reasons were included.

4.11 CONCEPTUALISING RESEARCH DESIGN

PAR is justified as an approach as it gives a voice to the voiceless, that is, learners and teachers, and allows them to take part in decision-making to find solutions (Eruera, 2010:3). According to Lategan (2012:92), PAR allows the learners and teachers to take part in the project of planning, reflecting and co-constructing the knowledge on challenges faced in the classroom in reading comprehension. PAR is seen as the best choice of research design as it communicates the bases of emancipation and transforms the co-researchers in the challenges they experience, such as limited vocabulary and incorrect pronunciation.

PAR was in line with this study since it required learners to identify their challenges and say how they thought they could be assisted in them, for example, limited vocabulary and mispronunciation of words. According to Clark, Dyson and Millward (2018:74), more knowledge is gained and evaluated in PAR and the recurrence of phases reveal that it is a spiral cycle, with co-researchers involved in each phase to exercise power in decision-making, knowledge construction and transformation.

4.12 DESIGN STRUCTURE

Conceptualised to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, the study employed CET as theoretical framework to address the objectives under the construct of challenges, possible solutions, components of reading comprehension and threats that might hinder the approach. PAR and CET had similar formats which addressed issues of power dynamics, social justice and gender equality (see Section 2.5) (Carlson, 2014:45). Both required co-construction of knowledge from the co-researchers in the study, giving a voice to the voiceless and encouraging equal participation in collaborative teamwork.

Both transformative in their approach (Lyotard, 2011:278), the emphasis was on improving various teaching strategies and learning with a focus on social and

cultural issues. Knowledge was co-constructed in a collaborative way with all researchers on an equal level. Co-researchers learned in a practical way about the issues that concern their life experiences, for example, performing below the required standard compared to other learners from neighbouring countries who use English as EFAL (see Section 2.2) (Bernal, 2013:389).

According to Formosa (2011:320), the main goal of CET is reflection, which is the most useful step in the spiral of a PAR cycle, with co-researchers having to reflect on whether any corrective measures were needed in the process or if it was well implemented. In the reflection, learners as co-researchers are afforded an opportunity to re-learn their reading comprehension components, leading to the improvement of reading comprehension in EFAL. Levin and Greenwood (2016:168) assert that PAR motivates transformation and encourages reflection, empowers co-researchers in collaborative way to examine various ideas, and challenges focusing in order to make corrective decision to the community in refining practice. Also, practically identifying needs and challenges with possible solutions, while learning in their teaching practice as equal partners, it leads to practical development and improvement in the classroom.

4.13 CONCEPTUAL PHASE AND INCLUSION OF CO-RESEARCHERS

Teachers and SESs as co-researchers were included to provide and share their experience in teaching EFAL and conduct a SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats) analysis of learners' reading comprehension, as well as various challenges encountered in teaching. Learners were included because they were facing different challenges in EFAL reading comprehension. Teachers and learners as co-researchers had challenges in reading EFAL and could offer possible solutions. They also reflected on whether the solutions were working. If not they would try to find others until it was solved. SESs were included since they had more experience in teaching and creating documents and were specialists in the teaching methods and experience of EFAL. Parents were also included in the process as they had to assist their children at home with reading comprehension and would also know the challenges at home.

4.14 TEAM OF CO-RESEARCHERS AND CRITERIA USED

Four of the co-researchers were learners from Grade 7 classes, chosen because the researcher was teaching Grade 7 English EFAL, in which the challenges (see Section 3.2) were identified. They comprised two teachers from different grades, the HoD of both Intermediate and Senior Phase, and one deputy principal who was also teaching Grade 4 English. Two SESs were invited to provide various approaches in teaching EFAL that might assist learners in improving reading comprehension. Parents provided challenges and possible solutions.

4.15 CREDENTIALS OF CO-RESEARCHERS

This section provides a short description of co-researchers in the Vryheid District who were providing support in teaching and learning in the surrounding schools. All names used are pseudonyms to observe ethical guidelines of anonymity.

4.15.1 SES

Two SES members were invited.

4.15.1.1 *Miss Zulu*

Miss Zulu had been a qualified teacher for more than ten years and was promoted to an SES. She had seven years of work experience as SES in the same district, facing various challenges in different schools. She had tried to help teachers who came forward with various challenges in teaching reading comprehension in EFAL.

4.15.1.2 *Mr Mpanza*

Mrs Mpanza was a qualified teacher. According to her job description, she was responsible for coordination of teaching material and providing support for teachers of EFAL across the district and boosting morale by ensuring effectiveness and efficiency. The SESs were expected to contribute to the learning and teaching of EFAL through various approaches.

4.15.2 Teachers

This section gives a short description of the SMT of Ntabasuka Public Primary School.

4.15.2.1 Mr Zwane (the principal of the school)

Mr Zwane was the principal of the school, with ten years' teaching experience. His job description was to make sure all the learning and teaching support material was available at school at all times and teaching and learning occurred in the school.

4.15.2.2 Deputy Principal

Mrs Ndaba, a deputy principal with 30 years of teaching experience, was responsible for whole school evaluation to assist teachers when required, using the scores found in their integrated quality management system (IQMS). Coupled with supervisory support of the head of department, she enhanced management skills and support of the teachers in the implementation of teaching and learning. She was an EFAL teacher by profession and contributed to teaching and learning by entering reading competitions in which she awarded trophies as motivation for learners to develop a love for reading, as well as spelling bees, as most learners were struggling with morphemes and pronunciation.

4.15.3 Departmental Head

The Departmental Head, a qualified educator with a secondary teacher's diploma. had been working for the DoE for the previous 30 years, 12 years as a post-level one educator and 18 years as the Departmental Head in the Intermediate and Senior Phase in different subjects. His major subjects were EFAL, Social Sciences and Mathematics in both phases. During the time of the ANA, he struggled for better results as the learners in the school had challenges in EFAL reading comprehension. He promoted reading for pleasure and for curiosity as a possible solution to challenges in studying of the whole school, hoping that this would lead to the improvement in performance of learners in EFAL reading comprehension.

4.15.4 Educators

This section contains a short description of the educators of the Ntabasuka Public Primary School who were involved in the teaching of EFAL and assisted in this study as co-researchers.

4.15.4.1 *Ms Buthelezi*

Ms Buthelezi was a qualified teacher with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Resource Management and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education with teaching experience of seven years at primary schools teaching various subjects, including EFAL. Her learners had been struggling with reading comprehension in EFAL since she started teaching. She mentioned that the first two years had been better, but the following years were getting worse year by year and it seemed as though learners had lost interest in reading.

4.15.4.2 *Mr Nyembe*

Mr Nyembe was a qualified educator with a Bachelor's Degree in Education and experience of twelve years in Intermediate and Senior Phase. She boosted her teaching experience with sports in learners at both circuit and district level.

4.15.5 School Governing Bodies

4.15.5.1 *Mr Vilane*

Mr Vilane, the chairperson of the SGB and a community member with many children who were learners in the school, had good relations with the teachers and parents, which made it easier for them to approach him when they were facing problems that required parents' help.

4.15.5.2 Mr Ndwandwe

Mr Ndwandwe, a parent of learners in the school, worked in finance in the SGB with good relations with the whole community in which the school was situated, including the teachers. The good relations make it easier for parents and teachers to approach him when they had issues to be resolved in the school and community.

4.15.6 Parents

The representative parents of the Grade 7 learners were asked to assist learners with homework and other school work, such as reading.

4.15.6.1 Mama Nompilo

Mama Nompilo, a retired professional teacher, had a Junior Secondary Teacher's Certificate and Senior Secondary Diploma, and 43 years' teaching experience. A grandmother of two learners in Grade 7 she helped them with homework and reading at home, and liked reading herself. She wanted her grandchildren to be readers too, and they were fluent readers and speakers, with good vocabulary in class, showing that they were used to reading. They also liked reading in class.

4.15.6.2 Zamile

Zamile, as member of the community and parent of some of the learners, was concerned with the education of her children and was a volunteer. She assisted during afternoon classes for reading comprehension and mentioned different challenges encountered with learners' lack of reading comprehension. She helped learners with their homework before they went home, since other parents were not educated and could not help their children. She motivated other parents to assist their children at home by reading with or to them.

4.15.7 Learners

The following are the profiles of four Grade 7 learners who participated in the research study as co-researchers.

4.15.7.1 *Kholeka*

Kholeka, a Grade 7 learner, was chosen as a co-researcher in her class. In Grade 7 for the second time, she had failed because she did not reach the required percentage in EFAL and other subjects, and the LoTL in the school was English. She still struggled with the construction of sentences and word recognition and her vocabulary was limited, making her unable to read words with three or more syllabi.

4.15.7.2 *David*

David was chosen as co-researcher in his Grade 7 class because he was the best performer in all his subjects. He was from a school in which English was taught as a home language. During group reading, he used to be a group leader to assist the struggling learners, for example, on how to pronounce words. Although an Afrikaans first language speaker, he helped learners with the meaning of texts.

4.15.7.3 *Khanyisani*

Khanyisani was chosen as co-researcher from his Grade 7 class, because he was struggling with reading comprehension in EFAL, particularly pronunciation of words and limited vocabulary, which impeded comprehension of texts. The best achieving learners usually helped him with the work, about which he was happy as he was sometimes shy around teachers. He helped greatly in generating data about what teachers could do in order for learners to understand the written text in EFAL.

4.15.7.4 *Nokusa*

Nokusa was chosen as co-researcher because she was in Grade 7. She had better results than some of the other learners in EFAL reading comprehension. Nokusa,

as the best achiever, assisted other learners with reading comprehension during their group work, as learners learn better when they are with their peers. She also provided suggestions on what teachers should do to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. The learners motivated each other to read for pleasure and curiosity and look up words in their dictionaries that they did not understand.

4.16 SWOT ANALYSIS

It was crucial that the conditions conducive to implementing possible solutions and the identified approach were maintained through understanding the threats and risks that might hinder and threaten its successful implementation. The threats to most teachers were the ever-changing nature of policies from the DoE and their requirements, as this resulted in more paper work, studying and time wasted attending workshops to learn new requirements (Yuksel, 2012:144).

A challenging part of PAR for new researchers was that it had many words, such as action research and participatory research that made it difficult to access the required information about it. Many co-researchers were not committed to the study, for example, parents would say they were busy when the researchers called them, some co-researchers became tired, and the SGB would wonder why the process was taking so long. Others felt offended due to different cultural backgrounds and authority exercised over co-researchers in the group (Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017:187).

The threats of using PAR as an approach are limited research action, for example, its main concern being to find solutions to the challenge of improving reading comprehension (Gray, 2013:31). According to Goetsch (2015:86), there is limited consistency in information from co-researchers, it is not scientifically proven and only what they think will improve reading comprehension.

A challenge to the researchers was when parents blamed teachers for learners underperforming in EFAL. In this case, the researcher were to remain neutral by not defending the teachers. Another challenge of using PAR is the time required for the researcher to explain the purpose of the research to the co-researchers, especially to the parents as many might have been worried about why a teacher wanted

information from them. Other challenges included changes in the university rules, the Research Information Management System and obtaining ethical clearance, with changed forms and the Department taking a long time to respond.

A challenging part of employing PAR is that the component of co-researchers can be time-consuming as one must repeatedly call them to continue with the project. Some expected a tangible reward from the researcher, though it had been explained clearly that there would be no payment and the project was voluntary. In assisting their children at home some complained that as teachers were paid to teach their children they should not have to be assisting.

4.17 DATA GENERATION PROCESS

A number of elements were used in gathering data for the research.

4.17.1 Instruments

A voice recorder were used during the meeting discussion with learners and teachers. All the co-researchers agreed to take part in the meeting by signing the consent form (see Annexure 1). The voice recorder helped capture information without relying on memory. Minutes were also taken in case the voice recorder was lost before data analysis.

4.17.2 Minutes of discussions

Minutes and voice recordings were used to capture the meeting for record purposes. Learners and teachers were free to take part in decision-making on the solutions to their challenges in reading comprehension, since they were the ones experiencing it. Learners also had equal treatment while discussing their challenges and proposed solutions with subject advisor, teachers and parents.

4.17.3 Technique to initiate discussions

Subtopics drawn from the research objectives to make sure that the process went ahead included challenges experienced in reading comprehension, possible solutions to improving reading comprehension, and what teachers could do. Teachers and subject advisor shared their knowledge, skills and experiences of the research problem, providing teachers who are still in the field with dictionaries to assist learners with vocabulary and pronunciation.

4.18 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary approach used on generated data in the sphere of spoken and written texts to reveal dominance, power and resistance of inequality evident in a social, political and historical context, to make clear the social practices to marginalised people (Sheyholislami, 2015:1; Huckin, Andrus & Clary-lemon, 2012:107). It analyses the blurred and transparent dominance of power and discrimination control in language and is ideal for the study of human action. Cots (2013:48) emphasises that CDA is a form of social practice pervasive in society, and that uses it and is committed to revealing construction of language use, power and ideas. For Luke (2018:169) it reveals other forms of abuse and oppression by those in power.

CDA is social practice and its objective is to discover relationships between textual structures, discursive practice, cultural structures, ideological relations of power and struggles over power and interaction between social communities (Sarfo & Krampa, 2012:46). According to Abdel-Moety (2014:5), it explores relationships between the community and increases transparency, as well as securing power, and provides resources to the disadvantaged group through transformation and domination. It focuses on various dimensions of power in seeking to reveal how texts are formed.

Data as texts are analysed by using three levels of CDA, namely social conditions of production and interpretation, which deal with the origin of texts in social factors (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013:42); the production process and interpretation concerned with the way texts are produced and their interpretation; and origins of texts and their interpretation. CDA explains realities of inequalities,

evaluating and analysing the different values in the society. It views social realities as conceptually mediated and focuses on the relation between the semiotic as a social element. According to Mullins (2013:68), it defines the formation of power and domination, co-construction of texts and the operation of individuals. At the same time, it reveals the liberation of actions of co-researchers, leading to transparency.

In this study, the co-researchers were given the choice to be in the study and if they wished to withdraw they were free to do so, as required in CDA (Braine, 2013:552). This encourages learners and teachers to be on the same level in the classroom, where the learners are allowed to question whatever teachers say. Byram (2010:26) also noted that this leads to everyone being empowered, with learners viewed as equal partners in the construction of knowledge, as in CET (see Section 2.4.2). In this view, learners participate and have equal power and responsibility and have a say in selecting the texts, books and topics used in the classroom.

Clarifying, translating and analysing the relationship occurs in CDA between educational issues and linguistic use in the society (Han, 2015:415). According to Van Dijk (2015:467), it may be found in argumentation analysis, social semiotics, sociolinguistic and conversation studies. Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran (2016:91) write that CDA investigates the figurative meaning of texts and how values and ideologies are obtainable in them. The clear meaning of difficult text was pronounced by the co-researchers during the meeting of PAR.

In this study there was no inequality as every co-researcher was equal and allowed to speak, with no abuse of power. Learners were allowed to talk to teachers and vice versa, notably about their challenges in understanding the written text, limited vocabulary, mispronunciation of words and recognition of words (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2). According to Brabham (2012:396), people or students who want to analyse their studies on contextual knowledge should use CDA. For example, in this study, it was used to analyse knowledge of the approach that could be used to improve reading comprehension and find solutions from the challenges identified in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3).

CDA, CET and PAR are all against the abuse of power and dominance of marginalised learners (Chapter 3, Section 2.2), requiring democratic fairness so that everyone will become transformed members of the community (Van Dijk,

2015(c):252). The learners will have equal education and be able to meet economical and political requirements in the near future. Srisawasdi and Kroothkeaw (2014:51) note that CDA is used to find strategies, approaches and possible solutions that could assist teachers to educate and encourage learners to involve themselves in a collaborative way, through application and implementation. These approaches and theories work best together and are also against social inequalities of gender, sex, race and culture. CDA requires emancipation in people so that every member in the community is transformed (Van Dijk, 2015(b):65). It is used for categorising the actions of power and identity of others constructed unequally, and fighting against the oppression of others (Gray & Webb, 2012:115). It was best suited in the study as it aims to equalise the status of humans, irrespective of colour, gender, religion, culture, race and ethnicity.

Yan (2010:75) states that CDA is a non-discriminatory tool for those people who are under pressure and against dominance. According to Tenorio (2011:187), it assists the co-researchers to emancipate themselves from domination and power abuse so as to be able actively to participate in the construction of knowledge (see Section 2.5.1). Breeze (2011:494) states that it is dedicated to revealing injustices, for example, dominance, mixture of discursive practices, bias and inadequate access to power of language and gender (between men and women), and rights. Construction of knowledge will assist in overcoming challenges, using possible solutions by reflecting on the components (see Section 3.4) of reading comprehension in EFAL that could improve the academic performance so that they can have equal opportunity economically and politically.

4.19 THEORETICAL ORIGIN OF CDA

The historical development of CDA can be traced back to the 1970s, to the Frankfurt School at the University of East Anglia (Sheyholislami, 2015:1), based on Halliday's systemic linguistics. Scholars started using the word 'critical linguistic' with neo-Marxist theories of capitalist domination explaining the crucial discourse and society. It was constructed with a purpose to reveal ideology established as structures of linguistic processes, later used in the UK during the 1990s by many scholars, including van Dijk, Wodak, Fairclough and van Leeuwen. During a

meeting in Amsterdam the forms of postmodernity in social sciences and humankind were discussed (Huckin et al., 2012:106; Luke, 2018:170; Rogers & Schaenen, 2014:125). According to Heberle and Veloso (2013:10:12), the word CDA originated in Britain and spread to Europe, Asia and Brazil, adopting a true multidisciplinary approach to analysing text, social cognition (attitude, knowledge and beliefs), communication, human culture, power, injustices, oppression and inequalities.

The various roots of CDA are in rhetoric, with a way of expressing words and language when speaking and writing with or about co-researchers. It reveals the abuse of power that makes people feel inferior or belittled and includes philosophy, linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatism, linguistic and sociolinguistics, all closely related to the humanities of social sciences and analysis of text (Wodak & Meyer, 2008:1; Wodak, 2002:6). CDA is more concerned with the experience of co-researchers and researchers and assessment about the challenges they experience to ensure they reach consensus on possible solutions (Flowerdew, 2014:202). For example, in this study the researcher and co-researchers reflected on their challenges and possible solutions that might improve reading comprehension in EFAL by using various approaches and strategies. CDA is against sexism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination of religion in the analysis of written and spoken text, including norms and values of power relations in society.

CDA employs a linguistic approach of enquiry into how spoken and written texts are concerned with power relations, inequalities, domination manipulation, mistreatment and injustice. It uses a ground-level approach to analysing data gathered from co-researchers about their feelings when they hear that learners are not doing well in their studies (Charteris-Black, 2011:746; Joye, 2010:596). For Duncan and Klos (2014:247), it permits the actual texts to be argued from wider viewpoints to co-construct the knowledge that the co-researchers are acquiring. The linguistic part of CDA was presented by Roger Fowler and his associates in the 1970s, and was concerned with lexicon and syntax (Van Dijk, 2015:467). It was best suited for this study as it is about the challenges, use and understanding of language (see Section 3.4). The study also researches human (learner) culture, language, class and gender and power abuse in the practices of challenges encountered (Van Dijk, 2015:18).

Rogers and Schaenen (2014:122) state that language as a social practice is not always equal, but rather, from a Marxist perspective, use prohibitively and unfairly for domination. According to Huckin et al. (2012:108), in analysing text CDA looks at social problems, social activities and power relations. Han (2015:416) asserts that it addresses social problems, All learners must have equal opportunity in education and learn how to read proficiently to attain success in education and ultimately in life. CDA became a network of scholars (Van Dijk, Fairclough, Kress & Wodak), seen by Wodak and Meyer (2001:6) as having important principles, namely, language as a social miracle; social grouping with values and meanings that direct language in a methodical approach; readers active with texts; similarities in language of science; and institutions and texts applicable in statements.

Theoretically, CDA is considered a social reality and dialectical in the constructions of discourse, social practices and social procedures, which present challenges of inequality, poverty and disadvantage. For example, as learners of EFAL were not catered for because the language was not their mother tongue, more assistance was required (see Section 3.2.8) (Fairclough, 2012:453).

In the 1990s the term CDA evolved from being 'Critical Linguistics,' (Wodak, 2002:13), with principles of challenges in societies about resolving inequalities, and focus on racism, social transformation and identity. CDA was best suited for this study as it focuses on analysing the challenges and possible solutions to improving reading comprehension in EFAL, analysing written and spoken texts in practice, and active participation of co-researchers to overcome the problems that challenge them in society (Brabham, 2012:397). According to Prins and Toso (2012:437), it permits scrutiny of the discretion of meanings, values and assumptions to connect it to broader discourse and ideologies. Ideology reflects orders that reveal daily actions and practices at schools of parents and learners.

Brabham (2012:396) regards the main aim of CDA as being to reveal to those in power how they influence power to those who have less freedom. Mason (2012:130) sees it as being to analyse blurred dominance, power and discrimination in linguistics, while for Rahimi and Riasati (2014:78) it is revealing and examining the blurred relationship of discursive practices, unfavourable, socially unequal texts and events in social construction and cultures to protect power and domination of

disadvantaged people. In this study, the researchers were required to solve challenges such as the mispronunciation of words, word recognition and limited vocabulary.

This approach was best suited to this study as it is concerned with the experiences and opinions of the co-researchers and supports their struggle against inequality (Van Dijk, 2016:97). CDA promotes the sharing of socio-economic, cultural and historical knowledge between minority and dominant groups and expressing how they deal with the challenges in teaching and learning in EFAL reading comprehension. Wodak (2001:65) adds that CDA aims to allow people to make their own variety of choices on how they wish to be transformed in constructed and communicated knowledge, by removing barriers such as power, domination, inequality and injustices applied to them. This study aims to make sure that in schools and classrooms no one is exercising power over another teacher or learner. They are equal partners in the construction of knowledge.

The crucial social structures examined by CDA in written and spoken texts are actor description, the uses of language, not treating all people equal in the community, and respecting all members (Rahimi & Riasati, 2014:79). According to Tshelane (2013:402), social structures that CDA is against are authority of people over others, different and high powers in the community, categorisation or unequal treatment in terms race, gender and ethnicity, and euphemistic use of words that are actually aggressive to members of the community.

This tool is concerned with analysing the co-researchers' explanations of structure, production and comprehension levels, such as coherence of text and other figurative meanings of how it was at the first level (Flowerdew, 2014:201). This could also be seen by examining the non-verbal messages to analyse the situation. Srisawasdi and Kroothkeaw (2014:52) concur that CDA is a tool that allows all parties to be treated equally, with power of accepted social practices maintained for all members of the social community. This provided them with equal opportunity to perform optimally in academic work, allowing them to be competitive both economically and politically.

According to Van Dijk (2015:467), CDA is a multidisciplinary approach concerned with social problems and political matters that affect the co-researchers in the social

community and political settings. In this research, since it employed PAR as the methodology, in conjunction with CDA as the tool of analysis, no one had power over another, and all co-researchers were equal in decision-making for the best approach and strategy. Transparency of power relationships in social and cultural construction helps close the gap in inequalities, power injustice, bias and discrimination (Han, 2015:417). The systematic functional linguistic approach explains levels of textual analysis, discursive practice analysis and social structure as those of CDA (Rogers & Schaenen, 2014:122).

4.20 LEVELS OF CDA

CDA has textual, discursive and social levels, according to which data is analysed (Rogers & Wetzel, 2013:15). They are discussed in more detail in this section.

4.20.1 Textual analysis focused on semantics

Textual analysis in this study analyses how the co-researchers used words, vocabulary, cohesion, grammar, text construction and figurative language understood by the researcher (Mason, 2012:128). For example, parents, the SGB and subject advisor used different words and attached to them different meanings. According to Sheyholislami (2015:8), parents stress that teachers should apply teaching strategies in order to improve reading comprehension. For example, giving awards to the best performer could motivate learners to improve their academic performance.

For Phillips and Lawrence (2012:226), some co-researchers use louder voices and some softer ones in saying the same thing. This can disturb the textuality of the researcher if there was no clear meaning. Parents and SGB at a certain time raise their voices on how their children should be taught and how they should be forced to learn. Parents wish that what applied to them be applied to their children, as it made some successful in their education. However, many traditional methods were outlawed by the SASA of 1994 (Act No. 84 of 1994). For instance, corporal punishment was no longer allowed from 1994.

This practical analysis research is about improving reading comprehension in EFAL, the level of analysis, the linguistic features for example syntax, figurative meaning and vocabulary used by the co-researchers to identify the equality, gender and power relations between the researcher and co-researchers (Kaura, Arumugam & Yunus, 2013:66). It reveals how power is abused among people and how they are given a chance to voice their views on the construction of knowledge as equal partners. Textual analysis involves power and practices, as example cited above of corporal punishment (Fairclough, 2013:22). This study does not encourage anyone to exercise power over another but rather encourages learners to participate in the co-construction of their learning.

4.20.2 Discursive practice analysis on interpretation of text

The analysis of data in discursive analysis mainly studies body language, tone of voice and its meaning, for example, utterances made by the researcher and co-researcher (McGregor, 2003:4). Laws, models and conceptual models of acceptable behaviour in specific roles or relationship are used to interpret what has been spoken. The co-researchers should ask for clear meaning of it or use previous experience, so other time discursive meaning assists in understanding the text (Phillips & Lawrence, 2012:225). For example, if the researcher is not from the community there will be some laws, cultures or norms that he or she would not understand, in which case, he or she should ask for clarity. Dar, Rahimi and Shams (2010:459) note that discursive practices deal with the process of text formulation; how it is understood and spread.

The most critical part of discursive analysis is analysing the way that power relations are exercised (Kaura et al., 2013:67). The authors add that power relations imply that the learners always feel they have to listen to teachers without them having a chance to voice how they combat their challenges in reading comprehension. According to Wodak (2002:8), discursive analysis reveals how parents as co-researchers feel about the teachers exercising unequal power towards learners through the way they express content.

To analyse discursive analysis the researcher used three practices, namely, force, or how the co-researchers (parents, learners, SGB); how they used their words in

discussions, with coherences ion the way they interpreted what they were saying should be done in class in order to improve reading comprehension in EFAL; and intertextuality, or the way the added other subjects as the LoTL as English. Gee (2011:58) explains intertextuality as borrowing words from other written or spoken text by the co-researcher, often to clarify what they mean or make everyone around them understand what they are saying.

4.20.3 Social structure analysis of historical and social context

Social structure analysis could change the moral structure of the society (Mason, 2012:131) by the way people react in different situations. For example, if the teacher of researched school acts in a different way it could spread to neighbouring schools and the society around them, as with the parents who expect teachers to do all the work at schools (McGregor, 2003:4). According to Wodak and Wright (2006:204), comprehensive CDA, which analyses indirect and unforeseen linguistic utterances, should systematically detect the hidden meaning of conversational cues in written and spoken text. Dar et al. (2010:460) believe that the social practice investigates what is a trend at what time on various levels of society and culture, such as power and ideology.

Social structure informs the expression and manipulation of power and control and how it is exercised on those in lower positions (Hall, 2013:16), for example, by teachers on parents and learners and how they should assist each other in reading comprehension so as to lead to the whole community on how parents should support their children and learners. This could lead to all the schools in the area applying the same strategy, as they would tell the other neighbouring ones which strategy helped them.

Social practice analysis is concerned with what is happening in the broader society (Kaura et al., 2013:68). As EFAL is the LoTL it affects all other subjects, and thus the learner's entire academic performance. People in higher positions usually complain about the issues of learners who fail to construct a sentence or comprehend written texts, and who claim that it destroys the economy of the country, are exercising power over the learners. They are not encouraging good performance in reading comprehension but instead promoting the value of EFAL.

In this study the way teachers exercise their powers in an abusive way over learners with the aim of improve the performance of reading comprehension could result in learners being afraid of the teachers and consequently hating EFAL (Fairclough, 2011:186). Teachers should love their job and care for learners as they need to progress successfully in their education. Teachers should be democratic in their leadership style by allowing learners to voice their views rather than be the only ones leading the class. They are required to allow learners to show their potential in academic achievements.

Tenorio (2011:191) concurs that some of the teachers do abuse power and perpetuate inequality towards learners, from a discourse-historical approach, by using utterances and expressions that will make learners afraid to ask questions if there is something they do not understand, or even to contribute to the construction of knowledge. This study required learners to question whatever information was given to them and voice their opinions, as this is how they learn.

Schools are cultural places in which most teachers are of the same gender (male) and more conversations are male-dominated, which limits female learners from participating (Mullins, 2013:66). This leads to female learners knowing that they have fewer opportunities to exercise power and have a voice, generating a male-dominated culture in which male learners exercise power over female learners by dominating the conversation. Teachers should rather allow all learners to actively participate in the classroom situation, as they should all have equal power and opportunities in the construction of knowledge in the classroom as well as in the community. Heberle and Veloso (2013:10) concur that the minority gender might feel that they add no value and are simply added to a group for no reason. Teachers in classrooms should make sure that they delegate responsibility in class equally, irrespective of gender, so that every female learner learns that they have a voice, even on a public platform.

4.21 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission for the study was sought from the DoE and the Research Information Management System (see Annexures 2 and 3 respectively). In light of its main purpose, the importance of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy was made clear

to the co-researchers. Regarding the voice recorder used during the discussion meeting, assurance of safety and confidentiality was given to the co-researchers that it would be kept in a safe and locked place. Their names and that of the school would not and shall not be used, so as to maintain anonymity.

The privacy of the co-researchers and school in which the data was generated remain confidential and private (Cohen, Morrison & Manion, 2017:40). The right of the co-researchers not to participate in the research and that it was voluntary was made clear to all the co-researchers. If at any time they wished to withdraw they were free to do so, without recrimination. Moatlhaping (2007:56) highlights that the extraordinary nature of generated data should be given to the study, exactly as it is with no addition or subtraction of data.

4.22 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter PAR was extensively explained and discussed as a methodological approach, including a full description, its origins and how it works. Characteristics and components were clearly explained. The phases of PAR, which are cyclical, and how it assists the co-researchers to gain constructive knowledge, as it is reflective in nature, were discussed. The involvement of the co-researchers, credentials and profiles, and the reasons they were included in the study were explained. The co-researchers were shown how PAR works in order to eliminate social injustice and imbalance in the social community.

This chapter revealed how PAR as the methodological approach works in conjunction with CET as the theoretical framework of the study, by illustrating their similarities about the co-researchers' co-construction of new knowledge in improving reading comprehension in EFAL. CDA revealed how data was generated during the PAR meetings and the tools that were used to save data were fully explained in this study. The origins of CDA were also explained. It discussed the three CDA levels, which are discursive, textual and social analysis. These levels were explained, including how they analyse data in a real-life situation, for example, during the PAR discussions.

The next chapter deals with the presentation of data analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings, SWOT analysis, components of the approach and conducive conditions, as well as challenges to overcome.

CHAPTER 5:

PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having detailed the processes of analysing and interpreting the data in Chapter 5, this chapter presents information collected during the meetings of the co-researchers. Van Dijk's model was employed to interpret and analyse the linguistic data on three levels of CDA, namely, the *discursive* level, on which practices were applied that are not acceptable; the *social* level, on which the stereotypical practices, such as power relations, human dominance and inequalities that the community usually accept, were revealed; and the *textual* level, on which was the way the co-researchers communicated with one another with the aim of directing textual content. Overall, it uses the literature reviewed to confirm or refute data gathered during the PAR meetings with the co-researchers, prior to making recommendations on the challenges that have arisen during the research process.

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS

In seeking to design an approach for improving reading comprehension in EFAL, the study is based on the objective that the co-researchers should work together to achieve optimal performance and improvement. Understanding of CET as the theoretical framework of the study was underpinned by CDA as an approach to analysing the data generated during the PAR discussions.

5.3 JUSTIFYING THE NEED FOR IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN EFAL

This chapter discusses the challenges in improving reading comprehension in EFAL and the need for an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. The following are challenges for the study: meaning-making or understanding text, using English as a communication tool, language competency, lexical pedagogy, a need

for the to creation of conditions conducive for English as First Additional Language, limited or insufficient dictionaries, repeated reading framework, pronunciation of words, teaching or developing reading strategies, word recognition, reading and building meaning and phonological awareness. The co-researchers believed that possible solutions regarding these challenges can be formulated and an approach that would improve reading comprehension in EFAL could be identified and implemented successfully.

5.3.1 Meaning-making or understanding text

Fluency in reading is required to develop similar and different sets of skills, such as meaning-making in reading comprehension in EFAL (Land, 2015:163). Proficiency in decoding and phonic skills lead to efficient reading comprehension (see Section 3.2.1). CET requires learners to participate in their own learning in and out of school so that they may be socially transformed members of the community, able to compete worldwide with their counterparts economically and politically (see Section 2.2.1).

By the time learners in South Africa reach the level of university, few have attained organised bilingualism that would allow them to comprehend complex meaning when they read. This is required for learning independently without supervision or assistance from teachers, as at primary and secondary school levels (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017:134) (see Section 3.2.1). CET, as the theory informing this study, requires that learners participate in generating their own learning in order to identify the pitfalls and challenges so that possible solutions can be identified at an early stage. The schema theory, when applied during teaching, allows learners as readers to apply their background knowledge to knowledge in the text, making it easier for learners to comprehend. It states that background knowledge in language comprehension provides guidelines for the reader (Ovando & Combs, 2018:39). According to Gass (2013:373), when learners do not have background knowledge the teachers should provide it.

English is generally the LoTL in South Africa, although for the majority of learners and teachers it is their second or third language. English proficiency is limited so literacy improvement is required, acknowledging consequences of unequal learning

opportunity, such as in marginalised learners of English at tertiary level. CET is against the unequal dynamics of power when it comes to the transformation and learning. This is also stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Section 29 (1–2), according to which all learners should receive equal education, irrespective of colour, gender or race (see Section 2.3 of this study).

Fluency in reading and oral reading fluency are regarded as the skills that most help learners to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, helping improve their performance in other subjects and so compete economically and politically with their peers in other countries. Fluency in reading enables learners to identify words without problem, while oral reading fluency helps them to read accurately and with understanding (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016:5). Being able to observe punctuation marks and have phonological and phonemic awareness enables learners to comprehend written text (see Section 3.4.5). According to Barlett, Dowd and Jonason (2015:309), sound knowledge of vocabulary and syntactic and morphological forms are other skills that assist learners in improving their reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 3.3.9).

A comment by one of the co-researchers in the PAR discussion supports the development of an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL:

Mama Nompilo (parent):

Izingane zethu ziyasithanda isiNgesi into phela ulwimi lwabelungu lolu okunye engingakusho ukuthi zehlulwa yiso kodwa ke bothisha bazo sicela nize zisifunde nathi sizozama okungangamandla ethu. Lokhu sibona ngokuthi bayasikhuluma uma befika emakhaya belokhu belingisile into noma amagama ekade ifundwa ngalelolangi. Nani bothisha sicela nibe nesineke nezingane ukuzifundisa nizazi phela ukuthi azibambi ngokufanayo nibalinde baze babambe bonke.”

[... believe that their children like English, it's only that it is not their language. This is shown by the way they practise what they have learnt at home. Teachers, please assist our children to learn English and be careful about those slow learners; wait for them to catch up before you move on to the next lesson. We are also going to do whatever we can do to assist and support them.]

The parents requested support from teachers for language competency in English and promised to assist their children when able. The above quote is a textual expression of how the parent felt about English as a language, and its importance for all learners to keep pace with learning. Society generally views it as a symbol of being educated if one demonstrates a good command of it, a social view held regarding the superiority of this language. It is significant that teachers move on to following lessons, while some learners still had not acquired a particular skill. This would result in some learners not comprehending the language as desired.

Zamile (parent) responded to Nompilo's words as follows:

Lento iqala ekhaya. Wena njengothisha ngezinye izikhathi uyayifundela ingane yakho izindaba ezibhalwe ngesingisi akufani nezingane ezihlala nogogo kunzima kugogo akasazi isingisi kunzima kugogo ngisho ukufundela ingane iphephandaba lesingisi ngoba akazi lutho. Okunye nina nike nizixoxise izingane zenu ngesingisi.

[This thing starts at home; you as a teacher, you read the English books for your child, unlike the children who live with grandparents who are uneducated, where it's difficult for her even to read a newspaper that is written in English. The other thing, sometimes you speak in English with your child; by doing so, the child gets familiar with it.]

a) Textual discourse analysis

Parents do understand that their children do not have reading comprehension in EFAL, so they request teachers be patient with them until they are able to understand texts in EFAL (Mogashoa, 2014:108).

b) Social discourse analysis

The parents are requesting teachers as they are knowledgeable about assisting their children in meaning-making or understanding English (Kiselica & Kiselica, 2014:260). In most cases, rural parents are illiterate, or not sufficiently knowledgeable, to offer such help (Arogon, Brantmeier, 2009:9).

c) Discursive discourse analysis

Parents are asking teachers to play their role as teachers to assist their children in meaning-making of reading comprehension in EFAL (Ndhlovu, 2014:32).

Reflection

The discussion above reveals that the parents wish the best for their children in receiving quality education by requesting teachers to play their role as knowledgeable professionals. An extra effort is called for in terms of parents' involvement in, and teachers' commitment to, education of learners.

5.3.2 English as a communication tool

Comprehending what one reads is crucial in language and has a positive effect on educational performance and economic or political success. It is beneficial to the individual and society at large, as a text that is read enables learners to use English as a communication tool. Babayigit (2014:3) notes that the forms that enhance reading comprehension in EFAL are decoding written text, accurate word recognition and linguistic understanding, which outline the medium of the meaning of the text, background knowledge, motivation and text characteristics, such as genre (see Section 3.2.1). Silva and Cain (2015:4) found that the ability to decode words helps learners find the meaning and combine it with background knowledge to fully comprehend the written text. In EFAL. This results in the ability to use English as a communication tool in real-life situations.

CET theory and PAR require teachers to work together with learners in constructing new knowledge and finding solutions to their challenges (see Sections 2.2 and 4.7.6). This allows learners to improve their position of being voiceless and to be empowered on their own levels, knowing their faults and working to rectify them (Formosa, 2011:74). According to Leu, Zawikiski, Castek, Banerjee, Housand, Liu and Oneil (2014:3), vocabulary and morphological syntactic skills are mediums for improving reading comprehension, which in turn works as a communication tool in economic and political areas. According to Silva and Cain (2015:7), grammatical

knowledge and vocabulary involve good comprehension of the text in EFAL, thus learners are able to communicate without challenges.

Parental involvement is also vital in CET, as they should be part of their children's learning and motivate them (see Section 2.2). It is also needed in order to improve learners' reading comprehension in EFAL as a communication tool in the future. This is crucial, as they would be able to compete with their peers in other countries, economically and politically, as well as in their academic careers. According to Harrell (2011:16), parents being involved at their children's schools delivers positive achievement to the learners. For example, when children are given homework the parents can assist and support them, and make sure the work is completed properly. It is important that the parents' involvement with and engagement in their children's work can improve their dedication to schoolwork. They could do their homework thoroughly at home and gain more understanding during their free time with their parents. This is argued in Section 32 of the No Child Left Behind Act (9101 of 2001).

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa section 6, parents must make sure that their children are taught in an approved language of their choice, in this case EFAL. They should be taught without any discrimination and it is important that teachers be aware of the culture and background of their learners. As such, parents' involvement in their children's education is a practice required by the SASSA (Act No. 84 of 1996). Parents complain that their children are not catered for as the school is in a rural area.

Ntombi (parent) said the following:

Uma nje bo thisha ningafundisa izingane zethu ngothando zingafunda isingisi ngoba phela thina uma nithi asizilekelele asazi lutho asisazi isingisi ngokwethu asifundanga lemfundo yamanje futhi ningakhulumi lesisingisi esikhulu sasemanyuvesi izingane engeke zisiqonde sebenzisani amagama alula noma ke niwashitshe abe lula ukuze bezowezwa nisebenzise amagama amqondofana kuze bagcine bazwile lento ofuna ukuyisho kubona. Okunye okufanele nikukhumbule phela manifundisa lezingane zethu akuzona ezalemadolobheni ezibuye zibuke namatelevision ezethu azazi lutho zithembele kini.

[If teachers can teach our children with love and support them they can understand English. We cannot assist them because we also do not understand

English and the curriculum is not like the old days. Do not use difficult words that are used at universities so that learners cannot understand you; use easy words and synonyms so that our children will be able to understand what you are teaching them. The other thing that you should remember is that our children are not like urban children, who can also learn or listen to English on television. Our children trust only you about using English as a communication tool.]

It is evident that the parents have a passion for their children mastering the language, despite their lack of advanced education. Furthermore, due to the geographical setting, rural teachers are the only ones trusted for knowledge, unlike their counterparts in urban areas.

Zoleka (SGB member) replied to Ntombi's views as follows:

Ukusebenzisa amagama alula ngempela ikhona okuyonisiza ukuthi izingane zikwazi ukukhuluma ngesingisi futhi kwenze kube lula ukusebenza kwenu njengoba nikhala ngokuthi kulukhuni.

[If you use easy words, they can learn and start communicating, using English like the urban learners. That will make the work easy for you as many teachers complain about our children not comprehending English and that it is difficult for them to teach our children.]

a) Textual discourse analysis

Parents ask teachers to use easy words so their children can comprehend the written text when reading (Draxler, Schneegass, Lippner & Schmidt, 2019:16).

b) Social discourse analysis

Community request the school to use whatever they can do, for example, implementing reading policies and using EFAL as a communication tool to communicate around the school premises, so that they can be more familiar with and fluent in it (Mogashoa, 2014:108).

c) Discursive discourse analysis

Parents expect the authority of teachers to support their children as they are knowledgeable about teaching and using synonyms or simpler words (Ndhlovu, 2014:32).

Reflection

The co-researchers in the above extracts showed that they liked what was being done for their children, suggesting that the help in implementing policies that could improve using English as a communication tool on the school premises. This illustrates that they wish their children are able to compete with their counterparts abroad. Since the parents with challenge in helping children are from rural areas they should be provided with teachers' assistants or after-school care teachers to assist learners with homework and reading that has to be done at home.

d) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

Teachers should not complain about stress in teaching as this will influence the whole community (Carlson, 2014:45). It is their profession and calling, and they are expected to work as part of their paid profession. In this case they and the learners were trying to find possible ways to improve EFAL as a tool of communication through reading comprehension. Kaur (2012:87) points out that being a teacher in a diverse community requires emerging socio-political consciousness and skills, with a resolution to generate transformed learners (see Section 2.5.5). This calls attention to teachers that the emphasis should be on competency, good results and being reactive to educational issues of equity and social justice. It is also suggested that the principals of schools should propagate critical strategies in an attempt to motivate parents to see the passion of teachers to improve the performance of teaching and learning. They should not be seen as the only ones responsible for the education of their children, and parents have a responsibility to provide support their children in using English as a communication tool.

5.3.3 Language competency

English as a global language is used for economic and political reasons, as well as for education to advance global language competency. The international world is dominated by English, and regardless of how well a particular country is developed in local cultures or languages, it is still required. Many countries add English as their first or second language in order for their citizens to be proficient and communicate globally. The South African Language Policy states that language is a tool of communication that may be used by learners as members of the social community (Bray, Adamson & Mason, 2014:420), whilst Chapter 11, Section 6(1) of the SASSA (84 of 1996) states that learners should be educated in the language so that they can use it as a communication tool in economic and political situations worldwide (see Sections 3.2.2 and 3.3.2).

According to Peng (2011:320), CET teachers in diverse cultural backgrounds build their relationships on working together as social community members to find possible solutions. Green and Gooden (2014:931) highlight that, in CET, diverse learners, teachers and parents have to work together in order to construct solutions and new knowledge. This is significant because it will improve reading comprehension in EFAL for learners in order to be competent users of the language (see Section 2.2). Lower performance in comprehending texts is a result of their limited oral skills and vocabulary (Cenoz, 2013:75) (see Section 3.2.3). According to De Jong, Harper and Coady (2013:92), some may read fluently but have lower performance in comprehension, as evidenced by their inability to relay or summarise the text (see Section 3.4.5).

Kholeka (Learner) commented:

Siyafunda khona eskoleni isingisi inkinga ikuthi sivele singasizwa nje nokuthi kuthini bese kubalukhuni ukuqhubeka wenze lowo msebenzi osuke uwu-nikeziwe nokuzamile kuvele kucace ukuthi awuzwanga ukuthi yini obekumele uyenze.

[Teachers do teach us. The problem is we do not understand the whole textual meaning or the related work that we are supposed to do. That is what causes us not to continue with the work. Or if we do it we get it wrong, as we are not competent in English.]

Nompilo (parent) concurred:

Njengoba besengicelile nasekuqaleni bothisha sicela nibhekelele nalababanye ababamba kancane bayazama inkinga bayehluleka ngoba phela nathi asifundile okunye siyazama kube yikhona ukuthi siyehluleka ngakho ke nina qinisani nenze sure ukuthi nihamba nababonke.

[As I already mentioned, you must please bear with us as you know our situation. Please assist, we are also going to try here and there to support them.]

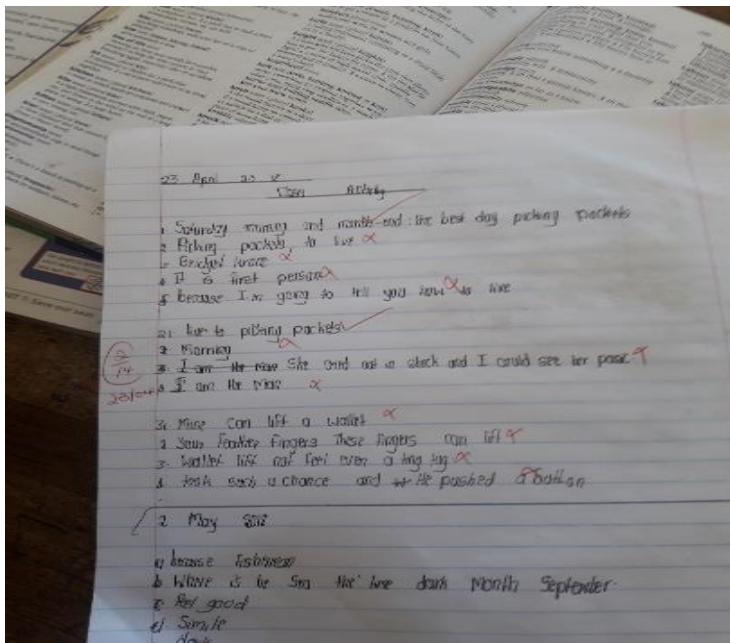


Figure 0.1: Language poor competency: showing the low level competency of learners in Grade 7

a) Textual discourse analysis

Learners agree that they do learn, but sometimes they do not understand the whole text (Harper & Newman, 2016:23).

b) Discursive discourse analysis

Parents are asking teachers to implement curriculum differentiation to all learners according to their levels in order for them to improve their language competency in reading comprehension in EFAL. This includes their questioning style using Broms Taxonomy in class activities so they can be familiar with them when writing (Patton, 2014:732). As shown in the above image, the learners did not understand the

questions clearly, so assistance should be given to those trying to understand the questions before they attempt to answer them.

c) Social discourse analysis

The community hope the teachers are the ones who will assist them in improving their language competency in reading comprehension in EFAL (Patton, 2014:730).

Reflection

The above discussion reveal that the parents and teachers wish to work in collaboration with the teachers to improve the language competency of learners in order to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. They suggest various teaching methods and certain questioning styles.

d) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

Allowing the voices of the marginalised to be heard, including those of the parents and learners in constructing new knowledge as required in CET as social justice (see Section 2.2), could facilitate finding solutions to problems (Baquedano-López, Alexander & Hernández, 2013:165). Importantly, it is suggested that teachers apply practices that can develop reading comprehension by activating prior knowledge, employing cooperative learning in the classroom and utilising hands-on activities (Gass, 2013:568). Learners hence come to know when they encounter challenges and the teachers are there to assist them in taking responsibility for their own education, as advocated in PAR (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:273). According to Reason and Bradbury (2008:45), comprehension is a crucial issue in EFAL learners as it makes an important contribution to language acquisition. Comprehending communication is evidence that the language has been acquired successfully.

5.3.4 A need for the creation of condition conducive to English as first additional language

The number of words known in the written and spoken text, called 'lexical pedagogy' (Van Zeeland & Schmitt, 2013:458), is necessary to comprehend a written text. Although learners may forget the words, continual reminding whenever they come across those words is useful. They can write them down in a personal dictionary for future use. EFAL learners are required to have at least 95% of lexical pedagogy in order to comprehend a written text and acquire writing capabilities in a conventional language context. If the percentage is lower it will be difficult for them, as they would have to keep on looking up words in the dictionary (Littlemore, Chen, Koester & Barnden, 2011:5; Zhang, 2012:559). From personal experience, providing learners with a glossary enhances their opportunities for improving reading comprehension in EFAL and hence performance in all subjects that use it (see Section 3.2.2).

The lexical pedagogy theory increases the capability of learners to understand forms of language and shows that language is divided into grammar and vocabulary, which learners have to be taught (Cook, 2016:97). According to Hedgcock and Ferris (2018:215), vocabulary should be taught in small portions to allow learners to find its meaning, thus enhancing reading comprehension in EFAL and learners' performance in all other subjects. Taljard (2012:378) adds that the lexical theory provides differences in vocabulary and tradition as a collection of predetermined meanings to produce reasonable texts that improve communication.

In the context of the shortage of dictionaries, learners are working collaboratively, even though the teachers are complaining about the shortage of dictionaries. This is one of the requirements of PAR and CET. Teachers should empower learners with the skills of cooperative and collaborative learning in order to be constructive social members (Alford & Windeyer, 2014:240; Balcazar et al., 2012:285). This is important, as these learners will, in the near future, be able to work with others. The following remarks were made during the PAR discussions:

Mr Vilane (SGB member):

*Bothisha sicela nizinike isikhathi ayi ukuvele nikhulume izingane niye ngen-
dlela yokuthi lezi zihlakaniphile noma lezi zibamba kancane azifanani ezin-
gane zinike isikhathi sengane ngayinye.*

[Take your time and learn your learners' differences. Give yourself time for each child. If you do that, you will see they will all improve their English as EFAL.]

Mr Ndwandwe (Department Head):

Ngikuphule ulimi nje Vilane ukuvuleleka ezinganeni ungahlali nje u serious khathi izingane zizokuthanda zithande nesifundo sakho. Ezinye zezinto ezinza izingane zifeyile ngoba ziyanisaba.

[Play with them, create a warm, welcoming environment and be friendly to them and not serious all the time. Let the learners know you, so that they will love you and your subject. Sometimes children are failing because they are afraid to speak English as EFAL.]

Khanyisani (Learner) criticised the teachers:

Ningasheshisi manisifunda izindaba ngoba kwenza singezwa kahle njenge pronunciation of words

[Teachers should not read too fast when they read. That causes us not to hear, for example, how to pronounce the words.]

a) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

In the quest for social justice, teachers, parents and other stakeholders of education should work in collaboration to improve the education system as they know the importance of education with regard to the future of the learners (Rogers, 2012:115). According to Orellana and Johnson (2012:73), stakeholders should all work together to ensure that the resources needed for teaching and learning of the learners are not compromised. They should address the quality and dissemination of resources and it is vital that the government consider the defenceless learners.

b) Social discourse analysis

Parents are concerned about teachers reading quickly as this may lead slow learners to be left behind. According to Duke (2018:38), teachers should also considered slow learners as they are not going to understand what is being taught.

c) Textual discourse analysis

Teachers must take their time in knowing their learners' differences (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013:14), so they will know which teaching method suit them. Creating a friendly working environment will facilitate learning.

d) Discursive discourse analysis

Fairclough (2003:37) points out that in textual reality, teachers should read slowly so that the learners can understand fully, as EFAL is not their mother tongue. It is suggested that learners experience a sense of freedom in the classroom. It is crucial for teachers to create a warm and welcoming environment to ease their difficulties.

Reflection

Drawing from the above discussions, teachers need to know the differences in each of their learners in order to choose wisely the appropriate teaching approach. They need to treat EFAL as important as is used as a language to communicate worldwide. In creating a friendly and welcoming environment they will make learners learn freely. Letting them write words in their personal dictionaries will help them to construct sentences on their own and comprehend the text they are reading.

5.3.5 Limited insufficient dictionaries

If there are many unknown words, owing to limited vocabulary, in the written text, the learners would have no understanding of it (David, 2010:1). Most EFAL learners have limited vocabulary so teachers can make word associations, play charades and improve their background knowledge by utilising newspapers and magazines (see 3.4.2). This suggests that core reading practices improve vocabulary and thus reading comprehension. Content subjected teachers are also required to play a part in teaching reading, for example, Life Orientation and Social Sciences.

Babayigit (2012:4) asserts that learners have a limited vocabulary in EFAL because of being introduced to reading comprehension only in the later stage of primary school. Most schools start learners in the Foundation Phase with Home Language and EFAL as a subject, and not the LoTL. Teachers should be aware that reading

comprehension in EFAL necessitates learners having an excellent level of word knowledge in order to improve their reading comprehension in EFAL.

The need to assist learners to improve their vocabulary or understanding of word meaning, the combination of definitional and contextual theories reveals success in improving reading comprehension in EFAL (Nagy & Townsend, 2012:99; Richards & Schmidt, 2013:78). The combination of employing these theories is valuable in teaching learners to have an understanding of word meaning and know how to use it in the sentence structure. Birch (2014:17) writes that learners could guess the unfamiliar words in the context, indicating that employing the contextual evidence could also improve reading comprehension.

August et al. (2017:36) believe that having a vocabulary implies that the meaning of the word has been retained so that the learner is able to use it in context and in syntactic construction, and also knows its antonyms and synonyms. Martinez and Murphy (2011:268) write that guessing by looking at the image could improve reading comprehension in EFAL, for example, by giving learners pictures, so that they would know the meaning of the word. Learners should be taught the strategies to read with understanding. Development of vocabulary using the schema theory would be valuable in improving learners' reading comprehension in EFAL. This calls teachers to teach learners vocabulary instruction by allowing them to use those words in language and be independent readers.

Improved of vocabulary skills will lead to improve performance in all subjects, thus a decrease in early school leavers and unemployment rates (see sections 3.7.3 and 5.3.5 respectively). This is crucial because it is where learners should find the meaning of the words on their own, through activities to construct their own sentences with the given words (Swanson et al., 2015:5).

Two participants commented as follows:

Mr Nyembe (teacher):

...inkinga esinayo mancane ama dictionary okusiza izingane ngevocabulary kumele ziwasebenzise ngokubolekana. Isikole masicela basithengela awafiki abaphathi bakhala ngemali engeneli zonke izidingo zesikole. Nabazali bakhala ngemali uma sicela ukuthi bawathenge. Siyazama nokwenza ama personal dictionary kulamagama ekade siwenza e classin

[...limited number of dictionaries as learners have to share dictionaries in order to improve their limited vocabulary, which is difficult and time-consuming, waiting for one learner to finish so that another one is able to use it. Also, the parents do not buy dictionaries if we ask them to, as they are unemployed. We also try to make our own dictionary from unfamiliar words]

Mr Vilane (parent):

Waphendula ... asinayo imali siyafisa ukubathengela.

[We do not have money; we wish we could buy for them.]



Figure 0.2: One dictionary shared by four learners

a) Textual discourse analysis

The Head of Department stressed the importance of reading to teachers and stressed to parents that they have to provide support and assist their children by trying to work with the school in buying dictionaries. Many learners have limited vocabulary, which leads them unable to read with comprehension. They should use dictionaries to understand the written text (Johnson & McGowan, 2017:2).

b) Social discourse analysis

The community is pleading with the school to acknowledge that it does not sufficient money, and suggests that teachers ask for donations from book stores in town, and

the municipal library for books and dictionaries. In some cases of the school having no books or dictionaries, teachers are asked for donations (Birch, 2014:17).

c) Discursive discourse analysis

Teachers request assistance from parents in buying a dictionary for their learners to assist in improving limited vocabulary. Sharing one dictionary will lead to learners to be able to learn how to use it (Johnson & McGowan, 2017:2), especially in cases in which learners have to know the alphabetical order of words. This causes difficulties because there is often one learner who is dominant over others in using the dictionary, and others merely follow him or her

Reflection

The extract above reveals that the community wishes that their children can further their studies, even though they do not have money to buy dictionaries that will improve their limited vocabulary. This study reveals that core reading practices start teaching English in early stages and allow learners to guess words which, when shown to them with pictures, could improve reading comprehension in EFAL. Being able to use a dictionary improves their pronunciation and shows them how it is ordered alphabetically.

d) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

In the quest for social justice, providing the necessary resources for teaching and learning should receive priority in the school. Failure to do so becomes detrimental to the aim of progressive learning. Schools that are not practising equity or societal integrity as the goal of equivalent education for all may be discriminating on the basis of race, gender and colour (Larnell, Bullock & Jett, 2016:19) (see Section 2.2). PAR upholds socially democratic and organisational transformation (see Section 4.8), as all the learners have the right to learn and reflect, thus enjoying equity and sustainability for everyone (Reason & Bradbury, 2008:2).

5.3.6 Repeated reading framework

English has been chosen as the LoTL in many countries, including South Africa, and society cannot overlook its learners' inability to read properly (Zhang, 2012:557). Underperformance of learners in reading comprehension in EFAL has led teachers to employ a repeated reading framework to boost performance. A repeated reading framework supports higher levels of reading skills, which will improve comprehension and involvement in the reading and understanding of written text. (Swanson et al., 2015:2). It gives readers a multifaceted vocabulary, text structure and content structure, helping them to comprehend any written text and construct meaning (Lin, 2016:22). It provides learners with the skills of reading proficiency, which in turn leads to greater ability to comprehend a text. Zhang et al. (2013:667) state that this comprises language comprehension, identification of words and sentence structure, helping with building reading ability and enhancing knowledge acquisition. Reading skills are thus strengthened.

Azevedo and Aleven (2013:135) concur that after successfully acquiring reading skills, learners should be able to use their vocabulary in content construction, build background knowledge in making inferences and preview, predict, retell and summarise the text, finding its main idea and assessing arguments (see Section 3.3.6). It assists learners with enriching their reading comprehension in all subjects so their performance in academic fields would improve.

Bottom-up and top-down theories differ in views of vocabulary, rhetoric and cultural content or background knowledge as the main aim of reading (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018:35). According to the bottom-up theory, learners are able to comprehend the written text from the letters of words in small portions. Taguchi et al. (2012:40) further state that in top-down theories the reader uses general knowledge to guess the meaning of the words and the focus of the text. These two theories could be used in conjunction, as they provide different knowledge. For example, bottom-up theories, when applied, allow for the repetition of reading letters and using the dictionary in order to comprehend the meaning of the word, while in top-down theories the meaning of the word in context is guessed.

It is suggested that the repeated reading framework makes learners successful readers who comprehend the written texts, leave out the unimportant information

and check unfamiliar words in the dictionary for more comprehension (Farina & Geva, 2013:392). The HoD in the Senior and Intermediate Phases for languages commented:

Thisha Ndwandwe (language HoD):

*Mathishela asiqiniseni ekufundiseni I reading khathi izingane zethu zizo-
kujwayela ukufunda kube into nje abayijwayele ingasuki kubo. Siyacela nani
bazali nasemakhaya niwuququzela lomkhuba wokufunda noma kungesiyo
into yesikole kodwa kube yisingisi amaphepha nama magazine kungasiza
kakhulu.*

[Teachers teach our learners to be independent readers, so that they will familiarise themselves with it. This will lead them to be their norm to read. We also request you, parents, to work with us at home to motivate and support the learners by buying newspapers and magazines for them to read.]

Zamile (parent):

*Siyazama khona inkinga njengoba besesichazile thina asifundanga kulukhuni
ke ukuthenga iphepha lesingisi kushukuthi phela ngeke ngisalifunda ngelakhe
nje phela. Akuncono naye kuthi seyasazi ezokwazi ukungichazela.*

[We are trying, but our challenge is that most of us in this area, we are uneducated and unemployed. That makes it difficult for us to buy newspapers and magazines. At the end of the day, no one will read it as I already mentioned that we cannot read properly.]

a) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

In the context of CET, the theory of this study perceives knowledge as power in social reality. According to Ladson-Billing (2014:259), those who see themselves as having power over learners should not exercise this power, as that is socially unjust. Frankenstein (2013:35) states that teachers should be critically mindful to oblige themselves to motivate learners in order to redress the socio-political injustices that have occurred in the past. CET and PAR suggest that learners and teachers fully participate in constructing new knowledge. For example, in this study, it was crucial for the researcher and co-researchers to practically participate so that they could take responsibility for their learning (see Sections 4.6.1.6 and 2.4.6).

Learners are said to be good in developing possible solutions if they are given a chance to participate in solving the problem. Apple (2013:45) points out that one of the objectives of CET is to make sure that, as learners are socially marginalised in their communities and the ones experiencing the challenges, they are allowed to identify possible solutions (see Section 2.9.2). Apple (2013:62) argues that the main aim of social justice is to make sure that reading proficiency in raising constructive cultural and social characteristics is at the required level of reading comprehension in EFAL. This results in learners becoming constructive social members who are able to compete with their peers in other countries, socially and economically.

The parents showed they were zealous about the education of their children, even though they had previously been disadvantaged and were lacking in formal education (Vera et al., 2012:185). Political authorities in the community should work collaboratively with other stakeholders to rebuild the community library, in which they could be provided with the latest magazines and newspapers. This would encourage learners to read outside of school hours.

b) Textual discourse analysis

The HoD reminded teachers that it is their duty to motivate learners to be independent readers. It also stresses to the parents that their role is to support their children's reading at home.

c) Discursive discourse analysis

The Head of Department reminds teachers about the importance of reading in EFAL in order to improve limited vocabulary in learners. This does not need to end at school but parents should play their role in supporting and assisting their children at home. This shows that the parents do not try their best to support their children, as if they only wish to maintain the status quo of being previously marginalised, non-educated members of society, so that people would feel sorry for them.

Social discourse analysis

Teachers expect parents to provide support and assistance to their children by motivating them to read.

Reflection

The extract above reminds us that teachers are being reminded and developed by the HoD and that it is their responsibility to keep learners motivated. The extract also reveals that parents are reminded of their responsibility to be involved in their children's schoolwork.

5.3.7 Mispronunciation of words

Most learners fail to comprehend what they read because of the difficulty in pronouncing the words. They also lack the required language skills that should have assisted them in comprehending the written text (Goodman & Goodman, 2011:11). According to Goodman, Martens and Flurkey (2016:216), error analysis is the best teaching strategy in teaching reading with comprehension and meaning-making of the written text. Mispronunciation of words, caused by limited phonics, spelling, accuracy and pronunciation, disrupts meaning-making and reading comprehension (see Section 3.7).

The communicative theory helps teachers when it is employed, teaching learners to pronounce words correctly, because if not they would automatically face various challenges in reading comprehension in EFAL (Brinton, 2012:247). According to Kurowski (2011:218), teaching learners to read aloud with focus on pronouncing the words will improve learners' pronunciation, thereby enhancing their reading comprehension in EFAL. The learners' performance in other subjects would also significantly improve through.

Teachers focus on teaching learners with written text that would stimulate their minds with new ideas, perceptions and new language skills. This will significantly enhance performance in retelling or summarising the text and constructing meaning to show that they understand it.

A learner and parent made the following remarks during the PAR meetings:

Kholeka (Learner):

Uma sifunda kuba namagama engingawazi umiss angisize ukuwafunda kodwa abanye abafundi eclassini bayahlekana ukuthi umiss ukulekelela kaningi. Yingakho ke mina ngigcina ngingasathandi ukufunda. Ngibuye ngesabe nomiss ukuthi uzongithethisa uma elokhu engisiza njalo.

[To be assisted by the teacher while you read feels bad because other learners laugh at you because you can't read. The other thing is, maybe the teacher will get angry if he has to help me all the time.]

Zamile (Parent) elaborated on Kholeka's comment:

Ngiyazi ukuthi unenkinga yokungakwazi ukufunda kodwa ke phela ngenezingane eziningi okumele ngizinakekele. Ngeke ngihlale ngibheke yena yedwa yebo ngiyamsiza kodwa nabanye badinga mina futhi ngisuke ngikhathele ngibuya kwamlungu nansi nemisebenzi yasendlini ingimele.

[I am aware that she cannot read properly as the teachers in the lower grades called me in about her problem in the previous years. But I cannot pay attention to only her as she is not the only child. She has siblings who I have to take care of and assist with homework and other stuff as a mother.]

Waqhubeka ebuza ukuthi "Bakhona yini ababasizayo elibrary uma isikhona mhlampe kuyoba ngcono lapho ke".

[Are there any assistant librarians to assist with reading in libraries?].

Mr Mpanza (subject advisor) gave advice to teachers on how to teach learners to read:

Uqale ufunde wedwa bekulalele emva kwalokho nifunde Kanye nabo ugcine ngokuthi bafunde njengeqoqo. Ngenkathi ufunda wedwa udeze uchaza amagama ngesingisi ukuze bajwayele. Lena kungaba indlela sonke esingafundisa ngayo ukuze sifukule imiphumela yesingisi. Siyokubheka ndawonye lokhu ema eworkshopin e district ne cluster.

[To teach learners to read efficiently as a teacher, you read first while they are reading silently. After that, you read with them, followed by reading as a group. The time you read alone gives clues of the meaning of the words. This helps them to comprehend the written text. This assists those who are struggling

readers to read along with others. I suggest this could be our approach in teaching reading comprehension that could improve learners' performance. We will work together as a group on this at district workshop and cluster level]

[This is how Kholeka reads, instead of spilled, splashed. Room instead of floor]

The sentence reads as follows: "The pig bumped into the churn, knocking it over. Then the cream splashed all over the room." The sentence reveals the lack knowledge of phonics.

a) Discursive discourse analysis

Learners are worried about those who are laughing at each other while teachers are assisting them with the correctness of pronunciation of words during reading comprehension in EFAL (Smith, 2015:7). Parents approach teachers as knowledgeable professionals, calling on them to be patient with their children (Reckwitz, 2012:254). Social injustice occurs in situations such as this one, when oppressed citizens, especially single parents, teach their children to read (cf. Apple, 2016:302) (see Section 2.4.5). It is not social transformation in this case and as Wimpenny (2013:4) found, this is against PAR, which requires the voices of the voiceless to be heard and for power not to be exerted over others. Working in collaboration in assisting learners to read is socially constructive (see Section 4.6.1.6), which demonstrates that teaching assistants are needed in public schools to help deal with such problems.

b) Textual discourse analysis

Learners are afraid to read in class because others laugh at them when they are being assisted by teachers in many times. Parents agreed that they were aware of the challenge to their children in mispronunciation of words, only that they do not have enough time to help them as they are domestic workers (Nelson, 2013:59). According to Cohen (2014:202), learners should be developed to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens. This requires teachers, parents and the entire social community to work in collaboration in building a love of learning in children.

c) Social discourse analysis

Parents are requesting teachers to convert a classroom into library in school. It should have an assistant to help learners in reading and pronunciation.

Reflection

The discussions above reveals that there is improvement after PAR meetings with the co-researchers (parents). Conversion of class to a library and donations from other stakeholders is a large step. The school had a *Soul Buddyz* group to ask for donations in town, perhaps a better way of raising funds.

5.3.8 Teaching or developing reading strategies and curriculum differentiation

Reading involves recreating meaning from a written text (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018:15; Young, 2011:24), so learners have to know which reading strategy is the best. In this way they experience fewer challenges in reading comprehension in EFAL, with teachers being the professionals able to develop or employ the reading strategies. Limited support in this direction increases the chances of underachieving to the mandatory or expected standard (Short, Fidelman & Louguit, 2012:335). According to Hedgcock and Ferris (2018:20), reading strategies include the bottom-up one for phrases and sentences. Young (2011:25) explains that in this reading strategy the learner reads the word letter by letter or a sentence word by word. It is a convenient reading strategy which focuses on phonemes, spelling, decoding, word knowledge, alphabetical encoding and syllables or words that usually challenge struggling readers. A second reading strategy highlighted by Beck *et al.* (2013:223) is paying more attention to background knowledge and reading aloud.

The schema theory model provides learners with instructions while reading, with which they are able to comprehend the written text through their background knowledge. This comprises an understanding of vocabulary and sentence structure (Ovando & Combs, 2018:84), important when teaching EFAL learners. It is

suggested that teachers should build the learners' background knowledge so that it is easier for them to comprehend the written text.

Social, economic and political communities illustrate that most learners have limited abilities in reading comprehension in EFAL, affecting the matriculation results and rates of students dropping out at institutions of higher education (Beck et al., 2013:218). This consequently increases the unemployment rate and decreases the economy of the country. Teachers are required to address this as they are professionals who are trained to educate the future workforce and citizens.

Responses by parents and a teacher were as follows:

Nompilo (Parent):

Kuzomela nathi singabazali sizinikela ukusizeni futhi kube umkhuba izingane zethu ukuthi zifunde othisha nabo abakhoni ziningi kakhulu izingane ngeke bekwazi ukuyinaka ngayinye futhi sikhumbule our vision as a school.

[As parents we should take our responsibility and make it our culture to help our children with reading because it's difficult for teachers to view each and every child's work daily.]

Mr Ndwandwe (language Departmental Head):

Komele mathishela kesithi ukubheka izindlela zokufundisa ukufunda ingane ngayinye ezingenyusa izinga njengoba seke saxoxa nge structured instructional reading procedure approach].

[As teachers we also have to review the reading strategies that could improve reading comprehension in EFAL and apply curriculum differentiation for each learner so that they would all benefit and to remind ourselves about our vision. The approach that improves reading comprehension as per our discussion is a structured instructional reading procedure approach.]

a) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

The public school should have publicised and made transparent school policy that involves the parents and members of the social community in their children's work (Apple, 2016:4) (see Sections 2.2 & 4.5.8). This illustrates that marginalised parents are not well informed about the support of their children until the educators take an

initiative to make them aware of their responsibility to work together. This can be achieved by involving them in the culture of learning at school, increasing their performance in reading comprehension as a form of social justice.

b) Textual discourse analysis

Parents see the need to support their children as it is difficult for teachers to pay sufficient attention to each individual learner (Blockett, 2017:806).

c) Discursive discourse analysis

Parents recognize their role as parents to help their children (Arp & Smith, 2015:7). Teachers also see the need to use or find different kinds of teaching strategies that will suit learners' needs so that reading comprehension in EFAL will improve.

d) Social discourse analysis

The community promised to help their children with a quality education so they can compete with their international counterparts. Teachers have to look for various teaching strategies that suit learners' needs in order to improve reading comprehension in EFAL (Blockett, 2017:805).

Reflection

Based on the above extract, it can be concluded that this community wishes to move from being marginalised to a future educated community, fulfilling their children's rights. An approach that the co-researchers found to be best in assisting learners in improving reading comprehension in EFA contributes to the body of knowledge.

5.3.9 Word recognition

The point at which the learner is an efficient reader requires the correct recognition of written words and being proficient in syntactic words, whereupon the learner is

able to find the meaning in the text (Scarborough et al., 2013:595). This suggests that, at this point, the learner has achieved the skill of reading comprehension in EFAL. He or she should achieve word recognition, phonological awareness and decoding of words, being a proficient reader and performing well in reading comprehension in EFAL through repeated exposure. This could be achieved by giving learners more comprehension and reading activities and having them read more, both at school and away from school.

The lexical priming theory illustrates that the learner could retrieve the words that are previously known and use it in a grammatical context (Hoey, 2012:137). This means that every time the learner reads the word he or she has read before and has stored it, it is retrieved for use according to patterns. For Pace-Sigge (2017:150), lexical priming expresses that the reader is able to recognise the words he or she has seen or read before, whilst Aitchison (2012:604) argued that repeated reading of written text with pictures in EFAL fosters learners' improvement in reading comprehension. This means that the lexical priming theory influences memorising or reading of previous knowledge to reconstruct new knowledge. Thus, this theory is best suited and suggested to be used to teach learners word recognition in order to improve reading comprehension.

Zamile (parent) made the following remark:

Ezinye zazo phela zihlala no gogo abangazange bafunde siyanizwa bothisa njengoba simele abazali kumele sibe nesixazululo ekugcineni.

[Other learners are living with grandparents who are uneducated. We have to come up with the solution for these challenges of children living with grandparents.]

Ngeke zifane zona izingane zethu nezenu sicela nizibekezelele awekho namalibrary lana ezingaya kuwo ziyofunda nani niyazi yasha. Njengoba nazi ngokubaluleka kwemfundo vele niyazifundela nizikhulumise nangesingisi ngalokho ziyajwayela njalo ulimi.

[It's not the same as your child, you have to bear with our children, be patient, they will get there. We don't even have a library in this community to get the readers. Every evening you read for your child because you know that it is important and you speak those few English words with your child.]

a) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

CET, the theory employed in this study, is defined as the system of knowing that the foundation of knowledge of learners is based on their social, historical and cultural experiences (Bernal, 2013:107). According to Babich (2016:67), understanding the social community and the historical background of these learners, together with their culture, has inherent social justice implications in comparing learners who live with uneducated grandparents to learners living in urban areas who have educated parents (see Sections 2.2 and 2.3). Some of the parents or guardians participating in this study are illiterate so it is imperative that these learners be given equal opportunities for quality and transformed education, in order to be empowered and emancipated.

b) Discursive discourse analysis

Parents request teachers to be patient with their children, though they will assist. It will be different for those staying with grandparents as they cannot recognise words themselves. Parents also request teachers to be patient as rural learners, unlike most urban counterparts, do not have access to a library.

c) Textual discourse analysis

Parents state that even though they wish to assist, some will not be able to, since their children are staying with grandparents who are uneducated.

d) Social discourse analysis

Parents appeal to teachers to be tolerant with learners as the school is in a rural area where learners only hear English words from teachers, unlike urban learners who hear more sources of English. This area does not have electricity or television.

Reflection

The above extracts reveal that teachers have to do most of the work. This community was previously marginalised and most parents lack formal education, so it is difficult for them to provide assistance or the support required.

5.3.10 Reading and building meaning

South Africa is a country with multiple languages and most schools do not use the learners' home language as the LoTL, although the SGB has a choice of language they wish the children to use in schools. This is alluded to in Chapter 2 Section 6(2) of the SASA (84 of 1996) and Chapter 1 Section 6(1–5) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996). According to Pretorius and Spaull (2016:16), learners in South Africa start learning in English in the Intermediate Phase while other countries start using English as the LoTL in the Foundation Phase. This makes it challenging for them to learn to read and build meaning in English or to comprehend written text. According to the guided reading theory, for teachers to overcome this challenge and enhance reading comprehension, it is suggested that they activate background knowledge and prediction of text, and have an opportunity to discuss written comprehension (Dwiono & Draji, 2017:139). This allows learners to have word knowledge, which leads to successful or improved reading comprehension in EFAL learners.

The new generation has less motivation for reading for pleasure, which causes them to underperform in reading comprehension for academic purposes (Sawangsamutchai & Rattanavich, 2016:55). Even reading in the home language is below the required level, resulting in limited EFAL reading comprehension, as their vocabulary skills are limited (see Section 3.2.9). Sometimes lack of reading motivation is the result of a teaching style that neglects phonemes and vocabulary skills.

Mr Vilane (parent) commented as follows:

*Izingane zamanje azikufuni ukufunda sezifunda ngoba ziphoqiwe mhlampe
uma ningavuselela uqhozi lokufunda bengafunda. Ngeke nje uzibone zithatha*

zizifundela noma kungekhona okwesikole. Othisha kumele bancenge izingane zifunde noma kungekho eskoleni.

[The new generation does not like reading. I don't know, if you as teachers activate the culture of reading in schools they can be motivated to read on their own. You will never see them just reading newspaper articles just for fun. Teacher need to motivate learners to read, even if they are not at school.]

a) Discursive discourse analysis

Parents request teachers to be patient with their children, though they will assist. It will differ for those staying with grandparents as often they cannot recognise words themselves. Parents also request teachers to be patient, as rural learners lack advantages held by urban learners. Parents are requesting teachers to motivate their children to be independent readers so that become familiar with it. This will help their comprehension in EFAL and ability to build meaning from the text on their own, without assistant from parents or teachers.

b) Textual discourse analysis

Parents state that even though they wish to assist, some learners will not benefit as they are staying with grandparents who lack formal education. Therefore, it will be difficult for those learners as they cannot recognise words. The parent acknowledge that learners lack motivation to read.

c) Social discourse analysis

Parents appeal to teachers to be tolerant with learners as the school is in a rural area in which learners only hear English words from teachers, unlike urban learners. This area does not have electricity or television and the community expects teachers to motivate the culture of learner to their children so that they will able to read on their own, without being told that they have to read.

Reflection

In the above discussions this community acknowledges that teachers are knowledgeable, professional and to be trusted with their children's education.

d) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

As the elders and as leaders of education, teachers should be committed to enacting social justice for learners by motivating them to learn and to improving the social community by finding knowledge of how they can help learners to like education (Glenn Bracey, Chambers, Lavelle & Mueller, 2017:45). This means teachers should continue to encourage lifelong learning by giving them reading material on their level.

5.3.11 Blame game attitude (phonological awareness)

Learners are failing to read efficiently and proficiently, leading to less reading comprehension in EFAL. One of the main reasons is lack of phonological awareness skills (Saiegh-Haddad & Geva, 2013:265) (see Section 3.3.7). According to Saiegh-Haddad and Geva, learners should be aware of the roots of words, as well as prefixes and suffixes, so that they know the core meaning of the word. This would lead to improved reading comprehension in EFAL. Nagy and Townsend (2012:95) concur that root awareness of words accompanies reading and spelling development, as illustrated by the learner who is good at this. His or her reading comprehension will improve.

Most learners who have challenges in EFAL also experience challenges in their home language. EFAL requires the transfer of knowledge acquisition from the home language, which is difficult if the learners still experience challenges in the home language (Melby-Lervang & Lervang, 2014:116). According to Cummins (2014:225), this is more familiar to the children who began school without development in their home language (see Section 3.3.7).

Critical language theory reveals that language and culture cannot be separated. If one or the other is not available there would be no meaning of words (Edwards &

Mercer, 2013:10). EFAL learners are expected to acquire English words that are foreign to their cultural context and understanding, so to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, teachers and learners should understand the two different cultures of their home language and EFAL (Fairclough, 2012:42). The critical language theory states that language bears power and reveals the marginalised. It also explores the relationship of culture and power. It is suggested that teachers are required to have a wide knowledge of the diversity of learners in their classroom and understand the cultural background of the society in which they work.

Mr Ndwandwe complained:

Izingange zakwa grade 7, azikwazi ukufunda nopelo magama lwazo njalo luhlala luwong. Uthisha bamabanga aphansi ake bazicinge bona bazibuze ukuthi ingabe benza okufanelekile na kulezingane.

[The learners in Grade Seven cannot read words correctly; their spelling is always wrong. Teachers in the foundation phase should do introspection on whether justice is done to these learners.]

Mr Vilakazi answered Mr Ndwandwe as follows:

Ziyafundiswa lezingane ukuthi angazi kungamele kwenziwe njani ukuze zibone ukuthi imfundo ibalulekile futhi ikusasa lazo.

[These learners were taught. We can't blame the foundation phase teachers. We have to find a way of telling them how important education is and that it's their future we are talking about.]

The picture below is evidence of the learners' limited phonological awareness.

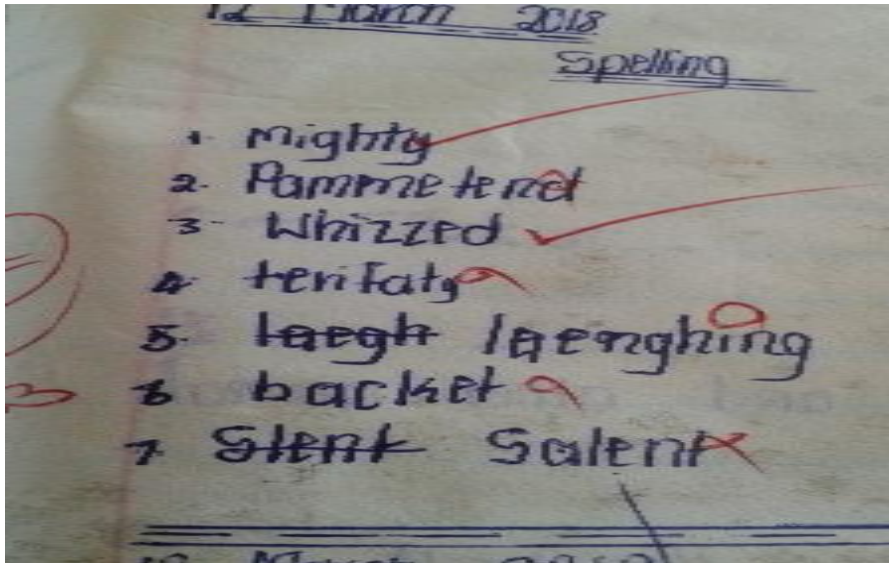


Figure 0.3: Phonological awareness

Mr Vilakazi further stated: +++

(Ephakamisa izwi) Abazali kumele basize izingane zabo bayeke lento yabo yokuthi yithi sifundise kuphela. Ikusasa lezingane zabo leli esikhuluma ngalo.

[(Raising voice) Parents should also assist their children and stop saying it's us who teach only. This is the future of their own children that we are talking about.]

Mr Mpanza (Subject advisor) looking at the work of the learners, replied:

Ukufunda njalo izindaba lezi abazithandayo kuyasiza. Emva kokufunda kubhalwe nepelo magama and dictation writing kungasiza.

[Reading stories of interest to learners so that reading is done frequently. I suggest the spelling and writing dictation every time when they finish reading.]

a) Theoretical framework (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

It is pivotal that learners be provided with quality and equal education so that they can compete with their counterparts. It is important that teachers understand the cultures and backgrounds of the learners they are teaching in order to apply curriculum differentiation (Alegre & Ferrer, 2010:435) (see Section 2.10). According to Brown and Carasso (2013:56), this would make it easier for them to know what should be prepared for their learners and which methods and strategies should be

used for them to be phonologically aware. This would lead to improved performance in reading comprehension in EFAL learners.

b) Textual discourse analysis

Grade 7 learners' poor spelling impedes reading and writing (McLaren, 2015:15).

c) Discursive discourse analysis

Teachers are complaining to each other that learners are failing to produce correct spelling. The reason might be that in the foundation phase there was weak teaching of phonics, though the teachers do not agree (Archibald & Estreet, 2017:452). It is important that parents be made aware that they need to take responsibility for their children's schoolwork by making them understand that they should be part of it (Van Dijk, 1993:253). For the teacher above to raise his voice and say, "*Parents should also assist their children and stop saying it's us who has to teach only*", seems as if he is commanding them. According to Fairclough (2013:740), the teacher reveals personal power, influencing the minds of parents whether they like it or not. It is authoritative and domineering towards parents, thereby indicating social inequality. Teachers and principals should work to improve parents' awareness and involvement if they are to improve the goals of education and make it a part of the school culture.

d) Social discourse analysis

Senior phase (Grade 7) teachers are complaining about wrong spelling from learner. They expect a foundation that could have done better to teach learners phonics in their phase, so they would not have faced this challenge (Archibald & Estreet, 2017:452). The teachers in the discussion have an influence over parents so they could make them understand that it is also their responsibility to take care of their children's education (cf. Van Dijk, 2015:254)

Reflection

The above discussions reveal that teachers are seeing phonics as the cause of incorrect spelling by Grade 7 learners. Teaching of phonics from the foundation phase and support from parents in teaching them words every afternoon can contribute to the correctness of spelling mistakes, thus phonological awareness can improve reading comprehension in EFAL. Grade 7 teachers had also to teach phonics if they saw the problem that developed from foundation phase. Teaching dictation helps greatly in language construction, thus adding to the body of knowledge.

5.4 POSSIBLE WAYS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

There are a number of possible ways to improve reading comprehension.

5.4.1 Meaning-making or understanding text

Comprehending a written text entails understanding words and sentences. To generate a comprehensible statement of a written text it may be necessary to create general world knowledge to assimilate the current utterance with the prior context, or to check the consistency of the resulting understanding with the communicative condition (see Section 3.4.1) (Mar, 2011:105). According to Paltridge, Starfield and Tardy (2016:72), the schemata reading theory suggests that when learners start to read written texts they adapt the new knowledge and mix it with previous knowledge. This can be illustrated by the learners' understanding of the written text and improving their reading comprehension in EFAL. It is critical to ensure the improvement in learners' understanding of words, which requires schools to collaborate with their SMTs to acquire dictionaries for their learners.

Mr Zwane (principal):

Ngiyaxolisa bakwethu benginganakile ukuthi umonakalo mukhulu kangaka nokuthi nisebenza kanzima kanje. Kule mandlana esekhona yesikole sizoxoxa ne SGB kanye ne SMT sithenge amanye.

[Please pardon me; I did not know how bad and how difficult it is to work with a small number of dictionaries. We are going take this matter to the SGB and SMT to acquire new dictionaries.]

The principal reveals that he has a passion for quality education, as required by the Constitution, and is willing to work in collaboration with teachers, the SMT and the SGB to take urgent action and buy more dictionaries (see Section 4.5.7).

a) Textual discourse analysis

The principal was apologising that he was not aware how bad it was after seeing the photographs of learners. He was going to discuss the matter with the SGB to see if they could get a few dictionaries.

b) Discursive discourse analysis

The principal as the head of school was going to discuss the matter with the SGB to buy dictionaries so that learners could make meaning of the text for reading comprehension in EFAL (Tracy, 2019:290).

c) Social discourse analysis

The community is expecting the school to buy the dictionaries. The principal apologised and agreed that they would work things out and buy them to add to what was available (Yule, 2016:130).

Reflection

As the principal did not know the number of dictionaries in the school suggests that in *Intabasuka* the stocktaking at the end of each term was not practised. If it were carried out every term he would have known there was a shortage.

5.4.2 Increasing the usage of English as a communication tool

Most parents used to send their children to schools in which English is used as first language (FL) (Ranta & Meckelborg, 2013:10). According to Ranta and Meckelborg (2013:10), these parents believed that the more their children spent time speaking English the more their English communication skills would improve. Teachers should therefore check which factors limit learners using English as a communication tool and correct it. As South Africa is a multicultural society, some Western concepts are misunderstood. This call for attention that, according to social constructivism theory, learning retrieves existing knowledge (Jordaan, 2011:79), and that learners cannot communicate in English if they have not been taught the language or have not been familiarised with it.

The theory requires learners to be practically involved in teaching and learning of English as a tool of communication. It is suggested that learning and teaching by applying constructive theory requires involvement in reflection and communication activities so that learners can be fluent and proficient.

Mrs Ndaba commented as follows:

Izingane zethu azikwazi ukukhululma isingisi. Ake siphakamise amasokisi khathi zingeke zibe nenkinga uma ziya e high school. Sihlanganise ukwenza ama debate, dialogue njalonjalo

[Our learners cannot communicate using English; let's improve that, so that they will not face such challenges when they change schools]

[Let us introduce dialogues, public speaking and debates in our school so that it will improve and increase the use of English as a communication tool]

The passion for quality education and collaboration in their conversation illustrates that the parents are willing to work towards their challenges. Linden (2010:57) contends that involving parents in their children's education affords many chances of attainment and achievement whereby reading comprehension could be improved. As evidenced by the cited words, parents and teachers are involved.

Teachers should demonstrate a passion for social justice and quality education by being strongly involved in supporting the human rights of fairness and justice in society. This can be achieved by enhancing the school structure and culture

(Theoharis & O'Toole, 2012:222) (see Section 2.4.6). In this study, the issue was taken further, as the suggestion to involve senior phase learners in public speaking and debate in rural schools was not mentioned in the consulted literature. This serves as a contribution of this study to the body of knowledge.

a) Textual Discourse analysis

If children cannot use English as a communication tool stakeholders should work together to assist them. They will struggle to make the next grades if they do not improve (Canagarajah, 2013:52).

b) Discursive discourse analysis

Parents acknowledge their role and should work together with teachers so that they can use English as a communication tool. As this level they will not progress to the next grade (Tracy, 2019:290).

c) Social discourse analysis

The community expects the school to work together with them so that their children can use English as a communication tool (Yule, 2016:135).

5.4.3 Language competency

Earlier exposure to EFAL in schools, the community and at home will improve language competency (Blumenfeld, & Marian, 2013:550). It is suggested that learners who use English more often are more competent in using it than those who use their home language. Their pronunciation and morphology are also better. Nassaji and Fotos (2011:392) believe that lexical pedagogy theory requires learners to connect the unknown to the known and integrate new knowledge with background knowledge. It involves prediction, interpretation and re-reading of the text to make informed guesses, while thinking aloud will also improve language competency.

Mr Ndwandwe:

Ake nathi siqale ukufundisa izingane zethu e foundation phase ngesingisi ukuze kuzobangcono lenkinga esinayo lana eskole, sikufake naku time table yeskole wonke uthisha kumele akufundise ukufunda.

[Let's start teaching our learners with English in the foundation phase. I think that will be our solution that will improve their language competency here at school. This should be included in a school timetable and all teachers are responsible for reading .]

The solution in South African schools is to start EFAL as the LoTL in the Foundation Phase and so familiarise their learners with English in the hope of improving their language competence, even though the CAPS document does not allow for this. Banks (2015:25) states that diverse countries should work in collaboration to build multicultural literacy. It is vital that the response to diversity should combine an established set of democratic values, such as justice and equality in education (see Section 2.5.5). Teachers should be reflective, active and moral citizens who understand the required integrities about diversity requirements in education.

a) Textual discourse analysis

Teachers are prepared to start teaching learners in English in Foundation Phase to improve language competence in Grade 7 (Canagarajah, 2013:52).

b) Social discourse analysis

Teachers are expecting much improvement in Grade 7 in language competency if they could start it in Foundation Phase (Basturkmen, 2014:96).

c) Discursive discourse analysis

Teachers have to make an agreement as a school to start teaching EFAL from Foundation Phase, as this would improve language competence (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018:89).

Reflection

Building English at early age in Grade 3 may improve language competency in EFAL because learners need to develop their mother tongue before learning a foreign language. This contributes to the body of knowledge of research, therefore when answering text in EFAL their language competence will be improved. This in turn will improve reading comprehension.

5.4.4 Lexical pedagogy and changing way of teaching that is conducive to learners

Lexical pedagogy is the method of teaching foreign languages through use of patterns and words to create sentences (Young, 2011:23). Classrooms are characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity, as many learners who come from different language and cultural backgrounds are required to acquire English as EFAL (Alford & Windeyer, 2014:78) (see Section 3.2.9). So that it is conducive to every learner, teachers should employ learner-centred teaching methods to accommodate everyone in the class or work in collaboration and feel welcome. For example, scanning and skimming of the text would help teachers to find out learners' challenges earlier, as their views are heard by everyone in the class and they construct new knowledge.

Mr Vilane, a teacher, commented as follows:

Ake sibuyekeze izindlela zethu zokufundisa lezo ezovumela abatwana bazikhulumele sizwe baxakeka kuphi ngempela, sizosiza lapho esingasiza khona noma singebona othisha besingisi.

[As teachers we have to review our teaching methods to allow our learners to talk, which will help us to see their challenges.]

The voices of the unrepresented ought to be heard and having no hierarchy leads to improved reading comprehension in a diverse classroom. This is evidenced by CDA, which is employed in this study (see Section 4.7). The learners have to be actively involved in finding the solutions to their challenges, of help when teachers give them time to work out the meaning of words that are unfamiliar to them and give clues when needed.

a) Textual discourse analysis

Wimpenny (2013:4), working in collaboration as a team of teachers with learners using learner-centred method revealed principles of PAR and CET (see Section 4.5.9).

b) Discursive discourse analysis

Employing various or changing teaching methods which cater for their needs such as curriculum differentials, D-CAPS (Differentiated Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) and learner-centred methods would be helpful and improve reading comprehension in EFAL. These methods should be applied to learners according to their levels.

c) Social discourse analysis

For teachers sit down and discuss teaching methods that cater for their learners requires ubuntu, that is, a communal spirit by which a citizen shows his or her identity through others (Basturkmen, 2014:96).

Reflection

These methods, curriculum differentials, D-CAPS and learner-centred schooling, should be applied according to levels. If all applied to the same learners it may confuse them learners as well as the teacher.

5.4.5 Limited vocabulary, insufficient dictionaries and trans-languaging

Employing group work or cooperative learning in classrooms is advocated to improve vocabulary skills amongst EFAL learners (Tsou, 2011:5). This could result in facilitating socio-cultural contact of learners in the classroom, who are encouraged by their teachers and afforded a setting for cooperative learning. Gee (2012:283) outlines that the other possible solution to improving reading comprehension is to explain difficult words to the learners and give them the

synonyms of those words. The authors above note that reading comprehension can be enhanced by using difficult words in practice, for example, having the learners create their own sentences and use it in their reading.

When teachers read out loud to their learners with facial expressions and body language, the learners understand the feelings, attitudes, beliefs and aims of the characters in the story. This kind of reading improves the learners' reading fluency and comprehension in EFAL (August & Shanahan, 2017:38). According to Burroughs (2015:25), the readers are provided with opportunities for repeated practice and oral reading, which are imperative to the construction of fluency, confidence and enthusiasm for reading. Subsequently, vocabulary skills in EFAL learners are improved. It is suggested that use of body language by the teacher helps learners become familiar with the language and motivates them to use it more, as it improves their performance in reading comprehension in EFAL. This will also result in enhanced performance in all other subjects (see Sections 3.5.3 and 4.20.2).

Zamile (parent) commented as follows:

Nibe nesineke phela nabo yazi nje ukudlala ngamagama angama synonyms nokuwalingisa kuyenza ingane ize izwe ukuthi uthini ningabachazeli ngesizulu. Nibafundela kabili noma ikathathu nje khathi bezozwa

[Please be patient with them; use synonyms and body language until they understand. Please let's do away with explaining English in isiZulu. Also read more than once for learners so that they will understand]

Zhang, Tardif, Shu, Li, Liu, McBride-Chang, Liang and Zhang (2013:667) state that teachers should be ready to work with diverse learners. It is imperative that learners be equipped with knowledge as they will be adults and citizens in a diverse community (see Section 2.2). Community members should actively participate in decision making to make schools inclusive. Smith, Yosso and Solórzano (2011:215) believe that CET affords all learners with transformative responses to racial, gender and class oppression.

a) Discursive discourse analysis

In some instances, using body language may be seen as discursive discourse analysis, and something that is acceptable in one culture could be unacceptable in another (Fairclough, 2012:137) (see Section 4.20.2).

b) Social discourse analysis

It is suggested that teachers keep abreast of educational knowledge of education for social justice, as the *No Child Left Behind* Act states that there is no exclusion due to culture (Zhang et al., 2013:667). The authors add that teachers should be ready to work with diverse learners. It is imperative that learners be equipped with knowledge as they will be adults and citizens in a diverse community (see Section 2.2). Community members should actively participate in decision-making to make schools inclusive. Smith, Yosso and Solórzano (2011:215) argue that CET is committed to afford all learners with transformative responses to racial, gender and class oppression.

5.4.6 Repeated reading framework

Using various reading methods, such as cooperative learning and effective classroom management, in repeated reading improves comprehension in EFAL (Cheung & Slavin, 2013:280). The involvement of parents in classroom management and identifying challenges and solutions may also help with improving reading comprehension. Group changes should be made and classroom instruction changed, based on performance. Some learners require one-to-one assistance to improve their reading comprehension (see Section 3.6.6). Sakiz, Pape and Hoy (2012:240) emphasise that other reading methods which should be included to enhance reading comprehension in EFAL are rereading, transforming sentence structure and questioning.

This suggests that teachers be cautious when they make group changes as it may be seen as discursive practice towards some learners (Fairclough, 2013:138). The textual reality is that learners should be grouped according to their abilities. Brown

and Carasso (2013:78) emphasise that when teachers make changes to groups they should take care that no learners feel dehumanised or discriminated against. It is significant that when teaching, social justice is intertwined with issues of power and privilege. Teachers should keep in mind that learners have the right to be responsible for their education.

5.4.7 Mispronunciation of words

To improve reading comprehension it is important that learners be given more reading work, illustrated by learners having to pay more attention to unfamiliar words and argue key facts (Hoff, 2013:7; Rodrigues, 2015:150). Activities include pictures and answering questions related to the text (see Section 3.6.7), helping learners to communicate and discuss the meaning of a text to improve pronunciation and, thus, reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 3.2.2).

Commitment between learner and teacher towards transformation means that both parties accept responsibility for teaching and learning (McLaren, 2015:127). Social justice requires that teachers and learners accept that no one has power over another or more responsibility (see Section 2.2). In other words, both have the responsibility for teaching and learning in order to receive transformed knowledge.

5.4.8 Teaching or developing reading strategies

Most texts in Grade 7 require the learners to recall the setting, characters, conflict, how the conflict was resolved and the message in the text (see Section 3.6.8). According to Gee (2012:289) and Hatim (2014:70), using a cross-referencing reading strategy encourages the learners to pay attention and improves reading comprehension in finding all the required knowledge, as mentioned above. This suggests that it triggers prior knowledge and the words that remind them about the required information.

Diversity education requires teachers to have knowledge about patterns of language and social development without discriminating against any learner of any culture (Cummins, 2014:34). According to Yilmaz (2011:206), diversity teachers

have to learn about the cultural background of learners in the social community of the school. Diverse learners should receive education that helps them fight against racism and other systems of repression, and generate a just and equitable society. This would also result in their being able to compete with their peers in reading comprehension in EFAL. Teaching reading for social justice helps learners to advance social and cultural personalities by confirming their language in reading comprehension in EFAL. Teaching the diverse learner to read, by using various reading strategies until one finds a suitable one for that particular learner, facilitates social justice.

5.4.9 Reading and building meaning, teaching or developing an approach

Teaching Grade 7 learners to read and build meaning in reading comprehension is difficult, as some seem not to understand at all (see Section 3.6.6). Intensive vocabulary approach is said to be the best way to improve reading comprehension in EFAL (Nagy & Townsend, 2012:94). The principle of intensive vocabulary instruction approach assists teachers by using the three properties of vocabulary instruction, namely integration, repetition and meaningful use. In integration, a teacher gives the learners a word, for example “gift,” and asks the learners about the types of gifts they have received. Then ask learners how their words relate to a particular poem or story. This helps learners to build a rich vocabulary of words related to their background knowledge, while a meaning of the poem or story is gained.

Ovando and Combs (2018:84) concur that background knowledge, as stated in the schema theory, enhances reading comprehension, because learners, as readers, are able to comprehend the written text. This can be illustrated by attitudes, beliefs and ideas they already have (see Section 3.3). Parent involvement is also required to assist at home with words and creation of sentences (Vera, Israel, Coyle, Cross, Knight-Lynn, Moallem, Bartucci & Goldberger, 2012:185). The teacher should know the learners’ background and pre-reading is exhaustive. Beck et al. (2013:499) highlight that repetition strategy requires conscious attention by the learners. If not, teachers should provide meaningful sentences in a practical way, for example. “Bella is **gifted** in singing. I received a **gift** on Mother’s Day from my son.”

The following relates an example of work by Ms Buthelezi in her classroom:

Nanku umsebenzi engike ngabanika wona ukuzama uku improve upelo magama lwabo nokukwazi ukufunda ngokuqonda.

[Here is the piece of work that I gave them in order to improve their vocabulary skills so as to building meaning in a written text.]

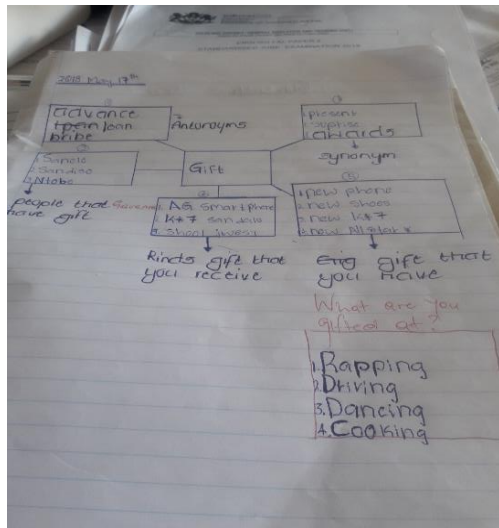


Figure 0.4: Example of classwork

This could be achieved by improving the relationship of marginalised relations of power in the society. According to Cummins, Hu, Markus and Montero (2015:564), learners who are labelled as underachievers would underachieve, but if they are labelled as competent they would excel. Teachers should therefore know their learners personally and where they lack skills, helping them choose the best instructional approach that suits their learners in order for them to improve language competency in reading comprehension in EFAL.

a) Textual discourse analysis

Teachers should know their learners personally and where they lack skills. This would improve their reading skills and building meaning in a written text.

b) Discursive discourse analysis

Teachers applying social justice in previously disadvantaged schools should contest the culture and identity by implementing the instructional procedure approach to develop identities of competence (Cummins, 2014:149).

5.4.10 Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability of the learner to identify words or syllables and read efficiently (Tunmer, Chapman, Greaney, Prochnow, & Arrow, 2013:141). Incorrect use of phonemes reduces reading comprehension in EFAL, as the structures and formations of language provide construction of words generated by two or more phonemes. Most of the learners in Grade 7 class were still limited in phonological awareness, which hindered their reading comprehension in EFAL.

For teachers to improve phonological awareness it is recommended that they have awareness of rhyming, which allows learners to have an understanding of the letters in words. This could result in enhanced reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 3.6.10). According to Rayner, Pollatsek, Ashby and Clifton Jr (2012:926), the evidence-based intervention assists in improving fluent reading and phonological reading comprehension in the Foundation Phase, long before learners reach the Senior Phase level, in which they have much work to learn. Loftus, Coyne, McCoach, Zipoli and Pullen (2010:125) write that teachers have to offer a suitable provision of phonological awareness to learners in the Foundation Phase to avoid the development of reading complications.

Ms Buthelezi, during a PAR meeting, described how her learners read:

“Thangs happy vey qeen. Mom week de pathi and kishion.”

The sentence may be interpreted as:

“Things happened very quickly. Mom walked up the short path and knocked.”

Teachers should have knowledge of microcultures in the teaching and learning of individual learners, how they learn and live culturally to construct social justice (see Section 2.11). As a teacher, I have a common understanding and shared socio-cultural and educational knowledge with my local learners.

a) Discursive discourse analysis

Classroom environment, teachers have to understand the various cultural factors and normative routines and relate them to social justice practices (Calet, Gutiérrez-Palma, Simpson, González-Trujillo & Defior, 2015:60).

5.5 SWOT ANALYSIS

This section explains in detail the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that may hinder the success of the strategy or make it possible to improve reading comprehension in EFAL at the Ntabasuka Public Primary School.

5.5.1 Strengths

The co-researchers are looking forward to improving the learners' reading comprehension in EFAL. They are eager for these children to perform as well as learners in other schools in the near future. The teachers aspire to social justice in providing quality education for all their learners and are hopeful of receiving parental support from the community.

5.5.2 Weaknesses

The attendance was not up to standard with some of the co-researchers being afraid to talk and not exchanging their views. As the school is located in a needy rural area most of the learners live not with their biological parents but with their grandparents, who lack formal education. This makes it problematic to seek assistance at home. There is no community library and even at the school books and readers are scarce.

5.5.3 Opportunities

Opportunities include the school's ability to provide books and the readers that are used. The SGB is supportive when the teachers require any related school materials and district officials help since the school is a full-service school offering inclusive

education. This illustrates a conducive environment expected to improving reading comprehension in the near future.

5.5.4 Threats

Amongst the threats are that many learners live with their grandparents, arrive late at school, are regularly absent, do not do homework, live in child-headed homes, lack parental supervision, especially for schoolwork, and contribute to high failure rates.

5.6 COMPONENTS OF ENRICHING READING COMPREHENSION

This section clarifies and discusses the components of improving reading comprehension in EFAL, which are geared by the challenges in the Ntabasuka Public Primary School (see Section 5.3).

5.6.1 Pronunciation

The mispronunciation of words shows that the reader is less knowledgeable of words (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2018:6). According to Hall (2011:189), correct pronunciation of words reveals that the person might know the meaning of the word. This indicates that reading comprehension has been achieved in that particular written text. It is important that the acquiring language requires the reader to learn the sounds that are represented by the letters.

Mr Ndwandwe complained:

Izingange zakwa Grade Seven, azikwazi ukufunda nopelo magama lwazo njalo luhlala luwong. Uthisha bamabanga aphansi ake bazicinge bona bazibuze ukuthi ingabe benza okufanelekile na kulezingane.

[The learners in Grade Seven cannot read words correctly; their spelling is always wrong. Teachers in the foundation phase should do introspection on whether justice is done to these learners.]

Working in collaboration means employing a democratic style so that everyone in the school knows the difficulties faced by Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase teachers in the mispronunciation of words, in order to ensure social transformation as the main goal of PAR (Minkler, 2012:192) (see Section 4.5.4). CET accepts that everyone has the ability to contribute to the construction of knowledge in improving reading comprehension in EFAL.

The voices of the co-researchers are meaningful and carry equal weight in contributing to the discussion, by mentioning the difficulties of the school, especially in pronunciation of words (Minkler, 2012:192). CET employs learner-centred methods, which allow learners to question knowledge (see Section 2.5.8) and illustrate the consciousness in knowledge and exercising equality and democracy (Scott & Dienes, 2010:395). The emphasis of CET and CDA is on the consciousness of knowledge and the critical role of social practice for justice in education and social transformation. It is harmful for the teachers to complain rather than work together as partners.

a) Textual discourse analysis

Learners in Grade 7 cannot read words fluently or spell correctly.

b) Social discourse analysis

Teachers are required to find out the causes and solutions to learners' challenges (Polat, 2011:53).

c) Discursive discourse analysis

Grade 7 teachers expect learners to show ability to write words with minimum spelling mistakes.

5.6.2 Background knowledge

It is suggested that learners understand better if the comprehension of a text involves something that has prevailed in their past or of which they have background knowledge (Estiyowat, 2013:73). If the written text does not contain background knowledge it is suggested that the teachers activate background knowledge to build the schemata in their memory. It would enable them to comprehend the written text easier using the bottom-up method. Hedgcock and Ferris (2018:12) confirm that EFAL teachers should employ methods of schemata in EFAL learners during the pre-reading phase to develop the cultural schemata, even though it is time-consuming.

Mrs Ndaba remarked as follows:

Akusilo ulimi lwabo lolu kodwa ngosizo lwenu bothisha sibalethele lokho kini bazofunda basebancane.

[This is not their mother tongue, but with your assistance, they can learn.]

Yebo kodwa ngicela sisebanzisaneni ekwakheni ikusasa lengane ukuyifundela njalo nje noma ngaba into engangesigaba lokho kungawenza umehluko

[Yes, but please, let's work together. Just read as little as a paragraph for your child each day. It will make a difference.]

In social justice and PAR it is clearly stated that parents should be involved in their children's work. It is recommended that they be taught the departmental policies about their involvement, what is required and what their responsibilities are towards their children's work (Baquedano-López et al., 2013:160) (see Sections 2.9.3 and 4.5.6). Nelson (2013:63) writes of the textual reality that parents and teachers seek with each other's support in order to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

a) Social discourse analysis

Parents are required to provide assistance in their schoolwork (Baquedano-López et al., 2013:160).

b) Textual discourse analysis

Parents and teachers should work in collaboration in supporting teaching and learning in order to improve reading comprehension (Nelson, 2013:63).

5.6.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary can be defined as the various number of words required to be knowledgeable when wishing to improve reading comprehension in EFAL (Schmitt, 2010:330). The learners, teachers, parents and subject advisor, working in collaboration, should retain a large amount of knowledge in reading comprehension in EFAL. It would require effort and input, in particular with words and use of language skills to increase knowledge and impact on learners (see Section 3.4.3). According to Fisher (2016:3), background knowledge and vocabulary skills are the most required components to teach reading comprehension in EFAL. The three types of vocabulary required are generalised, specialised and technical (Wise et al., 2010:342). Often, learners do not have the background knowledge or vocabulary skills for a written text that is being taught to them so teachers should activate these in the pre-reading stage.

Ms Buthelezi (teacher) made the following remark during one of the PAR meetings:

Umosa cishe usuku lonke ufundisa nje amagama lana ngoba nje endabani kuphuma inqwaba yamagama abathi abawazi futhi ungeke ubanike beyokwenza ekhaya ngoba bazobuya bengakwenzile. Isizathu ukuthi ukhohliwe noma bengingenayo I dictionary yokwenza umsebenzi.

[As teachers we waste a lot of time teaching vocabulary because there are lots of words that are unfamiliar to them. You won't give such activities to them to do as a homework, as they will not do it. Their reasons might be "I forgot" or "I don't have a dictionary at home".]

Mr Ndwandwe (Language HOD): insisted on the following:

Noma kunjalo Miss kumele sizame ukubanika inani lamagama ngokuvumelana nokuthi kumele bafunde amagama amangaki ngosuku.

[Even though they do not do it but we must try and give them the specified number of words according to their grade.]

Social transformation in learners, teachers, parents and subject advisors implies sharing knowledge on how challenges to reading comprehension are solved (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear & Leu, 2014:6). The co-researchers should make sure the solutions are translated into interaction, values and beliefs (see Section 2.3). Ozer et al. (2010:46) emphasise that in PAR, co-researchers (learners) learn in a transformative way to construct new social knowledge in its various phases of the cyclical process (see Section 4.5.1).

According to Fairclough (2013:90), it is a textual reality that teachers use most of the time in teaching the learners vocabulary to comprehend the written text, otherwise they would not comprehend it. However, if public schools do not have sufficient resources it makes the work of the teachers difficult and the learners will not learn how to use a dictionary individually, rather than having to share.

a) Social discourse analysis

Working in collaboration with the stakeholders (teachers, subject advisor and learners) in improving reading comprehension is vital in constructing new knowledge in reading comprehension (Coiro et al., 2014:6).

b) Textual discourse analysis

Teachers are mostly working in teaching vocabulary so that reading comprehension is improved (Fairclough, 2013:90).

5.6.4 Language comprehension

Achieving language comprehension involves background knowledge, vocabulary skills and extensive reading skills, which results in enhanced reading comprehension (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018:10). Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010:16) mention that vocabulary has an impact on reading fluency and reading proficiency, which are the main contributors to reading comprehension in EFAL.

A Grade 7 English teacher revealed the work of one of the learners in class, revealing limitations in the learner's language comprehension and one of the main causes of underachievement in reading comprehension in EFAL.

Miss Buthelezi: nanku umsebenzi wezinye zezingane zami zakwa Grade Seven:

[Miss Buthelezi (teacher) this is the work of one of my Grade Seven's learners:]

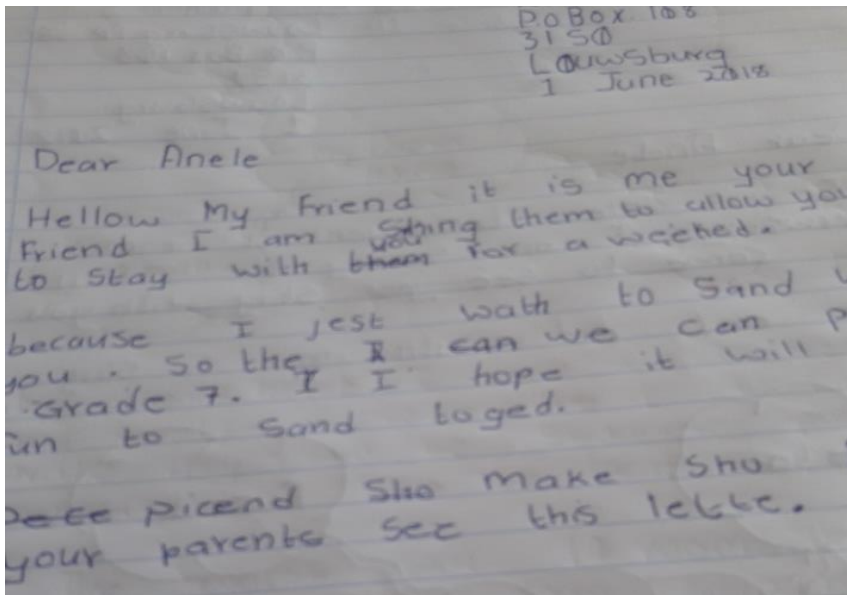


Figure 0.5: Informal letter showing lack language comprehension

The instruction was for the learners to write an informal letter to a friend to request the friend's parents to allow the learner to stay with them for the weekend.

a) Social discourse analysis

Such limited vocabulary in English in the middle grades will result in them not being able to construct sentences correctly, even in matric and at tertiary institutions. Social practices, social justice, freedom and equality to facilitate transformation require that learners are able to use language as do their peers who use English as their home language. According to Hanna (2011:736), the main aim of Section 702 of the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) (Act No. 81 of 1965) was to address opportunities of equal education access for minority learners, and guarantee rights to learn EFAL.

5.6.5 Phonological awareness

South Africa is a diverse country, with multiple authorised languages but with English used in the economic and political arena, as well as academically as the LoTL in most schools (Crystal, 2013:165). According to Cheung and Slavin (2012:3), most learners are underperforming in reading comprehension, compared to counterparts, providing EFAL teachers and learners with various challenges. For example, most non-native English learners are limited in phonological awareness, since the rules used in other languages are not the same. Parents are given a choice of being multilingual, choosing the language they wish their children to have as their LoTL (SASA 86 of 1996; Chapter 6, Section 2 and in Chapter 1(1–3) of Constitution of Republic of South Africa, Act 96 of 1996, and Section 3(4) (m) of National Education Policy, Act 27 of 1996).

Mr Mpanza jokingly told the parents:

Njengoba nazikhethela ke ukuthi izingane zenu zifundiswe ngesingisi asibambisaneni ke bazali.

[As you chose English as the language you wish your children to be taught in, we should work together.]

According to Nelson (2013:62) and Baquedano-López et al. (2013:159), in terms of CET and PAR, parents as members of the community should take responsibility for their children's constructive education. It is suggested that learners be included in the process of their learning and find solutions to the challenges they encounter, in order for their performance in reading comprehension to be improved (see Sections 4.5.6 & 2.2).

a) Social discourse analysis

The comment "*As you chose English... we should work together*" shows that it is their right, according to the laws cited above, to choose English as the LoTL (Wodak, 2002:7).

5.6.6 Oral or listening comprehension

Listening comprehension is an effective process whereby learners have to pay attention to designated features, create meaning from the text and convey it to what they are listening to with their schemata (Wise et al., 2010:345). According to Rost and Candlin (2014:102), improving listening comprehension will result in enhanced reading comprehension, as both are grounded on utterances. This can be achieved by making sure that sounds of words are reserved and clues given to the meaning of words. Lastly, use of real-world meaning and linguistic meaning will link it with the knowledge in the text. Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim and Thomson (2010:600) believe that picture stories assist in improving oral comprehension in EFAL learners, enhancing opportunities for learners' further communication with other English speakers in society.

The following was stated during the discussions:

Mr Nyembe:

We yazi ngoba bevele bengezwa nje ngivele ngingayenzisi ke mina I listening skill ngoba kuyefana vele ngeke bezwe lutho.

[Because they would not understand, I see no use to teach listening skills because they would not hear anything.]

Listening skills should be taught or the learners would not be able to listen to texts that are read to them. Teachers who are passionate about teaching and learning would accomplish great achievement in their learners.

5.6.7 Decoding

Decoding is defined as the complete, considerate understanding of words or letters and the texts they compile (Lervang, 2010:612). According to Soliman (2014:169), it is defined as the hearing code of written words, and being able to read aloud self-reliantly. Scarborough, Sabatini, Shore, Cutting, Pugh and Katz (2013:593) believe that inefficient word decoding presents learners with challenges in reading comprehension. Inability to decode or read words effectively leads to limited reading

comprehension in EFAL. Soliman (2014:170) recommends assisting learners with challenges in decoding skills, reading aloud and using texts with pictures.

Ms Buthelezi:

Izingange zakwa Grade Seven, azikwazi ukufunda nopelo magama lwazo njalo luhlala luwong. Kumele sithole ikhambi lokusiza lezingane.

[The learners in Grade Seven cannot read words or recognise words; their spelling is always wrong. We should find solutions on how we should assist these learners.]

a) Social discourse analysis

The textual reality of “*The learners in Grade Seven cannot read words or recognise words; their spelling is always wrong*” illustrates that the teachers have passion and love for their calling of teaching and wish to assist learners in improving reading comprehension in EFAL. Teachers should collaborate with each other, as required by PAR, to construct new knowledge on improving reading comprehension in EFAL. This will lead them to success (see Sections 2.3 and 4.3).

b) Textual discourse analysis

Learners come to school to learn from teachers, so for a teacher not to teach one of the skills is unacceptable, as all skills are important (Brown & Carasso, 2013:15).

5.7 CONDITIONS CONDUCIVE TO AN APPROACH

For the best improvement in reading comprehension in EFAL, the conditions conducive to an approach were pointed out and accepted by the co-researchers during the PAR meetings. The points raised during the PAR meetings were vocabulary skills, reading strategies and picture books.

5.7.1 Teachear collaboration

Most of the learners are challenged by limited vocabulary skills (see Section 3.2.5), which lead to their lack of reading comprehension in EFAL. According to Catts and Kamhi (2017:74), learners should be taught vocabulary at a young age, so that by Grade 12 they have approximately 60,000 to 100,000 words in their vocabulary. Learning such a large number of words is a condition conducive to reading comprehension of written texts and improved use of vocabulary.

Mr Ndwandwe:

Thina ave sisebenzisana no Miss Buthelezi kule phase ku vocabulary siyay-isebensisa kakhulu I dictionary sibonge nakumphathi ngibonile sekunamasha izingane sezizofunda kangcono.

[We work well with Ms Buthulezi in this phase using dictionaries. We also thank our principal for buying extra dictionaries, as in our first meeting we mentioned that the shortage of dictionaries hinders us in teaching vocabulary skills in the classroom.]

a) Textual discourse analysis

Collaboration by teachers and seniors shows the working environment is positive. The power relation is such that everyone is equal and works in collaboration to assist learners in achieving good results (Reckwitz, 2012:245).

b) Theoretical framing (critical epistemology) and interpretation of data

Social justice requires teachers to teach learners text that inspires them to provoke social issues, cultural and natural understanding for their better understanding of reading comprehension and improving vocabulary skills in order to improve reading comprehension (Bishop, 2014:54). This will help them to view how readers of other races and ethnicity comprehend the written text (see Section 2.11). It is important to allow learners as teachers to read texts that stimulate their minds to extend their real-life situations into school and use it.

5.7.2 Reading strategies

The crucial goal of reading is to comprehend the written text. To be able to read fluently, learners should be able to recognise words and have verbal and phonemic decoding skills (see Section 3.7.2). According to Iwai (2011:152), learners whose parents are readers perform better in reading and present good models. These parents are aware of the diversity of background experience, read for pleasure, use television selectively, encourage creativity and read to their children before they enter school (see Section 3.2.2). According to Morgan, Farkas and Wu (2011:475), the reading strategies that are suggested to be employed to enrich reading comprehension in EFAL are strategies that improve phonemic awareness and decoding skills. These are fragile in letter-sound correspondence, phonological awareness, explicit and systematic strategies to assist to attain knowledge of decoding patterns and reading ability.

Social justice requires that every learner should be able to read by applying curriculum differentiation. This promotes development for all the needs of the learners (Castro, Paez, Dickinson & Frede, 2011:19) (see Section 3.2.7). It is also clearly stated in Section 2.0 of the Differentiation Policy (2017) that teachers are required to select the reading strategies to accommodate all of the learners' potential needs. Kale and Luke (2017:52) state that teachers usually use names, such as 'gifted' or 'brightness', because of the learners' background, values and beliefs (see Sections 2.8 and 4.6). The judgement might betray an individual's social class and in another culture mean something different, perhaps rude. Thus teachers should always act vigilantly and professionally to assess and screen with their common sense before arriving at conclusions about a learner.

5.7.3 Picture books

Some learners encounter challenges with regard to reading comprehension in EFAL because of their home environment (Rodrigues & Tamis-LeMonda, 2011:1061). This indicates that learners with poorer parents attend school without any letter identification, storytelling or reading experience at home (see Section 3.7.3). Macaro, Handley and Walter (2012:10) recommend that learners at secondary school level be supported by technology to improve their reading comprehension.

Teachers without readily available technology may support such learners by using picture books to develop them to the same level as their peers.

Nompilo (Parent):

Kulezi ezinye izikole zabangabambi kahle baye basebezise izincwadi noma ama computer anezithombe ukuze kube lula ukuqondisisa indatshana.

[The special schools used to use books with pictures which helps learners to understand more easily the written text.]

a) Social discourse analysis

Principals, teachers and parents should work in collaboration to ensure that they promote social justice for learners. This can be achieved by giving them equal access to educational opportunities (see Sections 2.4.6 and 4.6) as required by PAR (Theoharis & O'Toole, 2012:651). PAR and CET require all co-researchers who are involved in the process of teaching and learning to be actively involved in solving challenges of reading comprehension in EFAL (see Sections 4.5.6 and 2.5.1). Teachers should involve parents when making decisions about the curriculum that is culturally responsive to the social community. Teachers are importantly required to ensure that teaching and learning are happening at a high-quality level, without leaving behind any child.

5.8 THREATS TO OVERCOME

Threats in this study are factors that could hinder the employment and achievement of the development of an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. The threats are include time to implement the strategy, resources needed to implement the strategy, and resistance to change.

5.8.1 Teacher attitude

The hours that are provided to teach EFAL as the LoTL, as per Departmental Policy, are not enough to implement the approaches as the learners' abilities in one class

differ. It would be easier if a teaching assistant could be used. The relevant school had only one teacher assistant in the Foundation Phase, leading to other teachers not using other skills required by the language policy of the Department.

Mr Nyembe (teacher) remarked as follows:

We yazi ngoba bevele bengezwa nje ngivele ngingayenzisi ke mina I listening skill ngoba kuyefana vele ngeke bezwe lutho.

[Because they would not understand, I see no use to teach listening skills because they would not hear or understand anything.]

a) Discursive discourse analysis

It is harmful for a teacher to disregard teaching certain skills as all are important in any language (see Section 4.5). Teachers should ask other teachers for help on how to address this challenge (Harran & Olamijulo, 2014:25).

5.8.2 Resources needed to implement an approach

This school does not have enough dictionaries or readers for the number of learners (see Section 3.5.1). The local library of the community in which the school is situated was burnt down during strikes. Most of the community members do not work and some learners are orphans, with no one to buy them resources such as readers. They have no one who could read to them. Some of the households are headed by grandparents who have had limited formal education, making it difficult to assist their grandchildren with schoolwork.

The responses below were given by two of the co-researchers.

Zamile:

Awekho namalibrary lana ezingaya kuwo ziyofunda nani niyazi yasha, kanti ke nathi asinayo nemali yokuwathenga

[We don't even have a library in this community to get readers and we don't have money to buy readers.]

Mr Ndwandwe added:

Impela asinayo imali siyafisa ukubathengela.

[We don't have money. We really wish we could buy for them.]

a) Social discourse analysis

The parents were passionate about buying dictionaries, which shows that they care about the education of their children. It is problematic that the community does not have a library to help motivate learners to read (Rule & Land 2017:4). It is suggested that they should use the community councillor's request for funding from, for example, non-government organisations or the local municipality to assist with the rebuilding of the library.

5.8.3 Resistance to change

The reasons teachers resist change are that they are unmotivated, they have had limited in-service training to implement various teaching methods and they have limited reading material, for example dictionaries and readers (Dlamini, 2015:20-21) (see Section 3.8.3). Learners become easily bored when they read the same books repeatedly. In some cases, reported by teachers, subject advisors say one thing and the SMT something different, so the teachers do not know what to follow.

Becoming a social justice teacher means one should be proficient, vigilant and dedicated to one's work, no matter what challenges one faces (Parkay, Stanford & Gougeon, 2010:436). According to Dlamini and Sewpaul (2015:468), learners believe in their teacher as an agent of change, and learn from him or her (see Section 2.9.3). As a teacher, it is crucial that when teaching in a democratic society one should make sure that there is social change in learners, co-workers and communities.

Miss Buthelezi:

Mhlampe ukuba nabaphathi bethu bayasitshela ukuthi asenzeni ngabe kungcono

[It was going to be better if there is in-service training provided by our seniors at school.]

a) Social discourse analysis

Teachers are willing to do better as they wish they could be provided with in-service training teaching and learning (Shin, Sailors, McClung, Person, Hoffman & Chilimanjira, 2015:260).

b) Discursive discourse analysis

According to the Skills Development Act (SDA) of 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) Chapter 1, Section 1, Subsection c (ii-iii), as employer, the DoE should train HoDs on how to assist teachers in schools (Sakiz, Pape, & Hoy, 2012:239).

5.8.4 Lack of in-service training of teachers

Another threat in this study was uncertainty in the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in EFAL. Some teachers in the school were novices who did not have much experience of teaching skills in EFAL reading comprehension. With no in-service training mentors of novice teachers inside the school, they only received assistance from subject advisors from outside the school (see Section 3.8.4). Coaching and monitoring by the SMTs were required to share expertise and work in collaboration (see Section 4.5).

Miss Buthelezi voiced her disappointment:

Empeleni lapha esikoleni asikaze nje salekelelwa abaphathi bangaphakathi ekufundiseni. Kuphela muse wenze iphutha ku assessment wakho uyothola icomment ngalokho. Ngizoliphinda ke lelo phutha uma naleyo comment ngingayizwanga ukuthi ithini ngoba ngakuncono ukuba sisuke sindawonye si-phendulane sibuzane.

[We never had an inside school development; it's only the written comments after you submitted your assessment. If I did not understand that comment I will repeat the same mistake as I did not what was doing wrong. I would get better if we could talk face to face, for example, in a meeting.]

a) Discursive discourse analysis

The lack of in-service training of teachers is the primary cause of the underperformance of learners in reading comprehension. One of the teachers in the above sections mentioned that he did not teach listening skills because the learners would not understand. This means that this teacher lacked the teaching strategies to teach listening skills. According to Chapter 1, Section 1, Subsection c (ii-iii) of the Skills Development Act (SDA) (97 of 1998), all new employees should be provided with the required skills to gain work experience.

b) Social discourse analysis

Teachers are required, in social justice, to teach learners various skills (Banks, 2015:29). This cannot transpire if the teachers are not provided with the required skills as employees of the DoE.

5.9 INDICATORS OF SUCCESS OF AN APPROACH TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

A number of factors indicate the success of an approach to improving reading comprehension.

5.9.1 Repeated reading approach

The more learners read the more they will become independent readers. Being well-versed in their mother tongue contributes to their acquiring a second language (see Section 3.7.1). The books donated from various bookstores in the community made it easier for teachers, as the learners did not have to share them. All learners received a book to read and exchanged them when they had finished reading them. Learners were also required to repeat the level if they were not yet of the required standard.

5.9.2 Guided reading approach

Teachers' implementation of the Guided Reading Approach imparted the agreed letter sounds, vocabulary, language skills and background knowledge to improve reading comprehension in EFAL (Dickson et al., 2010:305) (see Section 3.7.2). The challenge of an inadequate number of readers was addressed by the learners and teachers in collaboration, by going door-to-door and requesting bookstores to donate books to the school. It has been found that all the co-researchers should be actively involved in the process of solving the challenges to reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 4.5).

5.9.3 Communicative approach

Learners are required to communicate in classrooms to improve their learning. This does not only apply in EFAL, but in all subjects. Adopting the communicative approach, using various components of EFAL, such as terminology, learners are able to make sense of written words (McDonough & Shaw, 2012:15). They are able to read texts with understanding as the lyrics are stored in their memories. This is an indication that learners learn better and do not easily forget when they communicate with their peers.

5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented an analysis of the data generated, grounded on the five objectives of the study as outlined in Chapter 1. Challenges to improving reading comprehension were analysed, using three levels of CDA, in conjunction with PAR and CET objectives. The components to enriching reading comprehension in EFAL were clarified and discussed, as well as its challenges. Possible solutions to improving reading comprehension were discussed to assist teachers in dealing with the challenges they encounter while teaching reading comprehension. The conditions conducive to an approach for unsurpassed improvement of reading comprehension in EFAL were recognised. The threats that may hinder the success of the strategy and the development and improvement of the approach to improving reading comprehension in EFAL were conferred. Success indicators of all the

various approaches to enhance reading comprehension in EFAL in Grade 7 were discussed.

Chapter 6 discusses and deliberates upon the presentation and discussion of an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

CHAPTER 6:

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this study being to design an approach to improve reading comprehension in Grade 7 EFAL speakers, in this chapter it discusses the findings of the analysed data, makes recommendations and draws conclusions.

6.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

As stated in Chapter 1, the principal research question for this study was: **How could we develop an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL speakers?** And the aim to develop an approach for improving reading comprehension in EFAL speakers.

The objectives were:

- To demonstrate the challenges and justify the need for an approach to enrich reading comprehension in EFAL speakers
- To highlight the components in respect of an approach to enrich EFAL speakers
- To outline the threats, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for an approach to enrich EFAL speakers
- To highlight an environment that is conducive to the implementation of the communicative language and teaching approach
- To demonstrate the success indicators of the structured instructional approach informed by best practices around the universe.

In considering the findings from the data generated to have been accomplished, an approach to improving reading comprehension should be developed.

To recall the problem statement, learners in Grade 7 were experiencing challenges to reading comprehension in EFAL and underperforming in answering questions

related to the written text. They had limited vocabulary, mispronounced words and were unable to read fluently. These challenges hinder success in attaining the best results in all subjects, in school and at tertiary institutions, as English is the LoTL in most schools and institutions of higher learning.

The DBE has provided numerous approaches to improve reading, such as “drop everything and read,” a *learn to read* campaign, and communicative language teaching. These approaches focus on teaching learners to read rather than on reading comprehension. The instructional reading approach agreed upon by the co-researchers in their meetings outlined in Chapter 7 (see Section 5.3.7 & 6.12.1) dealt with how teachers teach the written text in order for learners to comprehend it. The findings discussed during the meetings justify the need for a new approach, even though the DBE has already provided some approaches to improving reading.

6.3 IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN EFAL

This section presents a justification for the need to develop an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

6.3.1 Meaning-making or understanding text

It was discovered that teachers were not involving learners in the construction of knowledge, though to do so would have made it easier to find possible solutions, as they were the ones who are experiencing the challenges (see Section 5.3.1). This is shown when teachers see learners as *tabula rasa* (empty vessels), treating them as if they know nothing and have to be “spoonfed” with knowledge (see Section 2.10.2). There was a misconception among teachers that it was only the language teachers who should care about learners’ poor performance in reading comprehension. In reality, reading happens in all subjects and all teachers should care about learners’ reading ability. Teachers should work in collaboration in teaching learners to comprehend the written text. PAR and CET require all the stakeholders of education to work together to achieve the great results (see Section 4.5.3 & Section 2.2).

It was recommended that the teacher must first read more than one of the chosen texts to learners. According to Land (2015:163), this can be achieved by applying the schema theory principles and providing background knowledge of the story that she or he has read for learners (see section 5.4.5). Before the written text is read in the class, background knowledge should be activated so that all learners are on the same level and receive equal opportunity for comprehending the written text (see Section 5.3.1). This is a requirement set out in the South African Constitution of 1996. It is crucial to involve all relevant stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, SMTs, subject advisors and learners in each phase of the cyclical process in order to improve reading comprehension in the school (see Section 4.3).

It is crucial that the teacher summarise the whole text or story, then read it with the learners, after which they read silently and underline the unfamiliar words to be explained by the teacher. To find out whether this helped it is advisable that teachers provide an activity that would require learners to answer questions, such as what is happening in each paragraph and what the text was about (see Section 5.3.6 & 5.3.7). There is a need to have dictionaries available at the school so that learners can look up unfamiliar words, which would ultimately result in comprehension of the written text.

Teachers of other subjects agreed to work with language teachers in improving reading comprehension (see section 5.4.3, 5.4.4. & 5.7.1). The subject advisor mentioned that he would work with us timeously as we identified our challenges and devised solutions that would improve reading comprehension in EFAL in our learners. The principals, SGB members and SMT members worked together and reached a decision to add extra dictionaries (see Section 5.7.1) to the school's available books. Similarly, parents also agreed to work with us in assisting and supporting their children so that they could compete worldwide in the future (see Section 5.3.1). The differences are that learners in urban areas do better than learners in rural areas, as the latter lack background knowledge (see section 3.3.1). Teachers are required to assist learners with background knowledge when teaching reading comprehension in EFAL as it will help learners improve their understanding of text (see section 5.3.1). Some did not see it as their responsibility to teach reading, while others agreed that it was. For example, in Life Orientation and History

there were some articles that learners were required to comprehend in order to perform better (see section 5.6.6).

6.3.2 Using English as a communication tool

There is a lack of parent involvement in assisting learners to achieve better results in EFAL and using it as a communication tool (see section 3.2.4). Parents are passionate about their children but they mentioned that they did not understand English, since they lacked formal education (see section 5.2.2). They trusted teachers with the education of their children, calling attention to the need for them to work with parents in finding out their expectations of the teacher-learner relationship and their education and language mastery.

The lack of using English as a communication tool was illustrated by a lack of motivation in parents themselves to see their children become educated. In learners it was seen by a lack of knowledge or ability to decode words in order to construct meaning of written EFAL texts (see section 5.3.1). Collaboration and working together to construct new knowledge as a team was minimal. To improve using English as communicative tool it is crucial that debates, dialogue and public speaking presentations be had in classes and around the school. Learners should be engaged in debates, dialogues and public speaking presentation (see section 5.6.4).

Parents' involvement is required in order to achieve the best results in EFAL as a communication tool. Learners tend to achieve more when parents and teachers work in collaboration (Tanner, 2014:54) (see Section 3.3.2). Their passion for their children's education should be shown in active involvement in their education so that the future of their children can be promising. This points out the need for teachers and the principals of the schools as professionals to enlighten and motivate the parents to be involved in the education of their children.

The recommended solution to their challenge of decoding is that learners should be actively involved in finding solutions (see Section 5.3.2). These are the main requirements of PAR and CET, as the research design and theoretical framework of the study (see Section 4.3 & Section 2.3 respectively). The school as a team

agreed on working on their weaknesses to foster the use of English as a communication tool. This is clearly stated by the social constructivist theory of language that learners cannot use English if they are not familiarised by the teachers to use it.

The underachievement of the school in reading comprehension seems to be the result of a lack of collaboration between different teachers and parents. This is evidenced by the subject teachers who were not willing to teach reading skills, not seeing it as their responsibility (see section 3.3.5 & 5.6.6). They eventually agreed that they needed each other as the LoTL of the school was English, but only after returning poor results. One difference lay in an agreement with parents to establish a more harmonious relationship with teachers and be more involved in their children's education. Teachers agreed on working with parents in every step of education and activated background knowledge to improve reading comprehension (see section 5.3.2). Another difference was that Entabasuka Public Primary school parents and teachers requested their children be taught EFAL as early as FP, preferably starting in Grade 3 with EFAL, but from Grade R-2 they followed the CAPS document policy.

The school team agreed that when teaching and holding meetings, they should lead by example and use English. Translingualism should be minimal in English teaching to motivate learners to use English as a communicative tool. The learners who communicate in English during breaks should be rewarded in some way, though this is not effective in some terms of the year.

6.3.3 Findings: language competence

Limited oral and vocabulary skills were found to be the main cause of language incompetence in EFAL learners (see section 5.4.3), as illustrated by the learners' lack of sentence construction and the correct uses of tenses and grammar, as well as lack of background knowledge in speech and literacy. An example was failing to answer questions related to the written text and summarising it (see section 3.2.8).

For learners to enhance language competence, the school team recommended that we start familiarising learners with English in the Foundation Phase, even though it

was not in the Departmental policy statement. Lexical pedagogy principles require learners to connect the known to the unknown, as can be seen when we teach them pronunciation and morphology in their early ages and language competence improves, followed by improved reading comprehension in EFAL.

Learners should be divided into small groups to support each other (see section 3.3.3). This indicates that teachers should group learners together who differ in their level of reading and bear in mind the social justice of curriculum differentiation and not to discriminate against learners while practising this (see section 5.3.6.5). It is imperative to teach reading across the curriculum, across all subjects (Taylor & von Fintel, 2016:77).

Vocabulary is the main cause of learners underperforming (see section 3.2.3). The school principal, SMTs and SGB agreed that in their next financial year they would provide a large number of dictionaries to close the vocabulary gap. A possible solution would be to provide learners with a strong foundation of their HL (see section 3.3.3), though they may still show weak points (see section 5.3.3). This tells us that English could be taught at an early stage but not at first in school. It was also suggested that time for reading across the school be included as soon as possible in the timetable, which would involve the subject teachers (see section 5.4.3). This had a positive impact on learners since there was much improvement in reading comprehension. EFAL teachers should create a warm welcoming environment in their classes so that learners are free to ask if they are experiencing challenges (see section 5.3.4). This would also help them enjoy the subject.

6.3.4 Lexical pedagogy

A large number of unfamiliar words identified in the written text results in Grade 7 EFAL learners underperforming in reading comprehension. A lack of dictionaries is the biggest contributor to the vocabulary problem. It is not only Grade 7 learners who struggle with limited vocabulary; secondary learners and tertiary students face the same challenge.

It was highly recommended that teachers provide learners with a glossary of unfamiliar words identified during the reading, as it would improve reading

comprehension in EFAL. The lexical theory principles require learners to be provided with a small number of words and their definitions each day so that they learn and keep it in their minds. It is crucial that teachers read for learners (see Section 5.4.5). The lexical approach recommends that the activities that will increase reading comprehension in learners should be exercised the most, for instance, repetition, recycling of activities, predicting the meaning of vocabulary and working with a dictionary (see section 3.3.4).

The school had only a small number of dictionaries due to loss and school break-ins by learners after school. They do not come to school with the stolen dictionaries as they are afraid they will be taken back. It is also unfamiliar for learners to hear somebody speaking English outside of school, and lexical pedagogy deals more with unfamiliar words that should be learned by using a dictionary (Pace-sigge, 2017:153). It was pointed out that some of the learners struggled to retain words if they were given a large number of unfamiliar words. It recommended that the learners be provided with a small number of words at a time.

6.3.5 Limited vocabulary or insufficient number of dictionaries

It was discovered that EFAL learners were faced with the challenge of limited vocabulary in reading comprehension in EFAL. Starting to familiarise them with reading written text only in the Intermediate Phase was found to be detrimental to learners. Improving their reading comprehension requires an advanced level of word knowledge (see Section 5.3.5).

It was pointed out that limited vocabulary skills, sentence construction and phrasing of texts were the main difficulties faced in comprehending written texts in any subject. This study found that learners needed to be motivated to read independently or for pleasure, the only time they read being for academic purposes, which lead to them not being familiar with the activity (see Section 5.3.10).

It is recommended that teachers teach vocabulary, word association, phrasing of texts and sentence construction. Learners should practice reading, reading independently and reading for pleasure, to improve reading comprehension in EFAL with reading material that suits their level (see Section 3.3.5 & 5.3.10).

The recommended approaches believed to improve vocabulary are thinking aloud and repeated reading. These allow learners more time using words and grasping the meaning, leading to enhanced reading comprehension in EFAL. The other recommendation made from the study is use of body language in reading stories to learners (see Section 5.4.5). It is crucial that parents support their children by reading to them from newspapers, magazines and open reading programmes in order to improve their vocabulary skills. Teachers should be willing to make an extra effort to help learners in EFAL. The classroom should be a warm and welcoming environment that will allow learners to speak freely with the teachers about the challenges they face in reading comprehension in EFAL.

It was recommended to let learners have conversations with their peers or peer groups on a given topic. Dialogues, public speaking presentation and debates on given topics may assist because learners research words they will use when debating (see section 5.4.2). This is crucial, as in this activity they would look up unfamiliar words to use during the debate. They should start and keep their own personal dictionary, it may be an exercise book, in which words and their definitions are written. Some learners cannot afford to buy dictionaries of their own so in this way they would at least have personalised dictionaries they could use at home. The school had a very small number of dictionaries, so learners had to share. Sharing can be good but in this case it was time-consuming and learners could not learn how to use the dictionary individually (see figure 5.2).

It was concluded that the larger the vocabulary of learners the easier it is for them to use words in context. This would be illustrated by being able to construct sentences using words correctly and have synonyms for them. Learners who had improved reading comprehension using schema theory principles were able to guess the meaning of the words and find the meanings on their own. Similarities found in the study were that in most rural areas learners had too few dictionaries, struggled with vocabulary skills and possessed limited background knowledge when reading text (see sections 3.2.5 & 5.3.5). This made it difficult for them to comprehend the text. A possible solution was paired reading (see section 3.3.5).

6.3.6 Repeated reading framework

The need for a repeated framework is crucial as some learners cannot read properly, hindering them in societal and academic achievement (see Section 3.2.6). The greatest challenge lies in vocabulary skills, identified by using a repeated reading framework in school. Lack of efficient reading leads to underachievement in all other subjects, not only EFAL (see Section 5.3.6).

A repeated reading framework is recommended to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, as it provides multifaceted vocabulary, text structure and content structure (see Section 5.3.6). It is recommended that learners practice the use of repeated reading framework as it builds learners' reading proficiency skills, language comprehension skills, identification of words and sentence structure, leading to improved reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 3.2.6). It yields excellent vocabulary for use in content structures, retelling and summarising the written text.

Bottom-up and top-down theories have to be used in conjunction to assist learners to learn reading independently and be able to comprehend the written text (see Section 5.3.6). It is suggested that teaching learners a specified number of words per day or week is conducive to learning vocabulary and enhancing the reading comprehension of EFAL learners (see Section 5.6.3). One-on-one reading assists learners in improving reading comprehension by using a teacher assistance to make sure that all learners are attended to.

There is a lack of reading materials in the school, which is not funded by the SGB, SMTs or the principal when the money from government arrives. It was also emphasised that there was no community library in which learners could read after school (see Section 5.8.2).

Marginalised parents do not buy newspapers or magazines with which learners to practice reading out of school. No one reads to them at home, as their marginalised parents lack formal education (see Section 5.4.7). Mama Nompilo, as the retired teacher, assisted learners with the reading after school and when there was a teacher on long leave. Teaching assistants are required for learners, as the EFAL teachers cannot focus on each individual (see Section 5.8.1).

6.3.7 Mispronunciation of words

The co-researchers found that learners lacked cognitive skills, word recognition, language acquisition, memory and vocabulary (see Section 5.3.7). They failed to display mastery in phonics or read text with understanding, leading to loss of meaning in the written text (see Section 3.2.6). It was found that learners in Grade 7 had not grasped the rules or structures of their own home language, causing difficulties in communicating and reading with comprehension in a second language.

It was recommended by the team of co-researchers that teachers teach written text to develop learners' skills, involving new ideas, retelling, summarising and constructing sentences. Teachers are advised to have knowledge of all the cultures around the community in which they work, in order to create a warm and welcoming environment for learners to improve their reading (see Section 5.3.7).

The communicative theory was identified as improving pronunciation by the co-researchers. This can be seen when practising reading aloud, mimicking phonetics and focus of pitch words as emphasised (see Section 5.3.7). Shraim (2014:25) believes that e-book readers and picture books, rather than newspapers, are recommended for enhancing language knowledge, especially in reading comprehension (see Section 3.3.7). It was recommended that teachers had to encourage learners to use the *Oxford English Dictionary*, because UK English, which is used in South Africa, shows how words are pronounced. Moreover, this is the recommended dictionary used in Spelling Bees, an activity that also helps learners pronounce words correctly.

The team recommended that learners be well-versed in their mother tongue because it contributes to their second language (see Section 3.7.1). When parents assist their learners with reading at home it has positive outcomes (see Section 5.7.2). It is suggested that mispronunciation be improved by teaching phonemes at home with the support of parental intervention. It is vital to support learners in order to improve their performance in reading comprehension in EFAL. Watching television and listening to radio can also help as some programmes can provide phonemic awareness, letter sounds and decoding skills.

Resources such as reader books and dictionaries are needed. The principals struggle to receive funding from the government and therefore cannot buy everything that is needed (see Section 3.6.2). The co-researchers' team found that teachers and learners were not motivated in teaching and learning, each of them finding someone to blame instead of trying. Time provided by the policy of teaching EFAL was too limited (see Section 5.8.1) and some teachers were not keen to learn the technology of using e-books to teach correct pronunciation (see Section 3.6.4).

6.3.8 Teaching or developing reading strategies

The team of co-researchers in the study identified a lack of support from teachers in developing strategies that could improve the underachievement in reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 5.3.6). The diverse background of learners was not taken into consideration and it was found that their reading material did not suit their level or background (see Section 3.3.6). There was lack of connection to written text with the images in order to comprehend it (see Section 3.2.6). Learners struggled with writing, recognising words and letter sounds, decoding, word recognition, fluency, phonology and comprehension of a written text.

It was recommended by the team of co-researchers that the development of various reading strategies that suit the kinds of learners we have could improve reading comprehension in EFAL, as highlighted in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.6. Using bottom-up theories and analytic phonics, where learners were assisted in reading word by word, phonics instruction, vocabulary, phrases or sentences and fluency, improves reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 5.3.6). It was recommended that learners be offered a time to read aloud and background knowledge should be activated while reading to make it easier for learners to comprehend the written text.

The structured instructional reading strategy was recommended to improve reading comprehension to support and encourage learners to be attentive to the written text while the teacher read for them (see Section 5.4.6). The strategy activates prior knowledge and learners are able to use memory to access previously acquired knowledge. In most diverse countries, such as South Africa and the USA, teachers are required to find the best suitable strategy for reading in EFAL so that learners are able to compete with their counterparts who use English.

Learners who cannot read well usually drop out from higher institutions, as there is less assistance than at school level (see Section 5.3.5). Teachers are less motivated because of less in-service professional development in the skill of reading and parents are not willing to assist at home. Parents are resistant to assisting learners in reading as they feel it is not their responsibility (see Section 3.6.3).

The differences found in this study are use of unfamiliar teaching strategy, which is a cause of learners not performing well in reading comprehension (see sections 3.2.5 & 3.3.5). It is recommended that the best reading strategy for the majority of learners be used and the use of curriculum differentiation and D-CAPS with the minority as they are strugglers (see section 5.4.4) (Alexiadou & Essex, 2016:2).

6.3.9 Word recognition

The team of co-researchers found that learners are not proficient in reading and therefore underachieve in reading comprehension in EFAL, as well as other subjects that use English as the LoTL (see Section 5.3.9). Inability to read letter sounds and identify words leads to mispronunciation and lack of comprehension (see section 3.2.7). The literature further revealed that limited reading material and no community library leaves learners unmotivated to read as they are not familiar with reading. Even in their home language reading is rare.

To improve reading proficiency and perform to the required standard in reading comprehension in EFAL, it was recommended that learners be exposed to repeated reading by providing them with a variety of written texts that require them to read critically at school and out of school (see Section 5.3.9). It is imperative to do spelling and dictation writing after every text or paragraph read. It was recommended that more emphasis be placed on those learners who lack phonological awareness and decoding of words as there would be no improvement if there were still such limitations in reading comprehension in EFAL. It was recommended that teachers develop cards or charts with written words.

Applying a lexical priming theory in teaching word recognition could help learners to recognise more words than they previously knew and link them with pictures. Reading is not the norm in the community or school, exacerbated by lack of a library.

Shortage of funds in schools leads to lack of reading material and is detrimental to improving reading comprehension in the school and community at large.

6.3.10 Reading and building meaning

It was discovered that learners struggle to build meaning and comprehend the written text as they start using English in the Intermediate Phase. They are not familiar with the language and the team discovered that learners lacked motivation in reading for pleasure in all languages, especially English (see Section 5.3.10).

Activating learners' background knowledge and predicting the text following the instructions in guided reading theory improves reading comprehension in EFAL. It is set as a recommended solution in this challenge, which allows learners to enhance word knowledge and be independent readers (see Section 5.3.10). To improve reading comprehension teachers have to utilise the principles of intensive instruction by employing several methods of vocabulary instruction, including reference to antonyms, synonyms and background knowledge about the word. The co-researchers emphasised the repetition of reading as the learners would be able to decode and recognise words and show various practical uses of words in context (see Section 5.4.9). Teachers were advised to use the best suitable instruction to learners that would improve their performance in reading comprehension in EFAL academically and allow them to be able to compete with their international counterparts.

Learners learn and comprehend the written text better when similar to their environment so it is advisable for teachers to find texts that are familiar (see Section 5.6.3). During pre-reading it was recommended that teachers activate background knowledge and be in line with their cultural background, explaining unfamiliar words so that it would be easier to comprehend the written text.

6.3.11 Phonological awareness

Learners in Grade 7 were found struggling with reading efficiently, word identification and finding syllables of words. Some teachers lack knowledge of the

cultures of learners they are teaching, as they reveal limited development in their home language (see Section 5.3.7). According to Cummins (2014:226), learners should first acquire and have great knowledge in their home language before learning a foreign one.

It was recommended that teachers teach and emphasise rhyme awareness to let the learners understand letters in words (see Section 3.3.7). This should be conducted thoroughly in the Foundation Phase so that learners have a solid foundation of phonological awareness in their early schooling. The team recommended that teachers learn the cultures of the communities in which they are working. This would result in understanding the strategies they should use in order for learners to comprehend the phonemics, which leads to improved reading comprehension of EFAL (see Section 5.3.7).

The recommended solution by the team of co-researchers, based on the evidence gathered, was intervention support in improving fluent reading and phonological reading comprehension in the Foundation Phase. EFAL needs to be focused early in schooling, before learners reach Senior Phase, where they have too much work (see Section 3.3.9). The team mentioned in their recommendation that teachers had to suggest a suitable provision of phonological awareness to learners in the Foundation Phase to avoid development of reading difficulties (see Section 5.4.10).

Differences identified were that learners in EFAL were experiencing challenges of too many difficult or unfamiliar words and ones different from their HL (see section 3.2.7). Other countries which are experiencing the problems mentioned found a possible solution in teaching phonics and mastering their own HL (see section 3.3.7). Language and culture cannot be separated (see section 5.3.7), indicating that teachers had to learn learners' cultural background and their HL in order to support them.

6.4 MAIN COMPONENTS FOR AN APPROACH OF ENRICHING READING COMPREHENSION IN EFAL

This section acknowledges main components of an approach in improving reading comprehension in EFAL. The components of an approach were pronunciation, background knowledge, vocabulary, language comprehension, phonological

awareness, oral listening, comprehension and decoding. In reaction to the aim of the study to construct a tactic of improving reading comprehension in EFAL, the team of co-researchers devised solutions to implement this. They agreed that through collaboration, teamwork and networking these success indicators could be a solution.

6.4.1 Pronunciation

Mispronunciation of words by Grade 7 EFAL speakers reveals an unconscious lack of word knowledge, which hinders reading comprehension of written text. According to Fromkin et al. (2018:4), teachers should motivate learners and provide more opportunity for linguistic parameters that predict language learning success, such as phonetic coding, grammatical competence, rote memorisation, inductive language learning, ability to conclude linguistic forms, forming patterns from linguistic forms, and assistance from teachers to improve pronunciation of words (see Section 5.6.2).

Odisho (2018:5) concurs that repeated drilling in pronunciation by using sensory and cognitive modalities to acquire skills should be carried out through collaboration of the teachers. This would ensure social transformation and contribute to the construction of knowledge and improvement of reading comprehension in EFAL. Working in collaboration, all the co-researchers within and outside the school know the difficulties faced by Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase teachers in EFAL (Kim, 2010:190) (see Section 5.6.1). Everyone has the aptitude to contribute to the construction of knowledge in improving reading comprehension in EFAL. Applying a learner-centred method allows learners to have a voice in the construction of the new knowledge and the learner-centred method leads to consciousness in knowledge (Gibson et al., 2011:262). Teachers have to exercise equality and democracy in classrooms to ensure that no citizen's rights are denied.

6.4.2 Background knowledge

Background knowledge assists EFAL learners to comprehend the written text. Some of the text may not contain background knowledge as learners are diverse

and previously marginalised. Teachers have to activate it by utilising the schemata theory principles during their pre-reading (see Section 5.6.2), thus leading to improved performance. To comprehend the written text they discuss what they are about to teach during their planning session, so learners have to maintain their background knowledge and understand the meaning of some words. It is worth noting that learners have to employ background knowledge during reading. Permitting them to utilise their background knowledge would make it easier to understand what they are reading (Shapaka, 2015:20-24). Activation of background knowledge requires them to be given a chance to think about what they had learnt before (see Section 3.4.2).

Parents' involvement in their children's work should take place to such an extent that they are taught the Departmental policies about what is required and what their responsibilities are (Copper et al., 2010:759). Background knowledge is easily activated by parents when reading stories in the afternoon, as they know their children the best. Combining background knowledge with vocabulary is said to be the most effective strategy to improve reading comprehension in EFAL.

6.4.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary and background knowledge are most required by learners to enrich reading comprehension in EFAL. Vocabulary skills equip learners with word recognition through alphabetic patterns and phonological awareness (see Section 5.6.3). According to Dressler et al. (2011:58), vocabulary provides learners with deep development and enriches the levels of language competency, such as, phonology, orthography, grammar, morph syntax, construction of schemata and text modelling.

Teachers should pay more attention to vocabulary skills when teaching reading comprehension in EFAL. This improves not only EFAL reading comprehension but also performance in other subjects taught in English (see Section 3.4.3). Leavitt (2012:190) concurs that it is important that teachers use various methods to improve reading comprehension. The direct vocabulary method and word learning strategies, according to Leavitt, are the most effective methods to improve vocabulary skills that teachers have to utilise to improve reading comprehension in

EFAL. This involves social transformation in the co-researchers' team, working in collaboration, and sharing knowledge on how the challenge of limited vocabulary skills could be solved (Tracey & Morrow 2017:79). Sharing various teaching methods could lead to improved vocabulary skills of learners and hence reading comprehension and academic performance of learners.

6.4.4 Language comprehension

Background knowledge and vocabulary skills together with language comprehension work hand-in-hand in enriching reading comprehension in EFAL. Improved vocabulary skills result in reading fluency and reading, which enhance the performance in reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 5.6.3). Makubele (2016:85) recommends that learners learn the meaning of 75,000 words per year, that is, 12 words daily, from the age of two to 15 years (see Section 3.4.4). This would give them a greater vocabulary and when they reach tertiary education they would not have the same challenges highlighted by most EFAL scholars.

Activating background knowledge, vocabulary skills and extensive reading skills results in enhanced reading comprehension (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2018:20). Conversely, limited vocabulary prevents learners in schools and tertiary institutions from being able to construct a sentence. Equality to social transformation construction of knowledge is required and recommended if the learners are to use language like their counterparts who use English as their home language.

Teachers and community members should work in collaboration to make sure that learners have the required resources to read both in and out of school. According to Dressler et al. (2011:58), learners have to master their home language to avoid challenges in a foreign language. The home language is a strong predictor of EFAL. Learning a foreign language while they are limited in their home language proficiency would make it more difficult for them.

6.4.5 Phonological awareness

South Africa is a diverse country with 11 official languages that are the home languages to most learners. These languages have different rules in phonemes compared to English, which leads learners to face various challenges in reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 5.6.4). According to the South African Constitution of 1996 and the SASA (Act 86 of 1996), parents have to work with teachers to choose the LoTL for the school, and they mostly choose English. Gillon (2017:72) highlights that phoneme segmentation is assumed to improve phonemes identity, rhyme, phonemes memory and rapid named ability to assist learners with reading challenges. The identified intervention that should be utilised to assist learners was spelling and reading performance, which could improve phonological awareness and lead to enriched reading comprehension in EFAL.

Foundation Phase and Senior and Intermediate Phase teachers are recommended to work in collaboration in the challenge of phonemes, decoding and word recognition in EFAL. Van Draanen, Jeyaratnam, O'Campo, Hwang, Harriott, Koo and Stergiopoulos (2013:15) argue that parents as social community members should take responsibility for their children's constructive schooling. Learners should be actively involved in the process as members of a team, assisting in finding solutions to their challenges in order to improve their own reading comprehension.

6.4.6 Oral listening comprehension

Enhancing listening comprehension required teachers to discuss unfamiliar words and create background knowledge during the pre-listening session. Word utterances should be reserved and clues given as to the meaning of words so that listening comprehension is improved (see Section 5.6.5). According to Goldenberg (2013:4), listening comprehension is the ability to communicate and understand English academic backgrounds successfully. The factors of listening comprehension that teachers and learners should pay attention to are grammar, vocabulary and oral comprehension. To improve listening comprehension, teachers should use picture vocabulary and filling in the missing words in the passage.

6.4.7 Decoding

Learners should be taught reading and writing spelling, which is how the learners would be able to decode and recognise words and have phonological awareness. By gaining all these skills, learners revealed that their reading comprehension is improved and their educational performance could also improve. To be a good reader is characterised by the ability to decode and read fluently. Understanding phonic skills results in improved reading performance (Burgoyne et al., 2013:134). Effective readers have few challenges in decoding and word recognition skills, leading to educational fulfilment.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN APPROACH TO ENRICH READING COMPREHENSION IN EFAL

The recommendations for an approach arise with the objectives of improving reading comprehension in EFAL at Ntabasuka. The main components that should be focused on are pronunciation, background knowledge, vocabulary, language comprehension, phonological awareness, oral listening skills and decoding.

Foundation Phase and Senior and Intermediate Phase teachers are recommended to work in collaboration in the challenge of phonemes, decoding and word recognition in EFAL. Van Draanen et al. (2013:15) believe that parents as social community members should take responsibility for their children's constructive schooling. Learners should be actively involved in the process as members of the team, assisting in finding solutions to their challenges in order to improve their own reading comprehension.

6.5.1 Oral listening

It is recommended that teachers enrich listening comprehension, ensuring that sounds of words are reserved, giving clues on the meaning of words and using-real world meaning and linguistic meaning to connect it with the knowledge (see Section 3.3.5). Rossiter et al. (2010:600) mention that picture stories help in the enriching of oral comprehension of EFAL learners, which results in learners enhancing opportunities for further communication with other English speakers in the society.

6.5.2 Decoding

Clements-Stephens, Materek, Eason, Scarborough, Pugh, Rimrodt, Pekar and Cutting (2012:103) state that efficient and effective word recognition and decoding lead to improved reading comprehension. Burgoyne et al. (2013:135) state that to help learners with challenges in word recognition, decoding skills, reading aloud, and texts with pictures would improve reading comprehension in EFAL and thus academic performance.

6.5.3 Theoretical framework

The study adopted CET, which facilitates the construction of new knowledge by all the involved parties without discrimination of age, gender, colour or ethnicity. Formosa (2011:74) states that CET is the practice or method of leading learners to extreme levels of freedom and empowerment to enrich their reading comprehension in EFAL. Winke et al. (2013:255) indicate that CET is generative and forms a catalyst of new constructed knowledge by its co-constructors. These are viewed as equal, with no power relations applied over others. The theory emphasises the developments of teaching and learning, social, cultural, political and economic issues, re-assembling of knowledge, motivated to reconstruct the new knowledge into ideas (Giroux & McLaren, 2014:215). It allows all the co-researchers to voice their views and gives power to the powerless.

One of the objectives of CET is transformative in nature. Its responsibility is to eliminate inequalities that were experienced by poor learners and people from minority ethnic groups and help them to receive education equal to their peers (Formosa, 2011:319). According to O'Shea and O'brien (2011:13), teachers and learners have the capability to be transformed by critically thinking. Knowledge is transformational and teachers and learners as agents of change have power. They should explore the reality of the knowledge to transform the world. The reality enriches their knowledge and assists them to transform reality. It also requires educational professionals to eliminate injustice, increase equity and streamline equal knowledge and beliefs to every learner, irrespective of colour or gender (Davy, 2016:16). This is achieved by developing a strong vision that includes policies and practices on how to improve academic performance and enhance reading

comprehension in EFAL (Carlson, 2014:45). Working collaboratively against organisational inequality, and collectively with parents and learners themselves, is mandated by social justice.

6.6 EVIDENCE THAT AN APPROACH WAS SUCCESSFUL

Collaboration of teachers, parents, SMTs and subject advisors improved the reading comprehension, which was monitored by the language HoD. It was supported by all the stakeholders involved. Reading comprehension improved in all subjects, which was illustrated by the improved performance in each term as English is used as the LoTL in the school. It was agreed that teachers would work in clusters with every teacher from various schools coming together to discuss their insight and knowledge. Every skill is taught in school but some teachers skip some, as they do not see their importance or have knowledge of them.

Networking with the neighbouring schools with the help of subject advisors when they exchange ideas on how to tackle lessons in different skills improved reading comprehension in EFAL in the schools around Louwsburg. It was suggested that cluster networking should not be in only one circuit but in all schools around the Vryheid District. This is important as the circuit is made up of few schools.

6.7 CONFINES OF THE STUDY

Five objectives of the study were achieved, even though there were some challenges that limited it. The principles of PAR, which are qualitative in nature, were used, with focus on one school in which I was working. Some of the learners did not voice their challenges. The school is a full service school and some learners are physically challenged so it is difficult for them to speak out.

Co-researchers were reluctant to participate and were often absent during the meetings, complaining that they had too many duties. Only one subject teacher managed to come to one of the PAR meetings. This presented some limitations as I was hoping to obtain information from them regarding improving reading comprehension, and they were experts on the curriculum. The learners were not

free to talk about their challenges in front of the teachers to such an extent that the researcher made time for them alone. The parents became angry and asked the teachers to do their job, which led to the teachers themselves raising their voices and arguments breaking out.

6.8 SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was informed by CET and gave a detailed description of how it assisted learners in the practical participation of construction of new knowledge. It sought to find possible solutions to the challenges identified in reading comprehension in EFAL. It required learners, teachers, parents and subject advisors to work in collaboration in this project. With all the findings, it thus recommends future research with relevant workshops and material; making principals understand the importance of buying reading materials for schools; and motivating parents with little or no formal education to support and take responsibility for their children's education by reading for them and buying reading material to read at home. Teachers should pay more attention to teaching phonological awareness, word recognition and syntax as their foundation, as this makes it easier for learners to read at an early age and in all their classes.

Presentation and differentiation of three approaches is covered in Chapter 7 below. Identifying the approach that improved reading comprehension in EFAL at Ntabasuka Full Service School took a structured instructional approach, which catered for all the challenges identified in Chapter 3.

6.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This section confirmed that learners are challenged with reading comprehension in EFAL. The discourse was analysed using three levels of CDA. Findings, solutions and recommendations from various co-researchers were identified with the hope of using them in the identification of agreed approach to be discussed in Chapter 7.

The next section deliberates points of an approach that was laid out by co-researchers to improve reading comprehension.

CHAPTER 7

PRESENTATION OF AN APPROACH TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION IN EFAL

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this chapter is to present and review the structured instructional procedure approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. It discusses the structured instructional procedure approach, development stages and formulation of an approach, finishing with a conclusion of the chapter.

7.2 FRAMEWORK OF VISION

The vision discussed in this section is that of co-researchers working in collaboration on the development of an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. The critical vision of Ntabasuka Full Service School and other stakeholders is to uplift the honesty and values of education with truthfulness and encourage learners and other stakeholders to have beliefs and aims for their future. Their obligation is to offer learners skills, attitudes and values to deal with political, social and economic demands, so that they can compete with their counterparts after graduating.

7.3 SWOT ANALYSIS FOR AN APPROACH

The acronym 'SWOT' stands for 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats,' a method of analysis of the environment and school situated within it. The strengths and weaknesses refer to the internal structure of a school, the opportunities and threats to external factors in the environment. For instance, a strength of the school is value-added performance in reading comprehension in EFAL, while a weakness is low performance in certain subjects.

The exterior threats and opportunities are not in the school's control as the environment comprises societal, commercial, regulatory, national and even

international events. It is explored to stipulate the purposes of the business project and classify the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable to achieving those purposes. The SWOT analysis assists in answering questions to generate meaningful information on how to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. Answers would assist in creating a valuable tool and classifying their modest advantages.

The researcher and co-researchers had to address the issues of SWOT analysis in this study. Mr Ndwandwe (language HoD) said: *...“...teachers’ commitment is to improving reading comprehension not only in EFAL but in all subjects. This would assist learners to be intensive readers. Parents take responsibility to be part of teaching and learning of their children by proving support.”* Principal, SMTs and SGBs work in collaboration in improving the situation of the school by making sure that all resources for teaching and learning are available.

In Chapter 5, the analysis of data, it was revealed that some of the teachers who were not clear on the other skills tended to skip them. The principal was unaware of resources that were insufficient to teach learners, whilst parents lacked the formal education required to assist their children in teaching and learning. Even if they could help they would receive no compensation, and instead regarded it as the teachers’ professional obligation to teach, not theirs.

7.4 PRIORITIES FOR AN APPROACH

This section discusses the important principles of an approach focusing on issues that could critically enrich reading comprehension in EFAL. The issues were discussed with the co-researchers, especially those who had experience in teaching EFAL and similar challenges faced by the school (see section 6.12).

7.4.1 Networking

Networking is the supportive system that exchanges and negotiates information with others to gain more insight into particular aspects (Kahn, 1989:343). In my understanding, networking establishes a relationship with those who are

knowledgeable and non-knowledgeable, so that they can discuss information and acquire knowledge. The co-researchers worked together during PAR sessions to find solutions to challenges identified in earlier stages.

The co-researchers worked in clusters with other teachers within and outside the school to exchange information, learn new skills and gain more insight into strategies that could improve reading comprehension. That subject advisors were also included, working together in clusters, is significant because teachers who work together in a collaborative way convey trustworthiness and integrity towards the continuously transformational information (Turrini, Cristofoli, Frosini & Nasi, 2010:530). Using networking can reduce costs as some schools, when they see the results below the required standard, tend to find someone with experience to assist.

In this case, the services of those who are knowledgeable is free through networking. Isett, Mergel, LeRoux, Mischen and Rethemeyer (2011:159) and Kapucu and Hu (2016:401) assert that the purpose of using networking is to combine information from various experts, which would give powerful and cooperative knowledge that may improve performance in reading comprehension in EFAL. This is crucial as teachers in the group return to their school and classes with the change that would be beneficial and transformational to the learners. It is recommended that teachers as lifelong learners should find more information and knowledge on how to teach reading comprehension in EFAL. This shows that they should not rely on Departmental in-service training, which lasts only one day, hoping to cover the work that should be set for the whole year.

Networking with neighbouring schools with the help of subject advisor, when they exchange ideas on how to tackle lessons in different skills, improved reading comprehension in EFAL. It was suggested that cluster networking should not involve only one circuit but all schools around the Vryheid District d. This is important as the circuit is made up of only a few schools.

7.4.2 Collaboration

Collaboration involves developing trust and working together with an aim to improve performance (Whipple, Lynch, & Nyaga, 2010:510). It requires teachers to work

together by actively participating and sharing their teaching and learning knowledge. This is aimed at transformational knowledge that could improve all the challenges outlined in the study (see Section 3.2). Collaboration in schools should be maintained to the extent that it shows the improvement and importance of relationships, with discussion of critical knowledge between teachers within and outside the school. Working together offers teachers knowledge and enriches performance. Siqin, Van Aalst and Chu (2015:165) note that a collaborative network amongst learners and teachers is said to improve understanding of subject knowledge.

Teachers collaborating to find possible solutions towards challenges requires them to use those possible solutions in a practical way, as mentioned above (see Section 5.4), to sustain and transform their mentality about possible solutions and priorities for action in order to improve performance. Healy (2014:13) highlights that applying the transformation would help them to express a common language that could translate into a reality of improved reading comprehension in EFAL.

The study adopted CDA, PAR and CET, which require individual co-researchers to work in collaboration. Huxham and Vangen (2013:160) assert that collaboration insists on transformation, common vision and an equal level of power to the co-researchers. It is suggested that it advances learning of knowledge during their meetings in order to improve level of performance in reading comprehension in EFAL. The goal or aim of the study would only be achieved if working together as a team between co-researchers inside and outside the school exists.

Collaboration of teachers, parents, SMTs and subject advisor improved reading comprehension, which was monitored by the language HoD. It was supported by all the stakeholders involved. Reading comprehension improved in all subjects, which was illustrated by the improved performance in each term as English is used as the LoTL in the school. It was agreed that teachers would work in clusters with a teacher from various schools coming together to discuss insight and knowledge. Every skill is taught in school as some teachers skip other skills because they see no importance in them or have no knowledge of them.

7.4.3 Transformation

The aim of this study was to use the research as a tool to expand academic knowledge, applying what had been found to a real-world situation (Supriyadi, 2012:316). For example, in this study, it was applied to the research problem (see Section 1.5), the main focus being on the possible solutions identified to improve reading comprehension in EFAL (see Section 5.4). The co-researchers had to network and work collaboratively to find solutions and improve performance.

The knowledge and information found and identified during the PAR meeting had to be used as transformed scientific knowledge. According to Supriyadi (2012:111), this knowledge should be taken as transformed knowledge. The learners, teachers and parents who formed part of the team of co-researchers identified the challenges. Their knowledge was not to be undermined or used as transformed scientific knowledge in class.

7.5 JUSTIFICATION FOR AN APPROACH TO ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN EFAL

This study seeks to formulate an approach that could lead to the enrichment and improvement of reading comprehension in EFAL. The poor performance of learners in reading comprehension had resulted in low performance in other subjects, since the majority of schools in South Africa used English as LoTL. For most ethnicities in South Africa, English was not the home language.

English in South Africa is treated as a communicative tool, as one of eleven official languages. It is necessary to be able to express oneself in English in order to communicate with other ethnicities and perform better in a learning environment. Through experience as teachers my colleagues and I identified various challenges in teaching EFAL and other subjects from the Intermediate Phase to the Senior Phase. I decided to engage in this study in order to find possible solutions that could assist in improving reading comprehension in EFAL.

Through my observation and PAR discussions with other co-researchers, the structured instructional procedure framework approach is the one chosen (Richards & Rodgers, 2014:25). The views of the co-researchers was to let the learners

improve communication and, while they engage in any written text, improve vocabulary skills and competence. This would lead them to comprehend any written text when reading individually, and so enrich the results of the school would. So, the structured instructional procedure approach, from the views of the co-researchers, is evident as the one approach with the principles required.

Pertaining to the challenge of reading comprehension in EFAL, teachers and learners responded well, and through the results of ANA and the analysis of results for other subjects of the whole school we agreed that there was a challenge in our teaching and learning. We identified it as reading comprehension, underpinned by others explained in the study (see Section 3.2).

7.6 CHALLENGES IN RESPECT OF COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT SKILLS IN EFAL

The co-researchers stated in their discussions that most learners in classes were lacking pronunciation skills in reading a written text in EFAL. Mispronunciation of words or lack of word recognition lead to lack of comprehension of written text (see Section 5.4.7), causing learners to lose self-confidence and self-esteem in reading comprehension in EFAL, as well as in other subjects, since English was the LoTL. Young and Wang (2014:239) refer to the automatic speech strategy that could assist learners to improve pronunciation of words by using one-on-one computer drill practice in an amusing way.

Learners were not used to or motivated to read during their spare time or just to read for pleasure (see Section 5.7.2 and 3.2.5). Repeated reading leads to improved reading comprehension as they become used to it and independent readers. Hedgcock and Ferris (2018:18) highlight that the learners are not aware of the method of reading of previewing a text, which assists them in knowing the aim and important points of reading written text.

The other challenge that lead to underdeveloped reading skills was lack of material at home. The marginalised parents were not familiarising their learners with reading (see Section 3.3.5 and 5.3.5) and tended to think that reading should be carried out at school as the teacher's responsibility. They did not know that as parents it was

also their responsibility to assist learners in learning to read (Baquedano-López et al., 2013:150). The learners were not exposed to the media and usually communicated in their home language (see Section 3.3.2 & 5.3.2). A language is better learned when practised (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2013:14), when the written text contains pictures, is auditory and dramatized. Reading material with pictures or audio and dramatized mostly leads to better performance.

A lack of reading material at school and at home was a problem, suggesting that teachers should be innovative and bring readers, for example newspapers and magazine cuttings, to class. Barton and Hamilton (2012:52) recommended that, firstly, teachers record stories from radio and television to use in class stories. Secondly, as lifelong learners, they should also read newspapers and make copies.

A particular challenge caused by teachers is use of translingualism when teaching, which makes it difficult for learners to understand English or translate to English for themselves. Translingualism should be avoided in favour of role-playing the word or showing a picture of it for the learners to work out (MacSwan, 2014:32). This motivates learners to think critically about the answers and not just be spoon-fed.

7.7 THE CRITICAL ASPECT OF COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT SKILLS IN EFAL

Mr Ndwandwe (language Departmental Head) commented as follows:

Questions first before engag[ing] in comprehension. This is important as it gives the learners a clue and focus[es] on what is required on the comprehension before start[ing] reading. This is worth noting that they will know what is expected of them. When they start reading they will focus on the story with the questions in their minds. It will be easy for them to answer related questions to the text and comprehend what is the written text.

Learners should ask themselves about the setting, characters, main characters, conflict, where the story started, how it was resolved and what should happen next.

7.8 ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSION APPROACH IN EFAL

Pictures

Mr Ndwandwe (language Departmental Head):

The area is too remote. As our school is situated in [a] deep rural area like this. Our learners never hear anyone speaking English. They do not even listen to radios at home and watch television. Let alone various reading material.

The school should play an important role in the learners' EFAL learning, by providing newspapers, magazines and reader books to motivate learners to read independently and for pleasure. Teachers could create a warm environment and be friendly to learners, so that they feel comfortable to ask questions about any challenges they are encountering in their reading. Being familiar with the environment is conducive to them by infusing personal experience and activating background knowledge. They will then be more able to recall information.

7.9 THE SUCCESS INDICATORS FOR DEVELOPED COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN RESPECT OF EFAL

Reading books should be organised for learners and reading taught across the curriculum, even if it is a content subject. Learners should consistently be involved in reading that would improve their reading comprehension.

7.10 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR AN APPROACH FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS IN COMPREHENSION FOR EFAL

This section discusses the planning stage of an approach developed with the team of co-researchers. It explains in detail the common vision of teachers to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. In the planning stage, structures should be created and incentive provided. It is suggested that teachers plan at school and try to engage in reading. They should also try to speak English during school hours, as this would be a good example to learners, as well as organising debates, dialogues

and public speaking presentations. Picking topics that are relevant to a current situation they can use reputable dictionaries that help with the pronunciation of words. Even in school assemblies the proceedings should be in English, and small Bibles can be provided for learners to come forward and read from.

7.10.1 Planning stage

As the team of co-researchers, we met with a purpose of developing an approach that would improve reading comprehension. This section starts by explaining the approaches that were put in place by the DBE and school respectively, followed by the one we believed best for enriching reading comprehension in EFAL (see section 5.3.6 and 6.6.6). These approaches were “drop everything and read,” communicative language teaching, structured instructional procedure, and repeated reading.

7.10.1.1 *Drop everything and read approach*

The so-called “drop everything and read” approach gives learners time to read aloud what they wish, independently (Foorman & Wanzek, 2016:9). They are also provided with an opportunity to state to the teachers the challenges they experienced in a text that they were reading. While the teacher only attends to the struggling and middle-level learners this improves the literacy development of learners. Phonological awareness and limited vocabulary are some of the challenges of this study (See Section 5.3.5 & Section 5.3.7), an approach that provides solutions.

The approach illustrates the elements that could improve reading comprehension, with reading aloud connected to the ability of learners to comprehend the written text. According to Hasbrouck (2010:1), it allows learners to be corrected for their mistakes while reading. The point was raised that silent reading would not help struggling readers, as it puts more pressure on them to do something they cannot do (Hasbrouk, 2010:3). Reading silently is suggested for learners who can read and make meaning of text. They should be given an opportunity to read on their own while the teacher is busy with the strugglers. Even those who are fluent readers still

need assistance as they also need to develop their reading. They cannot be entirely neglected while attention is paid only to the strugglers, because if so they would also become strugglers in the near future, while others would grow in their reading.

This approach could be applied, but then the other challenges would be neglected. It would be wiser for the co-researchers to choose an approach that accommodated all the challenges, so that the objectives of the study were achieved.

7.10.1.2 *Communicative language teaching approach*

The origins of the communicative language approach can be traced back to the 1970s, internationally using English as language of communication (Littlewood, 2011:550). It is more concerned with knowledge in grammar and utterances of words (Savignon, 2018:236), and focused on assisting learners to use English as a communication tool. It does not put great emphasis on pronouncing words correctly (Banciu & Jireghie, 2012:94). Littlewood (2011:545) writes that this approach assists learners in attaining structures and vocabulary skills and contributes to the meaning-making of text, vocabulary, grammar and construction of sentences, and uses English as a communication tool. These are four of the challenges for which this study aimed to find possible solutions (See section 3.2), but not the others.

7.10.1.3 *Read to lead approach*

A “read to lead” campaign was established in 2011 at New York University then implemented in South Africa in 2015 by the Minister of Basic Education. It was established in order to improve reading in all countries around the world, especially in those learners from low-income homes. With learners from deep rural areas and most parents not working, the approach was supposed to motivate independent readers, but reading comprehension did not reach the 60% average.

The main purpose of this campaign is to read with understanding, focussing on phonological awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, limited background experience and limited vocabulary skills. This shows that this campaign would be of

great help to the study as all these challenges align with the challenges of this study, but there are still some challenges we face that are not addressed by this campaign.

7.10.1.4 *Structured instructional procedure approach*

In this approach, learners are motivated to read as if they are talking (Hasbrouck, 2010:2). Before teachers ask learners to read they give clues, model, demonstrate and do close reading. In this approach reading follows the method of modelling, prompts, directs clarification and targets questions, helping learners to comprehend the written text and enlighten them in their learning path. It empowers them to advance metacognitive strategies for knowing that learning has taken place. In this method the teacher may pose questions at any time, ask learners to explain vocabulary to make sure that they are concentrating, and allow them to comprehend the written text. As the teacher poses questions at any time, gives learners clues and provides them with vocabulary, this approach addresses all the challenges faced in reading comprehension in EFAL.

7.10.1.5 *Repeated reading approach*

Foreign learners use English in the USA as the LoTL, so failing to comprehend it will lead to poor achievement in other subjects. According to Beglar, Hunt and Kite (2012:24), Japan faces the same challenges regarding EFAL learners, notably inadequate vocabulary skills. Kenyans experience challenges in the decoding of words (Schroeder, 2013:245), with teachers explaining that their learners are not familiar with the many monosyllabic words in English.

Ramalepe (2013:73) noted that PIRLS (2007) also revealed that Republic of South Africa, between 2004 and 2007, had the bottom results of the 45 countries that participated. Reading comprehension was poorer than average. Research conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading fluency in 1994 revealed that learners were not reading well (Gove, Vacca, Vacca, Burkey, Lenhart, & McKeon, 2011:70). Reading fluency has a confirmatory association with reading comprehension, helping with word recognition needed to comprehend the text.

7.10.1.6 Repeated reading framework

Repeated reading is one of the most recommended methods of increasing the performance of reading comprehension in many countries, including the USA and South Africa. According to Taguchi, Gorsuch, Takayasu-Maass and Snipp (2012:40), this method has been used in the USA with the help of audiotapes to improve comprehension, enabling Learners to increase recognition of words, and impacting on their fluency and comprehension. Chen, Chen, Chen and Wey (2013:305) argue that repeated reading also improves background knowledge and high-order comprehension skills, enriching reading comprehension.

An approach for developing EFAL reading requires learners to be taught vocabulary rather than anything else to improve their performance in reading comprehension. It helps learners to learn volumes of words to achieve a high level of competence in reading comprehension (Beglar et al., 2012:66). The repeated reading approach assists learners to become efficient with decoding and word recognition in reading comprehension. It is important that explicit instructions in the repeated reading approach assist learners in vocabulary breadth and constructing fluency. Teaching learners to be fluent and also to comprehend helps them achieve competency in reading comprehension. The Ehri theory suggests that learners be taught from the partial alphabetic stage to the fully alphabetic stage of reading (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2010:28), showing that they would be able to recognise and decode words for foundational reading, and enriching reading comprehension (Allor & Chard, 2011:1).

Repeated reading is explained as the method that enhances reading fluency. The USA has a diverse language community. English is their main language of communication and since foreign learners struggle it was decided to plan repeated reading approach that could accommodate them (Graves, 2016:57). This approach would motivate them to be independent readers, leading to read for pleasure even out of school. Graves adds that foreign learners underperform in reading comprehension, but it is still compulsory for them to learn English, as it assists them in social adjustment and academic enactment.

7.10.2 Proposed approach of improving reading comprehension in EFAL: structured instructional procedure approach

This section focuses on the steps of creation and presentation of an approach to improving reading comprehension in EFAL. The structured instructional procedure approach is aimed at teaching academic curriculum material for reading comprehension in EFAL (Russell & Dauglas, 2019:67). The main purpose is to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, focusing on improving performance of reading comprehension in EFAL in order for them to compete with their counterparts. It will help learners to achieve best results in reading comprehension, thus their performance in other subjects is achieved. In improving this the decrease of unemployment and early school leavers should be achieved.

7.10.2.1 Step 1: Formulation of participants in an approach

The English teachers who were identified in this study as co-researchers held PAR meetings to discuss the challenges they encounter in teaching reading comprehension in EFAL. They also play a role in assessing learners and analysing results in order to identify the best suitable approach. In the initial meeting, they pointed out the different approaches that could improve reading comprehension. Parents assisted in promoting reading comprehension in EFAL. Some of the team members, notably SGB and SMT, would try to ensure resources were available, for example, finance to buy a dictionary. Teachers would made an effort to request donations from a nearby bookshop.

The Ntabasuka Full Service School is situated in Louwsburg in a deep rural area, along with a few other schools. It is a full service school to these few schools with an enrolment of 565 learners, half of whom are physically and intellectually challenged. The school is supported by district officials in full service school duties, though there is only one teaching assistant who works solely in the Foundation Phase. This means that the Intermediate Phase and the Senior Phase are not supported by teaching assistants and teachers have to do the work on their own.

7.10.2.2 Step 2: gather learners with reading comprehension in EFAL challenges

The second step is to identify the co-researchers who are challenged with reading comprehension in EFAL to hold meetings to find solutions. Parents, teachers and learners should discuss the challenges and find possible solutions to poor reading comprehension (see section 3.2 and 3.3). Teachers and subject advisors have the knowledge to improve reading comprehension (see 5.3.7).

7.10.2.3 Step 3: Common vision

In order to create vision, we made sure that there was common understanding between co-researchers regarding the structured instructional procedure approach. We acquired information to make sure that we all had the same understanding of it. Regarding its requirement, the main aim was to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, with information acquired on phonological awareness, limited background experience and limited vocabulary skills.

The focus for struggling learners is time spent on reading, oral, how fast the lesson should be paced (Alexiadou & Essex, 2016:2). The vision discussed in this section is that of co-researchers working in collaboration in the development of an approach to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. The critical vision of Ntabasuka Full Service School and other stakeholders is to uplift the honesty and values of education with truthfulness and encourage learners and other stakeholders to have beliefs and aims that influence their future. The obligation is to offer learners with skills, attitudes and values to deal with political, social and economic demands so that they can compete with their counterparts after graduating (see section 5.3.8).

7.10.2.4 Step 4: Differences

Communicative language teaching is different from the two other approaches in that it emphasises grammar more while the others are concerned with vocabulary skills. Limited vocabulary skills are mostly raised as a challenge to reading comprehension.

SWOT analysis

Areas that need to be addressed are checking parental involvement in providing support for their children's education, learners taking full responsibility of their education, teachers fully committing themselves to teaching and learning, providing support for learners, and checking knowledge and skills of teachers in implementing the structured instructional procedure approach. The SGBs, principals and SMTs ensure that teachers are provided with in-service training to be empowered.

The SWOT analysis assisted in answering questions to generate meaningful information on how to improve reading comprehension in EFAL. The answers to this would assist in creating a valuable tool and classifying their modest advantages. The researcher and co-researchers had to address the issues of SWOT analysis in this study. Mr Ndwandwe (language Departmental Head) said: *teachers' commitment in improving reading comprehension not only in EFAL but in all subjects. This would assist learners to be intensive readers. Parents to take responsibility to be part of teaching and learning of their children by providing support.*

Principal, SMTs and SGBs work in collaboration in improving the situation of the school by making sure that all resources for teaching and learning are available.

In Chapter 5, the analysis of this study, it was revealed that some of the teachers who were not clear on the other skills tended to skip it. The principal was not aware of resources that were insufficient to teach learners and parents who did not have the knowledge that it was their responsibility to help their children in teaching and learning without compensation.

The aim of the study was to tackle sustainable teaching and learning in improving reading comprehension in EFAL. It was crucial that the conditions conducive to implementing possible solutions and the identified approach were maintained through understanding the threats and risks that might hinder and threaten its successful implementation. The threats to most teachers were the ever-changing policies of the DBE and its requirements, which resulted in more paperwork,

studying and time wasted attending workshops and learning new requirements (Yuksel, 2012:144).

The challenging part when learning about PAR for the new researchers was that it has many words, such as action research, participatory research and PAR, that made it difficult to access the relevant information (Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017:187). The other challenge mentioned by Balakrishnan and Claiborne was that many co-researchers were not committed to the study. For example, parents would say they were busy when the researchers called them, some co-researchers tiring and the SGB would wonder why the process was taking so long. Others felt offended due to different cultural backgrounds and authority exercised over them.

The threats of using PAR as an approach are limited research action that is exercised. For example, its main concern is finding solutions to the challenge of improving reading comprehension (Gray, 2013:31). According to Goetsch (2015:86) there is limited consistency in information from co-researchers that is not scientifically proven and is only what they think will improve reading comprehension and what makes their children perform poorly in EFAL.

A challenge to researchers is when parents blame teachers for learners underperforming in EFAL. In this case, they should remain neutral and not defend the teachers (Friesen et al., 2011:99). Another challenge stated by Friesen et al. (2011:95) of using PAR is that time is required for the researcher to explain the purpose of the research to the co-researchers. This is especially to the parents, as many may be worried about why a teacher seeks information from them. Other challenges include changes in the university rules, the Research Information Management System and obtaining ethical clearance as it changed forms and the Department time to respond.

The challenging part of employing PAR is that the component of co-researchers can be time-consuming and requiring repeated telephone calls. Sometimes, they expect that the researcher will provide remuneration, even though it was explained clearly that there would be no payment and the project was voluntary. In assisting their children at home some complained that teachers were paid to teach their children, so why should they help?

7.10.2.5 Step 5: Roles and responsibility

A role of co-researchers (learners) lay in identifying and provide possible solutions to the challenges. Subject advisors provided information about departmental policies and curriculum matters. Whilst teachers were implementers of an approach and evaluators of how it was implemented. Parents shared the responsibility for providing support to their children.

Four of the co-researchers were learners from Grade 7 classes, where the challenges of reading comprehension were established. The reason they were chosen as co-researchers was because I was teaching Grade 7 English EFAL and the challenges that were mentioned (see Section 3.2) were identified in their classes. The other co-researchers were two teachers from the same school who were teaching English in different grades, The HoD of both Intermediate and Senior Phase, and one deputy principal teaching Grade 4 English in the same school. Two SESs were invited, but only one participated, providing various approaches in teaching EFAL that would assist learners in improving reading comprehension in EFAL. Parents provided challenges ns they encountered while assisting their children with EFAL reading comprehension at home, as well as possible solutions.

7.10.2.6 Step 6: prepare and present collaboration lessons and assess all endowment

The co-researchers should all have a common understanding of an approach that was being implemented. Common understanding helps in how to solve the challenges identified. During implementation, all should be allowed to have a voice, and be able to take decisions (see section 4.12).

7.10.2.7 Step 7: The chosen approach for the study

The identified approaches mentioned in step number three were taught in both classes of Grade 7 learners. It was assessed and results analysed in the meeting. After this, the structured instructional approach was seen as the best approach that could be used to improve reading comprehension in EFAL, because of its qualities

that cater for the challenges and give best solutions. The structured instructional approach is the chosen one for this study, significant as it allows learners to practise their vocabulary skills, dramatize, public speaking, dialogue, debate and improve reading comprehension in EFAL. This is seen through what their teachers were modelling for them.

7.11 THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME FOR ENHANCING COMPREHENSION SKILLS IN EFAL

Educators should monitor learners during break when they are outside and check whether they are using English as a communication tool. It is suggested that teachers hold conversations in English, and when teaching a poem recite and write to gain knowledge. Role-play of the stories that are read helps learners comprehend the written text, as the vocabulary in the written text could be improved when accompanied by visual support. Another recommendation is to monitor reading comprehension by removing certain words from sentences and asking the learners to fill them in.

In the meetings, discussion was on whether progress in each point had been made, if it was still in place and was followed in a correct manner according to its principles.

7.12 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The study contributed to the debate regarding reading comprehension in various ways, such as extended reading time for learners. Incentives of using EFAL during break time served as ways in which reading comprehension could be improved, as did the use of retired teachers.

Using various approaches, such as “drop everything and read,” and read to lead can enable teachers and schools to devise a more suitable approach to reading comprehension in EFAL. An example in this study was application of a structured instructional procedure approach. This study contributes to the body of knowledge in that it has been applied in Grade 7 class and was evidently successful.

The following are considered as contributions made by the study:

- It used an exercise book to be used as a personal dictionary in which to write unfamiliar words as it is difficult for their parents to buy dictionaries for them (see Section 5.3.5).
- It encouraged non-native English speakers to speak English during school hours as a communication tool (see Section 5.4.2).
- Starting to use English as LoTL in lower grades in the school made learners familiar with English at the early stage, so improving their reading comprehension in all subjects (see Section 5.4.3 & 5.4.10). This also helped decrease unemployment and the number of early school leavers before they reached higher institutions.
- It donated books from the local municipality to fill the new library (see Section 5.3.7). Situated in a rural area of Louwsburg, there was neither a community or school library. The school as a team of PAR changed the classroom into a library by building the shelves.

Use of different approaches suited learners' needs and built their background knowledge every time they started reading the text.

7.13 SUCCESS INDICATORS OF AN APPROACH

The structured instructional procedure approach was successfully developed and implemented in the school. There was no supremacy over one another (see Section 5.3.7). PAR principles guided the co-researchers to practically work together and all were practically involved without looking down upon others. They all worked collaboratively. Involving learners in their challenges improved the performance as they were able to read with comprehension on their own and answer related questions without the assistance of teachers.

Success indicators for the study were reading after break every Tuesday for 30 minutes so as to be independent readers and read for pleasure.

7.14 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, I recommend the structured instructional procedure approach that would take learners step-by-step with a purpose to improve reading comprehension (see Section 5.3.7). This significantly motivates learners to be independent readers and improve performance in reading comprehension. If this is followed and applied South Africa should no longer struggle with low performance or results in any grades.

7.14.1 Relevant professional development

Teacher development in teaching reading comprehension in EFAL is crucial as English is the language of communication worldwide and the LoTL in most schools. Subject advisors, teachers and SMTs should make sure that they work collaboratively in solving challenges identified in reading comprehension in EFAL. Parents should support their children and work together with teachers.

The teachers, SMTs and subject advisor identified and developed a structured instructional procedure approach in their PAR discussion (see Section 5.3.7). This approach illustrated much improvement in the performance in reading comprehension in EFAL and other subjects. It also helped in decreasing the stress of teachers as they were worried about what they were doing wrong (see Section 5.8.4). Applying this approach with Grade 7 learners saw few being identified as strugglers, since the school was a full-service school with learners who were intellectually challenged.

Subject analysis for the school was used to monitor the results in each activity and task. Teachers agreed to meet on a monthly basis for a refresher networking workshop (cluster/district) to see where challenges persisted (see Section 5.3.7). The subject advisor agreed that he would take suggestions from the teachers on topics that should be covered in Departmental workshops. These would be from challenges that teachers encountered in class.

7.15 THREATS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN APPROACH

An approach will not be effective or successful if the teaching resources are not made available to the school. The HoD of Language should monitor the work of the teachers by making class visits and checking files. It is important to make sure that all the skills are taught. It is imperative that teachers apply the approach in class as agreed upon and use various teaching strategies to cater for all types of learner. Teachers should attend the Departmental refresher workshops on all subjects.

7.16 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The vision of Ntabasuka was discussed along with a full SWOT analysis of implementing the approach. The approach identified revealed no threats but rather it allowed many opportunities for successful implementation. The four possible approaches were discussed with their similarities and differences. The developed approach was chosen because its principles suited the objectives of this study.

The first chapter of this study gave an overview, which included the background of the study and literature review, research problems, main question, theoretical framework, main research aim and five objectives of the study, methodology and design adopted, and ethical consideration.

In Chapter 2, CET, which informed the study, was discussed and it was explained how it related to the study. Theoretical concepts were explained using dictionaries, literature from other scholars, encyclopaedias and my own understanding.

Chapter 3 dealt with a literature review of the five objectives of the study, by acknowledging international, African and South African Democratic Countries scholars. In each challenge discussed, I mentioned the challenges that I experienced that persuaded me to undergo this study.

Chapter 4 discussed the research design. PAR and its cyclical CDA was discussed and how discourse data was analysed by using its three levels (textual, social and discursive).

Chapter 5 analysed the generated data using the three levels of CDA and CET on social issues.

In Chapter 6, a synthesis of findings was presented, with recommendations made for future research. Networking was used, through circuits and district clusters to obtain insight from various teachers in different schools about any challenges identified after a structured instructional approach had been implemented.

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ANNEXURE 1: RIMS APPROVAL



Faculty of Education

17-Oct-2017

Dear Ms Cherron Vundla

Ethics Clearance: Improving Reading Comprehension (RC) in English First Additional Language (EFAL) speakers

Principal Investigator: Ms Cherron Vundla

Department: School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2016/1548**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Prof. MM Mokhele
Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee
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ANNEXURE 2: PERMISSION LETTER

Request for permission to conduct research at Louwsburg P P School

Name: _____
Building no: _____
Department of education: _____
Telephone number : _____
Email address: _____

I, Cherron Nonceba Vundla am doing research supervised by Dr Nkoane M.M. in the Department of education towards a PhD at the University of the Free State. I am requesting a permission to conduct a research in your institution. The study is entitled: Improving reading comprehension in English First Additional Language

There will be an information meeting, to discuss information on the project, SWOT analysis and brainstorming sessions, then follow up meetings depending on the needs of the project. The discussions will discuss issues of safety policies, implementation of policies, challenges in the implementation process and come up with the strategy to improving reading comprehension in EFAL. Lastly there will be a reflection meeting where there will be discussions and reflection on the report, presentations and plans for public launch of the research report. All co-researchers will receive the final research report to its public dissemination. Members who will be quoted in the report will be contacted directly to ensure that they are happy with the context in which their anonymous quote will be used. All co-researchers will be given two weeks to consider the report and include any amendments or suggest changes or corrections.



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205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Rylaan,
Park West/Parkweg, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid-Afrika
P.O. Box 333, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid-Afrika

ANNEXURE 3: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: KZN DoE



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 362 1063

Ref:2/4/8/1498

Miss C.N Vundla

P.O Box 2513
Vryheid
3100

Dear Miss Vundla

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE", in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 05 April 2018 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Lourensburg Public Primary School

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 April 2018

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 - Pietermaritzburg - 3200 - Republic of South Africa
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...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

ANNEXURE 4: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION ASSENT FORM



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION ASSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Improving reading comprehension in English First Additional Language

RESEARCHERS NAME(S): Cherron Nonceba Vundla

ADDRESS: 1625 New Age, Bhhekuzulu New Location, Vr

CONTACT NUMBER: 083 882 3563

What is RESEARCH?

Is the scientific investigation or inquiry of a specific problem or issue which involves studying material, sources in order to find the truth and facts or new suggestions to shape our society which will lead to innovative decision. Its purpose is to understand human behaviour towards a particular problem.

What is this research project all about?

It help all the relevant stakeholders to find an approach or approaches that will enhance reading comprehension in EFAL.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

To assist in the improvement of reading comprehension in English First Additional Language

Who is doing the research?

I am Cherron Nonceba Vundla I work for the Department Of Education as teacher. I want to help learners to improve their read comprehension in EFAL.

What will happen to me in this study?

There will be discussions that learners will participate on. It will only be to give information and protection will be given continuously given throughout the study.

Can anything bad happen to me?



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205 Nelson Mandela Drive/ Rylean,
Park West/Parkweg, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/ Suid Afrika
P.O. Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/ Suid Afrika

ANNEXURE 5: CONSENT FORM

A CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Mzali ka.....

Ngingu Nkosikazi CN Vundla owenza uphenyo ngokwenza mihle imiphumela uma kwenziwa ukufunda nokuqondisisa olwemini lwesiNgisi lokungezelela lokuqala.

Ngithanda ukusebenzisa umntwana wakho kulolu phenyo.

Ngithanda ukukuqinisekisa ukuthi uma kwenziwa lolu phenyo angeke kube khona okuzophatha kabi umntwana wakho.

Konke okuzokhulunywa ngabantwana kuzoba yimfihlo namagama esizowasebenzisa angeke kube ngawabo ngempela.

Igama lomzali.....

Ukusayina komzali.....

Usuku

Nansi imibuzo ezobuzwa abafundi abantwana engezukukhombisa ukuhlukumezeka

| |
|---|
| 1. Yini engenziwa ukuze kutholakale imiphumela emihle uma kufundwa ukufunda nokuqondisisa olwemini lwesiNgisi lokungezelelela lokuqala? |
| 2. Yikuphi okungenziwa ngabafundisi ukusiza abafundi ukuze kwenyuswe imiphumela uma kwenziwa ukufunda nokuqondisisa olwemini lwesiNgisi lokungezelelela lokuqala? |
| 3. Yiziphi ezinkinga enihlangabezana nazo ezenza imiphumela engemihle uma kufundwa olwemini lwesiNgisi lokungezelelela lokuqala? |
| 4. Yiziphi izindlela zokufunda ezingenza kube nemiphumela emihle uma kufundwa olwemini lwesiNgisi lokungezelelela lokuqala? |

ANNEXURE 6: DISCUSSIONS DURING DATA GENERATION

DISCUSSIONS DURING DATA GENERATION

Mama Nompilo:

Ingathi khona okungahambi kahle lapha ezinganeni zethu uma sibuka imiphumela yesiNgisi. Ake sizame isixhazululo esingaphuma naso ukuze izingane zethu zifane nezinye izikole.

Miss Buthelezi (Language Teacher):

Siyakubona lokho kodwa nathi siyazama okusemandleni okulungisa isimo nathi I Department iyalwa nathi ngemiphumela engemihle

Mr Ndwandwe (Language HoD)

Implela mama nathi siyakubona nansi inkinga esinayo mancane ama dictionary okusiza izingane ngevocabulary okuyiwona asizayo ukuthi ingane izwe kancono ekwazini amagama. Lana akhona kumele ziwasebenzise ngokubolekana. Isikole masicela basithengela awafiki abaphathi bakhala ngemali engeneli zonke izidingo zesikole. Nabazali bakhala ngemali uma sicela ukuthi bawathenge.

Miss Buthelezi (Language Teacher):

Ukubolekana kwama Dictionary kuyasihlupha ngoba kwenza ungakwazi nokubona osengconywa ukukwazi ukuyisebenzisa.

Zamile (parent)

Noma phela engekho amadictionary sicela nenze imizamo yokuthi nibanikeze amagama babhale ezincwadini zabo.

Mr Ndwandwe

Asingabe sisibheka amadictionary odwa izingane zethu azikutholi ukunakelelwa emakhaya ngokufunda ubanika umsebenzi babuye nawo bengawenzile.

Zamile

Siyazama ukubasiza inking phela abanye bethu asifundanga kubalukhuni ukumsiza makunjalo.

MS Buthelezi (Language teacher)

Ake nathi siqale izingane zethu e foundation phase ngesingisi ukuze kuzobangcono lenkinga esinayo lana eskole.

Mr Vilane

Kuzomela nathi singabazali sizinikela ukusizeni futhi kube umkhuba izingane zethu ukuthi zifunde othisha nabo abakhoni ziningi kakhulu izingane ngeke bekwazi ukuyinaka ngayinye.

Mr Mpanza (subject advisor)

Nokuzifundela izingane emakhaya bazali kuyasiza kwenza umntwana ajwayele ukufunda kungabi into ayigcina esikoleni kuphela noma kusiyo incwadi namaphephandaba nibathengele kuze bajwayele ukufunda

Ntombi (Parent)

Lento iqala ekhaya. Wena njengothisha ngezinye izikhathi uyayifundela ingane yakho izindaba ezibhalwe ngesingisi akufani nezingane ezihlala nogogo kunzima kugogo akasazi isingisi kunzima kugogo ngisho ukufundela ingane iphephandaba lesingisi ngoba akazi lutho. Okunye nina nike nizixoxise izingane zenu ngesingisi.

Zamile (parent):

Siyazama khona inkinga njengoba besesichazile thina asifundanga kulukhuni ke ukuthenga iphephandaba lesingisi kushukuthi phela ngeke ngisalifunda ngelakhe nje phela. Akuncono naye kuthi seyasazi ezokwazi ukungichazela.

Ntombi (parent):

Siyacela nako thisha babafundise ngothando zingafunda isingisi ngoba phela thina uma nithi asizilekelele asazi lutho asisazi isingisi ngokwethu asifundanga lemfundo yamanje futhi ningakhulumi lesisingisi esikhulu sasemanyuvesi izingane engeke zisiqonde sebenzisani amagama alula noma ke niwashitshe abe lula ukuze bezowezwa nisebenzise amagama amqondofana kuze bagcine bazwile lento ofuna ukuyisho kubona. Okunye okufanele nikukhumbule phela manifundisa lezingane zethu akuzona ezalemadolobheni ezibuye zibuke namatelevision ezethu azazi lutho zithembele kini.

Zoleka (SGB member):

Ukusebenzisa amagama alula ngempela ikhona okuyonisiza ukuthi izingane zikwazi ukukhuluma ngesingisi futhi kwenze kube lula ukusebenza kwenu njengoba nikhala ngokuthi kulukhuni.

Nompilo parent:

Nathi singothisha bengicela sibhekelele nalababanye ababamba kancane bayazama inkinga bayehluleka ngoba phela nathi asifundile okunye siyazama kube yikhona ukuthi siyehluleka ngakho ke nina qinisani nenze sure ukuthi nihamba nababonke

Subject advisor

Niyise nezingane elibrary ziyofunda khona uma kungesilo usuku lwesikole.

Zamile (parent)

Awekho namalibrary lana ezingaya kuwo ziyofunda yasha, kanti ke nathi asinayo nemali yokuthenga izincwadi zokufunda

Ntombi (Parent):

Kwesinye isikhathi ngisuke ngazi ngengane ukuthi unenkinga yokungakwazi ukufunda kodwa ke phela ngenezingane eziningi okumele ngizinakekele. yebo ngiyamsiza kodwa nabanye badinga mina futhi ngisuke ngikhathele ngibuya kwamlungu nansi nemisebenzi yasendlini ingimele

Mr Vilane (SGB member

Ezinye zazo phela zihlala no gogo abangazange bafunde siyanizwa bothisa njengoba simele abazali kumele sibe nesixazululo ekugcineni.

Ntombi (parent)

Ngeke zifane zona izingane zethu nezenu sicela nizibekezelele awekho namalibrary lana ezingaya kuwo ziyofunda nani niyazi yasha. Njengoba nazi ngokubaluleka kwemfundo vele niyazifundela nizikhulumise nangesingisi ngalokho ziyajwayela njalo ulimi.

Mr ndwandwe (Language HoD)

Izingange zakwa grade 7, azikwazi ukufunda nopelo magama lwazo njalo luhlala luwong. Uthisha bamabanga aphantsi ake bazicinge bona bazibuze ukuthi ingabe benza okufanelekile na kulezingane.

Mr Mpanza (Subject advisor)

Ukufunda njalo izindaba lezi abazithandayo kuyasiza. Emva kokufunda kubhalwe nopelo magama and dictation writing kungasiza.

Mr Ndwandwe (Language HoD)

Ziyafundiswa lezingane ukuthi angazi kungamele kwenziwe njani ukuze zibone ukuthi imfundo ibalulekile futhi ikusasa lazo

Mr Vilane (SGB member): *Bothisha sicela nizinike isikhathi ayi ukuvele nikhulume izingane niye ngendlela yokuthi lezi zihlakaniphile noma lezi zibamba kancane azifanani ezingane zinike isikhathi sengane ngayinye.*

Izingane zamanje azikufuni ukufunda sezifunda ngoba ziphoqiwe mhlampe uma ningavuselela uqhozi lokufunda bengafunda. Ngeke nje uzibone zithatha zizifundela noma kungekhona okwesikole.

Mr Ndwandwe (Language HoD)

Mathishela asiqiniseni ekufundiseni I reading khathi izingane zethu zizokujwayela ukufunda kube into nje abayijwayele ingasuki kubo. Siyacela nani bazali nasemakhaya niwuququzela lomkhuba wokufunda noma kungesiyo into yesikole kodwa kube yisingisi amaphepha nama magazine kungasiza kakhulu.

Komele mathishela kesithi ukubheka izindlela zokufundisa ukufunda ingane ngayinye ezingenyusa izinga.

Izingange zakwa grade 7, azikwazi ukufunda nopelo magama lwazo njalo luhlala luwong. Uthisha bamabanga aphantsi ake bazicinge bona bazibuze ukuthi ingabe benza okufanelekile na kulezingane.

Mr Vilane (SGB)

Ake sizwe kuzo izingane zona zithini ngaloludaba.

Khanyisani (Learner)

Ningasheshisi manisifunda izindaba ngoba kwenza singezwa kahle njenge pronunciation of words

ANNEXURE 7: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

Acknowledgment of Language Editing

Date: Monday, 28 September 2020

This is to certify that I have conducted Language Editing on the following:

*IMPROVING READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL
LANGUAGE SPEAKERS*

by

CHERRON NONCEBA VUNDLA

Algraham

Andrew Graham (BA, MA dist., PhD, University of Keele, UK)*



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ANNEXURE 8: TURN IT IN REPORT