Exploring reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers responsible for early literacy development

Elani Boshoff

2013045170

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts (English Language Studies) in the Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State

(September 2023)

Supervisor: Dr Colleen Du Plessis

Co-supervisor: Dr Laura Drennan

Abstract

Reading is a crucial part of academic study and scholastic performance. Strong reading skills, which entail positive reading attitudes and robust reading habits, are needed to facilitate learning. Teachers, in particular, need to have a love for reading and regular reading habits themselves to be influential role models for their learners. However, studies show that, although pre-service teachers believe reading is important and/or beneficial, they do not maintain strong reading habits themselves, and they do not see reading as pleasurable. Such teachers may struggle to impart to their future learners positive reading attitudes that they themselves do not have.

This study focused on pre-service teachers because they are uniquely positioned to reveal current reading attitudes cultivated by South African schools, and because they still have the opportunity to develop positive reading attitudes during their teacher training. The cohort includes pre-service teachers who are training to become Foundation or Intermediate Phase teachers; thus, the title of the study refers to pre-service teachers who will be responsible for early literacy development. The study aimed to learn about pre-service teachers' reading attitudes and habits, and underlying reasons for them. To do this, insights were gained from a thorough literature study on reading as a cognitive process, the development of reading attitudes and habits, reader-text transaction types, and instructional approaches for meaningful reading practices within a Humanist and Social Reformist curricular philosophy. For the purposes of exploring the reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers responsible for teaching young learners, the English Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) was developed as the data collection instrument.

Key findings were that although most of the pre-service teachers expressed positive reading attitudes, their reading attitudes do not align with their reading practices, and they do not engage in extensive or pleasure reading. The cohort's reading habits can be described as efferent rather than aesthetic; they seem not to focus on a love for reading and a regular reading habit for its own sake — rather, many think of reading as a necessary obstacle that must be overcome for academic purposes such as completing assignments. They read texts associated with their course work rather than literary works that could provide educational and personal benefits. Although many mentioned the value of literature in education to acquire knowledge and develop language proficiency, very few mentioned the need for teachers to read often or have a love for reading. Moreover, most were not encouraged to engage in meaningful ways with literature at school. They were taught with rote learning techniques in which learners were expected to memorise teachers' notes instead of generating their own ideas and interpretations. It is possible that the lack of personal and meaningful engagement with literature texts is a cause for their lack of extensive and pleasure reading.

The results of the survey also revealed a concerning prevalence of reading anxiety amongst the cohort of pre-service teachers. Participants indicated that they struggle to understand what they read, which may affect their studies negatively, given the amount of reading students are expected to do at university. Interestingly, participants showed a strong preference for printed texts. The fact that much of their academic reading is done through digital modes, via the Internet or through online learning management systems, may be a contributing factor to reading anxiety. Responsible design principles in applied linguistics remind us that the efficacy of our solutions is more important than their trendiness. If we wish to establish healthy reading

attitudes and habits, digital reading modes may not always be the best tool to facilitate engagement with literature in classrooms.

Recommendations based on the findings include prioritising reading literacy education in teacher training programs, as well as foregrounding the literature component of language curricula. Pre-service teachers need to be made aware of their example as reading role models, and they should also be given opportunities to nurture their own reading attitudes and habits during their training. They need to be equipped with the tools and techniques necessary to teach their future learners important reading skills, while encouraging a love for reading and the development of robust reading habits.

(Key words: reading, literacy, reading attitudes, reading habits, pre-service teachers)

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge my two supervisors, Dr Colleen Du Plessis and Dr Laura Drennan. Thank you both for your diligence and patience; your support through the writing process is very much appreciated. I could not have asked for better partners in my research. Many thanks to Dr Van der Merwe at the UFS Statistical Consultation Unit, whose assistance was invaluable. I am also very grateful to each student who participated in this study. Lastly, my deepest gratitude to the many literacy and literature teachers who have had an impact in my life. Those include my parents, who were my first and most important reading role models.

Table of Contents

Abstract .... **i**

Acknowledgements .... **iv**

List of figures .... **ix**

List of tables .... **x**

Chapter 1: Exploring pre-service teachers' reading attitudes and habits **1**

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 The education system and inequality in South Africa 6

1.3 Purpose of the study and research objectives 7

1.4 Conceptual and theoretical framework 9

1.5 Research design and methodology 11

1.6 Data collection 12

1.7 Ethical considerations 13

1.8 Conclusion 13

Chapter 2: Literature review **17**

2.1 Introduction 17

2.2 Responsible design in applied linguistics 17

2.3 Reading comprehension as a cognitive process 20

2.4 Development of reading skills and attitudes 22

2.5 Reader-text transaction types 30

2.6 Studies on reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers 34

2.7 Instructional approaches for meaningful reading practices 44

2.7.1 Literature as concept 45

2.7.2 Teaching literature 46

2.7.3 Models for using literature in EIL contexts 48

2.7.4 Classroom strategies for integrated language and literature study 50

2.7.5 Literature in the prescribed South African school curriculum 53

2.7.6 Digital reading in the literature classroom 58

2.8 Conclusion 60

Chapter 3: Research methodology **63**

3.1 Introduction 63

3.2 Research objectives 63

3.3 Research design 64

3.3.1 The pragmatic paradigm 64

3.3.2 Mixed-methods approach 65

3.4 Participants 66

3.5 Development of the survey instrument 68

3.5.1 Design of the pilot survey questionnaire 70

3.5.2 Piloting the questionnaire 72

3.5.3 Refinement of the questionnaire 73

3.6 Statistical procedures 78

3.7 Ethical considerations 81

Chapter 4: Reliability of ERAS and analysis of descriptive statistics 82

4.1 Introduction 82

4.2 Reliability of the survey scale used in the ERAS questionnaire 83

4.2.1 Reliability of the ERAS using Cronbach's alpha and Guttman's Lambda (G6) 84

4.2.2 Reliability of the ERAS using Omega as calculated through R 88

4.2.3 Reliability of subscales 92

4.3 Descriptive statistics covering educational and language background 102

4.4 Summary statistics of the scaled survey items 111

4.5 Participants' total reading attitude scores 121

4.6 Conclusion 128

Chapter 5: Investigating relationships between variables 132

5.1 Introduction 132

5.2 Correlations between subscales 132

5.3 Correlation of scaled items and contextual questions using Pearson 134

5.4 Nominal summaries and relationships with key questions using Chi-square tests 136

5.4.1 The relationship between pleasure reading and mode of reading 137

5.4.2 The relationship between pleasure reading and conative reading habits 140

5.4.3 The relationship between pleasure reading and negative reading attitudes 145

5.4.4 The relationship between enjoyment of literature classes and English reading attitudes 149

5.5 Conclusion 151

Chapter 6: Thematic analysis of responses to open-ended survey items 154

6.1 Introduction 154

6.2 Analysis of responses to first open-ended question 155

6.3 Analysis of responses to second open-ended question 159

6.4 Conclusion 164

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations 166

7.1 Introduction 166

7.2 Pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading English 167

7.3 Kinds of reading in which pre-service teachers engage 169

7.4 Underlying reasons for pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading 170

7.5 Recommendations 173

7.6 Closing remarks 175

Bibliography 177

Annexure A: L2 Reading attitude survey (Akbari *et al.*, 2017: 3-5) 191

Annexure B: The English Reading Attitude Survey 192

Annexure C: Consent form (POPIA ACT) 195

Annexure D: Ethics approval 198

List of figures

Figure 1: Common underlying proficiency iceberg (Robertson & Graven, 2020: 6)..............25

Figure 2: Stages of Learning to Read: Reading to Learn methodology (Rose, 2005: 147).....52

Figure 3: Omega factor analysis of the ERAS..89

Figure 4: Distribution of responses to items within the ‘Anxiety’ subscale............................92

Figure 5: Distribution of responses to items within the ‘Cognitive’ subscale........................94

Figure 6: Distribution of responses to items within the ‘Conative’ subscale..........................96

Figure 7: Distribution of responses to items within the ‘Negative’ subscale..........................98

Figure 8: Distribution of responses to items within the ‘Self-assessment’ subscale.............100

Figure 9: Students’ Grade 12 English literature curriculum (N=438)..................................104

Figure 10: Summary of responses in each subscale...120

Figure 11: Histogram indicating total reading attitude scores for ERAS participants. 123

Figure 12: Normal Q-Q plot of total reading attitude..125

Figure 13: Detrended normal Q-Q plot of total reading attitude..126

Figure 14: Correlations between subscales...133

Figure 15: Pearson correlation coefficients of survey items...134

Figure 16: Reading concerns of survey participants...156

Figure 17: School-level literature instruction topics...160

List of tables

Table 1: Final language background and contextual information questions 74

Table 2: L2 Reading Attitude Survey statements with modifications. 75

Table 3: Open-ended questions.. 78

Table 4: Reliability of the ERAS using Cronbach's alpha and Guttman's Lambda (G6) 85

Table 5: Reliability of the ERAS scale if item is dropped as calculated through R 85

Table 6: Item-total statistics of the ERAS calculated through R 87

Table 7: Summary of all reliability coefficients 91

Table 8: Reliability analysis for 'Anxiety' subscale 93

Table 9: Reliability analysis for 'Cognitive' subscale 95

Table 10: Reliability analysis for 'Conative' subscale 97

Table 11: Reliability analysis for 'Negative' subscale 99

Table 12: Reliability analysis for 'Self-assessment' subscale 101

Table 13: School level of English (N=444) 103

Table 14: Access to a school library with books to read (N=442)....................................... 106

Table 15: Enjoyment of high school literature classes (N=443).. 107

Table 16: How participants were taught literature in high school (N=443) 108

Table 17: Reading preferences (N=442)... 109

Table 18: How often participants read texts longer than 20 pages (N=441) 110

Table 19: How often participants read for pleasure (N=442) 110

Table 20: Summary statistics of Likert scale items 112

Table 21: Distribution of responses to Item 12, "I would rather do nothing than read a book." 116

Table 22: Responses to Item 14, "I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read in my coursework." 118

Table 23: Responses to Item 34, “I feel anxious about the amount of academic reading I have to do at university.” ... 118

Table 24: Total Reading Score descriptive statistics from SPSS (N=434) ... 122

Table 25: Tests of Normality ... 124

Table 26: Upper and lower extreme reading attitude scores ... 126

Table 27: Strongly correlating items ... 135

Table 28: Correlation of preferred mode of reading with how often participant reads for pleasure (p-value <0.001) ... 138

Table 29: Correlating reading aversion and preferred reading modes (p-value <0.001) ... 138

Table 30: Correlation of online/digital reading and frequency of reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001) ... 139

Table 31: Correlating book recommendations and pleasure reading (p-value <0.001) ... 140

Table 32: Correlating vacation English book reading and pleasure reading (p-value <0.001) ... 141

Table 33: Correlating finding time for reading in English) and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001) ... 142

Table 34: Correlating desire to read English books in future with reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001) ... 143

Table 35: Correlating attitudes towards library use and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001) ... 144

Table 36: Correlating how often participant reads a text longer than 20 pages and how often participant reads for pleasure (p-value <0.001) ... 145

Table 37: The correlation of attitudes towards book reading and how often participants read for pleasure (p-value <0.001) ... 146

Table 38: Correlating frequency of pleasure reading and finding reading English boring (p-value <0.001) 147

Table 39: Correlating attitudes towards reading English and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001) 148

Table 40: Correlating academic reading fatigue/anxiety and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001) 149

Table 41: Correlating enjoyment of literature classes and finding reading English boring (p-value <0.001) 150

Table 42: Correlating avoiding reading English and enjoyment of high school English literature classes (p-value <0.001) 150

Chapter 1: Exploring pre-service teachers' reading attitudes and habits

1.1 Introduction

Reading is a critical component of literacy, as well as academic study and scholastic performance (Pretorius, 2002; Pretorius & Mampuru, 2007; Baruthram, 2012; Cimmiyotti, 2013; West, 2017). Without strong reading skills, which entail a positive reading attitude and robust reading habits, students stand little chance of succeeding in their academic careers. Proficient and independent readers are not only more likely to perform well academically (Cullinan, 2000; Whitten, Labby, & Sullivan, 2016; Nyarko, Kugbey, Kofi, Cole & Adentwi, 2018), they are also in a stronger position to engage in self-education driven by their curiosity because they can access the vast body of written knowledge accumulated online and in printed form. Thus, it is imperative that learners be taught to read well, to give them the opportunities that reading can offer.

Learning how to read is a complex process, which is influenced by many factors. It begins in the home and continues into learners' early school years. Spaull, Pretorius and Mohohlwane (2020: 2) write that "[b]y the end of Grade 3, readers are expected to read accurately – on their own – at a steady rate or speed (appropriate to their grade level), with comprehension and *with enjoyment*)" (emphasis added). Despite this goal, literacy rates among South African school children are worryingly low. More data are needed to understand the extent and the nature of South African learners' literacy, but the highly relevant Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides some important statistics. PIRLS is an international research project whose objective is to measure learners' reading ability at Grade 4 level, and teachers'

and schools' instructional practices with respect to developing reading literacy (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The study sets an international benchmark for reading comprehension at Grade 4 level, since, as Spaull *et al.* (2020) emphasise, this is the level at which learners are expected to have mastered the skill of reading; they have learned to read and can now begin reading to learn. PIRLS consists of a literacy test administered every five years (since 2001) to learners and teachers in over 60 countries, including South Africa. The test assesses participants' ability to comprehend what they read. The most recent round was conducted in 2021, but the detailed results available for South Africa are those from 2016. In the 2016 administration of PIRLS, a nationally representative sample of 12810 South African participants were assessed in the 10 official languages, including learners from urban, rural, privileged, and underprivileged schools (Howie *et al.*, 2017b). The results were discouraging. The 2016 results indicated that 78% of learners in South Africa are unable to read for meaning at the end of Grade 4 (Howie *et al.*, 2017a: 73). The 2016 PIRLS study also found that South African teachers spend about 10% of their time in the classroom on reading, whereas teachers in Russia (one of the top-performing countries in PIRLS) spend about 30% of their time on reading (Howie *et al*., 2017a: 171). In addition, the PIRLS study found that teachers in South Africa spend less of their own free time reading than teachers in the high-achieving countries do (Howie *et al.*, 2017a: 11). With that said, the PIRLS found no relationship "between instructional time and achievement in reading, possibly indicating a lack of effective teaching and learning" in South African schools (Howie *et al.*, 2017a: 13). The latest PIRLS poll's findings, released in May 2023, have not yet been analysed in detail; however, they do show that the situation in South Africa has in fact deteriorated; 81% of Grade 4s who participated in the 2021 round of the PIRLS were not able to read for meaning (IEA TIMSS & PIRLS, 2023). This once again highlights the urgency to address reading literacy in South Africa.

Teachers and teacher trainers in South Africa would do well to increase their knowledge of literacy problems particular to this country since they may be the key to alleviating them. One aspect that may have a greater influence than expected is the reading attitudes of learners and teachers. Reading attitudes can affect the amount of reading that people do and impede knowledge acquisition and generation. The problem of illiteracy and literacy struggles is significant, and weak reading abilities in students who have been schooled present the disturbing possibility that the education system is not producing proficient readers. However, *aliteracy* is a less obvious but important issue as well. The term 'aliteracy' was first coined by Larry Mikulecky in 1978, who described it as "lack of a reading habit; especially, such a lack in capable readers who choose not to read" (in Ramsey, 2002: 52). Children learn basic reading skills like decoding[1] at school, but the aforementioned PIRLS results indicate that learners are not successfully taught to read for meaning in lower primary school, and they may not be inspired to want to read during their academic careers and throughout the rest of their lives. Despite their ability to read, aliterate learners may not engage in reading regularly. Literacy involves more than just the ability to decode written text; the truly proficient reader reads widely and deeply (Applegate & Applegate, 2004: 554), and can use reading skills to build knowledge and expand intellectual horizons, not because of an obligation to read, but as a result of pleasure associated with reading. If the goal is to encourage this kind of reading, instilling a positive reading attitude in learners is just as important as literacy itself.

Research suggests that teachers' attitudes towards reading, as well as their personal reading habits, will impact their teaching practices and set an example for their students (Nathanson, Pruslow & Lewitt, 2008; McKool & Gespass, 2009; Rimensberger, 2014). That is to say, just

[1] 'Decoding' refers to the act of recognising and converting constituent written letters into their respective sounds and then blending the sounds together to pronounce the word (Pearson & Cervetti, 2013: 258). In essence, this means connecting the written word to its spoken form and meaning.

as teachers should teach learners the skills needed to read well, they also should "be good reading role models" for their students (Rimensberger, 2014: 6) if they intend to foster healthy reading habits and advanced reading skills in their learners. Rimensberger (2014: 6) reminds us that "[t]he need to be passionate, particularly in the Foundation Phase, about narratives and stories is so important in starting children on the journey to becoming [proficient] readers". Thus, it is important to encourage positive reading attitudes as part of teacher training. Studies show that pre-service teachers' reading attitudes are not as positive as one might expect of the teachers of tomorrow. According to Applegate and Applegate (2004: 1), "[m]any pre-service teachers are not avid readers themselves, and this lack of engagement may be passed on to their students." In her study at a private tertiary institution in South Africa, Rimensberger (2014) found that pre-service teachers agree that reading is important, but they do not enjoy reading and they do not read for pleasure. Rimensberger (2014: 1) cautions:

> It emerged that student teachers' positive attitude towards reading and their apparent understanding of its importance starkly contradicted their lack of own reading for pleasure and investment of their time in this activity. The acknowledgement of the importance of reading can be viewed as a small success. However, it is ultimately overshadowed by the reality that if this contradiction is not pointed out and interrupted, it could send a mixed message to future learners: that reading is important, but not pleasurable.

Teachers' struggles to foster healthy reading habits in their students may be affected by their own reading attitudes and the reading habits they model to their students. Also, teachers may struggle to choose appropriate texts and may not be able to design effective reading instruction program[2] if they themselves do not engage in reading on a regular basis (Van der Walt & Evans,

[2] Program is the preferred word in American, Australian and Canadian English. It was also used in the UK up until the Nineteenth Century when preference started to be given to the French spelling "programme". In the light of the move to decolonise South African education, consideration should be given to accepting program as part of the South African variety of English. See the following webpage: https://www.grammarly.com/blog/program-programme/

2019; Rimensberger, 2014: 2). Another serious concern is the number of teachers who are not fully equipped to teach learners how to read. It seems that teachers are not adequately trained to teach children how to read or instil in them a love for reading, not only in the Foundation Phase, but throughout their school careers (Taylor, 2014; Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016; Spaull, 2019).

To address some of the literacy problems in South Africa, this study focuses on the reading attitudes of pre-service teachers responsible for early literacy development. The study focuses specifically on English reading attitudes and habits because all BEd Foundation and Intermediate Phase students at the University of the Free State are required to study English and be trained to teach English. Furthermore, most schools in the country use English as the main language of learning and teaching, which means that most of the learning materials are in English and require teachers to have good English reading skills. Research on multilingual pedagogies and the importance of reading attitudes and habits related to other languages falls outside the scope of the present study.

The researcher endeavours to gain a fuller understanding of attitudes to reading in English, how these are shaped, and how they may influence reading behaviour. As has been shown in many studies, such as those done by Applegate and Applegate (2004), McKool and Gespass (2009), Nathanson, Pruslow and Levitt (2008), and Rimensberger (2014), teachers' reading attitudes and habits have a profound effect on their learners. Understanding their attitudes can shed some light on how to address a lack of appreciation for reading and its connection to academic performance and academic literacy. Working with pre-service teachers offers the opportunity to understand the reading attitudes produced by the school system, from which first-year students have recently graduated. First-year students also have the potential to gain positive

reading attitudes during their time at university, before they enter the classroom to teach their own students. If we can better understand pre-service teachers' attitudes toward reading, particularly when those attitudes are negative, we may be able to address some of the challenges in the literacy classroom (Rimensberger, 2014) and beyond.

1.2 The education system and inequality in South Africa

Literacy education could be a powerful tool of upliftment. As Nelson Mandela[3] stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". However, as it stands, the education system in South Africa perpetuates the cycle in which young people inherit the socioeconomic status of their parents. Those who are privileged to graduate from high-functioning or private schools can access the top section of the labour market where they enjoy a higher earning potential. On the other hand, learners whose parents cannot afford to send their children to the top-achieving schools do not have the same access to the labour market and end up inheriting the same economic status as their parents. Thus, where education could be a tool for social mobility and improving the economic prospects of citizens, in reality, it is "one of the key mechanisms through which an unequal society is replicating itself" (Spaull, 2015: 38).

Poorer students have limited access to quality education, which adversely affects their academic performance (Spaull, 2015). Children from high-poverty, print-poor homes begin their education journey well behind the starting line (Rose, 2005). Children who have not yet grasped basic decoding skills by the end of Grade 1 face more challenges reading for meaning

[3] Speech delivered by Nelson Mandela at Madison Park High School in Boston on the 23rd of June 1990 (see Ratcliffe, S. (2017). Oxford Essential Quotations. 5th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press). Available at: https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191843730.001.0001/q-oro-ed5-00007046

or pleasure. Although it is possible to develop the necessary reading skills at a later stage, most children's initial experiences with reading will form the foundation of their reading experience for the rest of their lives (Van Staden, 2011). A home environment in which the child's caregiver(s) have neither the knowledge nor the resources to provide the child with high-quality language exposure will negatively impact the child's language and literacy development. Such children need more time and help to acquire reading skills, but they often only have access to schools that cannot meet these needs (Rose, 2005; Spaull & Pretorius, 2019: 152).

Although there may be financial constraints in South Africa, other countries with similar financial issues, like Kenya and Tanzania (Spaull, 2015: 34), have shown that it is possible to provide better education through more effective training, knowledge, and policy reform. As emphasised by Spaull and Pretorius (2019: 165), "... ultimately the solution to the South African reading crisis will depend entirely on whether the Department of Basic Education, and the government more generally, prioritises the universal acquisition of basic literacy above all other policy priorities." This study focuses on pre-service teachers' reading attitudes and habits as part of a larger initiative to facilitate the training of the teachers of tomorrow, in the hopes of creating an education system that could empower the citizens of this country to break free from the poverty cycle.

1.3 Purpose of the study and research objectives

The present study investigates a group of South African university students' attitudes towards reading and their actual reading habits. The cohort includes pre-service teachers who will be teaching Grades R to 3, and 4 to 6 (referred to respectively in South Africa as the Foundation and Intermediate Phases of teaching). The study follows the same rationale as Rimensberger

(2014: 1): if we do not understand pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading, the challenges of the literacy classroom cannot be fully addressed.

The purpose of the study is to learn about the reading attitudes and habits of first-year pre-service teachers enrolled in the BEd Foundation and Intermediate Phase degree programs at the University of the Free State (UFS). The study also seeks to uncover possible underlying causes of negative reading attitudes and unhealthy reading habits.

The research questions are the following:

1. What are pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading?
2. What kinds of reading do pre-service teachers engage in?
3. What are the underlying reasons for pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading?

It is possible that, among other reasons, pre-service teachers with negative reading attitudes and unhealthy reading habits may have developed an aversion to reading because of ineffective teaching methods they experienced in schools, and a lack of exposure to reading as a fun, pleasurable activity. Pre-service teachers' answers to these research questions can help us understand their reading habits, which, in turn, could have a significant effect on their teaching (McKool & Gespass, 2009). Focusing on negative attitudes reported and excavating their possible causes might help us to begin theorising methods to cultivate and improve positive reading attitudes and habits.

Research shows that teachers, especially language and literacy teachers (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016), who possess a positive reading attitude and robust reading habits, pass these on to their

learners through explicit instruction, sharing their own reading experiences, and behavioural modelling (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Rose, 2005; McKool & Gespass, 2009; Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). However, many learners in South Africa, from the beginning of their academic careers through to university, are not equipped with the knowledge, resources, or opportunities to develop strong reading skills, attitudes, and habits (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019; Spaull, 2015). Those students with strong enough reading skills to enter university may retain negative reading attitudes. Some of these students will study to become teachers, and without the instructional training they need to improve their own reading skills, attitudes, habits, and instructional methods, their negative reading attitudes may be transferred to their learners. Such teachers "are charged with conveying to their [learners] an enthusiasm for reading that they do not have", a condition which Applegate and Applegate (2004: 556) refer to as the "Peter Effect". Negative or unenthusiastic reading attitudes may then be passed from teachers to learners in a self-perpetuating cycle. To interrupt this cycle, we need to understand the reading attitudes and habits that our pre-service teachers have, and what may have influenced their development. This knowledge could inform the design of solutions, which could develop and improve the reading habits and attitudes of pre-service teachers during their training at university.

1.4 Conceptual and theoretical framework

A theoretical framework provides the researcher with reputable theories and facts in which to situate the study. This study falls within the discipline of applied linguistics, which is largely concerned with "making plans in order to overcome language problems" (Weideman, 2017:2). These plans need to be developed responsibly to ensure accountability and relevance. Design principles in applied linguistics research related to language and literacy instruction are

discussed in the literature study. In addition to principles for the responsible design of language interventions, curricular philosophies and language teaching models are probed from the perspective of teaching English as a global or international language (EIL). Using EIL as part of this study's theoretical framework is most appropriate in light of the growing movement towards decolonising language teaching and education in general. As Maley (2012: 305) points out, the world is fast becoming a global village whose lingua franca is English. As English spreads and is used by people from different language backgrounds and cultures, the language and its varieties continue to change and grow. Any persons who hope to prepare students for interactions in English in the modern world must consider that their students will encounter native English speakers and speakers of English as an international language. In South Africa, most students are not native English speakers and literature is a useful tool for exposing students to different varieties of English and cultures that use English in non-traditional, inclusive ways. Although this study does not focus on the teaching of literature or the teaching of the English language, any recommendations related to encouraging healthy reading attitudes and habits based on the findings of the study should be aligned with the current role and prominence of English as an international language.

Principles and theories related to literacy development and reading comprehension are explored in the literature review; important South African scholars in this field include Pretorius (2002, 2007, 2010, 2019) and Spaull (2015, 2019). Although the Language-in-Education Policy is supposed to support literacy and cultural diversity in schools through a multilingual approach in which the learning of an additional language occurs while maintaining the home or first language (Department of Education, 1997), this has not always had the desired effect. Many schools prefer to use English from Grade 1, since the majority of schools use English as their LoLT from Grade 4 (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019). Thus, children must learn basic literacy skills

in English, not their home languages, which has significant implications for their academic career and reading experience. Learners may not have adequate opportunity to develop literacy in their home languages before switching to English as the medium of instruction, which could negatively affect their literacy skills and reading attitudes. The matter of language policy in education falls beyond the scope of this study and will not form part of the literature review. Key studies on reading, as well as research on first language (L1) and second language (L2) reading attitudes and habits, further inform the theoretical framework for the study.

1.5 Research design and methodology

The study takes the pragmatic worldview, where inquiry is based "on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 54). Rather than providing a solution to a problem or testing a specific hypothesis, this study focuses on deriving knowledge about the problem itself and uses multiple approaches to understand the problem of inadequate reading ability and how beneficial reading attitudes and habits could help to address this. A mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 44) was used in which the researcher collected and analysed both qualitative and quantitative data in the form of closed- and open-ended survey questions. Analysis of both forms of data (open- and closed-ended) in tandem can enhance interpretation and reveal deeper insights.

Due to time and funding constraints, convenience sampling and purposeful sampling was used. The participants in the study included students enrolled in the ENGE1608 module (a language module taken by all students registered in the BEd programs for Foundation and Intermediate Phase teaching). The module covers both mastery of English language skills and principles of

teaching young learners to read, which made this cohort particularly relevant for this study. Since the researcher was a learning facilitator for this module, she had access to this group of students. Participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. Also, the cohort included pre-service teachers who will become teachers in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases and are therefore responsible for literacy development in the first years of schooling. An email was sent via the Blackboard learning platform to all ENGE1608 students, and those students who wished to participate were able to complete the survey online. The survey link was available to students for a period of three weeks from 1 to 21 April 2022.

1.6 Data collection

The survey instrument used in the study is a modified version of a reading attitude questionnaire for additional language speakers of English (L2) used by Akbari, Ghonsooly, Ghazanfari and Shahriari (2017). Many students at the UFS do not speak English as their first language; thus, the Akbari *et al.* (2017) survey instrument was an appropriate template to use as a point of departure. The questionnaire measures five attitude components: cognitive attitudes, conative attitudes, negative affect, anxiety, and self-assessment. The cognitive aspect pertains to "the intellectual, practical, and linguistic values of reading" (Akbari *et al.*, 2017: 3). The conative component is related to the actual behaviour of readers, whereas negative affect and anxiety are related to negative views and feelings about reading. Self-assessment pertains to students' perceptions of their own reading competence (Akbari *et al.*, 2017: 3). Some questions from Rimensberger's (2014) survey instrument were included, probing the actual reading habits of pre-service teachers. In addition hereto, a few new items were developed to even out the number of questions in each subscale, and to include open-ended questions pertaining to participants' worries about reading and the teaching of literature.

The survey instrument also focused on possible causes of participants' reading attitudes by including questions related to their past learning experiences. It gave participants the opportunity to respond more freely to a number of open-ended questions that required thinking back to their time at school, what reading resources and materials were available to them, and what their experiences were in the reading classroom. The purpose of the questionnaire was made clear to the participants; the results were used for research purposes only and were kept anonymous. No identifying information was collected. All data were stored on a password-protected computer. The survey data were analysed using SPSS and R.

1.7 Ethical considerations

As the researcher, I have taken every precaution to keep the data of participants anonymous and to conduct and report on this research accurately and respectfully. Participants were informed of all relevant details concerning their data and any potential risks of participation, such as emotional stress triggered by potentially sensitive subjects like participants' reading ability. I am aware of my responsibility to protect participants and their data and have done so to the best of my ability, in accordance with the requirements of the ethics committee, who approved the study in 2022. The ethical clearance number for the study is UFS-HSD2021/1715/22.

1.8 Conclusion

Education at its best offers us the opportunity not only to obtain a specific qualification but to learn about the world we live in and develop critical thinking skills that enrich our lives and

make us more productive members of our communities. As reading teachers, we aim not only to teach our students how to read but how to become “ideal readers”, whose reading skills form a path to self-education stimulated by their own needs and interests. The study has been conducted on the premise that literacy and literature can be an ideal vehicle for exposing students of all ages to ideas and forms of knowledge that are enriching. If positive feelings and attitudes to reading can be cultivated and encouraged, the prospect of self-actualisation and self-driven education on the part of the student becomes more attainable.

Every effort should therefore be made to provide learners (pupils in the school setting) and students (in the tertiary education context) with the necessary instruction and support to scaffold their reading skills and cultivate a positive reading attitude which, ideally, could take them from passive learning to active participation in their educational development. If pre-service teachers can develop their reading attitudes, cultivate robust reading habits, and more deeply understand the importance of their influence on the reading culture of their learners, perhaps they can impact positive change once they enter the education field and curb the “Peter Effect”.

The study aims to expand upon the limited amount of research done in South Africa on pre-service teachers’ reading attitudes and habits in the hopes that understanding them better could edge us closer to solving literacy problems in South Africa. The study includes pre-service teachers in discussions about reading and literacy and their need to become strong readers, not only for their benefit, but also for the benefit of their future learners. The study focuses on identifying factors that influence reading habits and attitudes towards reading, and possible causes of those habits and attitudes. It also aims to raise awareness of the importance of positive

reading attitudes and habits on the part of teachers as they endeavour to instruct and cultivate students who are capable and educated readers.

The section below provides brief outlines of the chapters that follow.

Chapter 2

This chapter provides a detailed review of the literature which relates to the present study, based on theoretical foundations of responsible design in applied linguistics. The chapter describes the development of reading skills and attitudes, as well as reading comprehension in school-aged learners and university students. Also discussed are the transactions between the reader and the text, which contribute to and are influenced by reading attitudes, as well as pertinent studies, which form the foundation of the present study. The chapter closes with a definition and discussion of literature and its uses in the modern South African education system.

Chapter 3

This chapter provides a detailed description of and justification for the methodology used to conduct this study. Research questions and objectives are re-stated, and the development of the research instrument is explained. Statistical procedures used for data analysis are discussed, and ethical considerations are provided.

Chapter 4

In this chapter, the reliability coefficients of the survey instrument and its subscales are reported, and descriptive and summary statistics of the survey data generated are presented and discussed.

Chapter 5

In this section of the study relationships between different variables are explored using different statistical procedures. Statistically significant correlations between variables are reported and analysed.

Chapter 6

Responses to open-ended survey questions are discussed and analysed, and prominent themes are identified by means of the process of thematic coding.

Chapter 7

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the study and answers each research question based on information gathered in the literature review and findings from the analysis of ERAS data. Finally, a series of recommendations are made based on the research and findings.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Research on language and education is not without ideology. For this reason, it is important to first take cognisance of the philosophical foundations that underlie our academic endeavours and to obtain clarity on those beliefs that guide our thinking and actions before embarking on a research project. This study falls within the discipline of applied linguistics and the researcher has made every effort to adhere to guiding principles in applied linguistics research (Grabe, 2010; Weideman, 2017) discussed below. Also, this chapter reviews pedagogical principles and reading practices that could prove beneficial for South African contexts, and critically appraises relevant studies that have already been done on the topic of teachers' and pre-service teachers' reading attitudes. The last part of the chapter investigates how the literature classroom could be used to a greater extent to nurture a love for reading while, at the same time, support reading literacy and other essential skills.

2.2 Responsible design in applied linguistics

At its emergence in the 1940s to 1960s, the term "applied linguistics" was defined as the "application of linguistics to language teaching and related practical language issues" (Grabe, 2010: 34). Applied linguistics is not an extension of linguistics, though some reciprocal feedback does transpire between the two disciplines. Before applied linguistics developed into a fully-fledged discipline, the assumption was that language can be learned by breaking it down into its constituent parts, as linguists do, and then teaching these parts until the learner knows enough to understand the language. However, this view fails to provide a solid theoretical basis

for effective methodologies that can be used in the language classroom. Du Plessis (2017: 56-57) writes on linguistics and applied linguistics:

> The study of language and linguistic concepts can therefore not be equated with the making and application of language plans, teaching courses and language examinations as instruments of design to address an identified problem. The two aspects may be related, but … [linguistics] deals with an analysis of the learning and use of language and the structure of lingual objects, while … [applied linguistics] attempts to address a language problem – and usually a large-scale or at least pervasive one – in a particular and complex context through the design of a solution.

Thus, whereas linguists study language itself, applied linguists find solutions to language-related problems. Applied linguistics has thus grown into a discipline of its own, which operates in specific and contextualised situations (Sealey & Carter, 2004; Weideman, 2017). As said by Hall, Smith, and Wicaksono (2011: 15), applied linguistics is a "discipline concerned with the role language and languages play in perceived problems of communication, social identity, education, health, economics, politics and justice, *and* in the development of ways to remediate or resolve these problems". Although the discipline spans many subfields, of particular relevance to our South African education crisis are the aspects of second language (L2) teaching, L2 literacy, and language-teacher training. The focus on real-world issues and practical solutions, rather than theoretical explorations of language-related concepts, is what differentiates applied linguistics from associated fields like formal linguistics and sociolinguistics (Grabe, 2010: 35). Researchers in the field of applied linguistics can address language-related problems practically by investigating these problems in depth and using their research to design and implement solutions in the form of language interventions, such as courses and modules aimed at school-aged learners or university students, as well as teacher training programs, and the like. Such carefully designed solutions are sorely needed, especially

in multilingual educational settings where traditional approaches used in Western countries may not be as effective or suitable. This study seeks to serve others and solve real problems in practical ways and therefore needs to be built on a firm foundation of responsible design principles in pursuit of useful insights.

Language problems are complex and require urgent attention. It may be tempting to design solutions as quickly as possible, which could come at the expense of deep critical analysis of problems and sophisticated design of truly useful practical solutions. Applied linguists should therefore create solutions and conduct research responsibly, with careful consideration of the foundational questions and principles of the discipline (Weideman, 2017: 2). Although the objective of the present study is not to provide a solution to a particular problem, it does seek to offer further insight into the issue of pre-service teachers' reading attitudes and habits, which is necessary to avoid designing solutions that seem intuitive or fashionable (Weideman, 2017: 4), but might not be truly effective. Weideman (2017: 5-6) also reminds applied linguists that they remain accountable to the people who are affected by the solutions they design. As academically accountable practitioners, applied linguists should hold to sound theory and be able to defend their designs rationally. Another obligation of applied linguists is to mediate these two ideas, the social and theoretical accountability of the discipline, and navigate "along an axis between reflection on the one hand and action on the other" (Weidman, 2017: 6). In an effort to uphold these guiding principles, this study involved pre-service teachers directly in an attempt to be accountable to them and their future learners while grounding the study in relevant theory to ensure academic rigour.

Given the importance of reading ability and the inadequate comprehension skills of South African learners (Howie *et al.*, 2017a), it is necessary to better understand what reading

comprehension entails. The phenomenon is much more complex than word recognition or word comprehension. To understand sentences and full texts, many more cognitive processes must take place. The following section discusses reading comprehension as a cognitive process based on Kintsch's (1998) Construction-Integration Model and examines issues South African learners may face when comprehending text.

2.3 Reading comprehension as a cognitive process

To facilitate reading comprehension, the reader must be able to use the appropriate strategies to decode the text, and, provided that the reader has the vocabulary knowledge necessary to understand the words, the information from the text must then be integrated into existing background knowledge on the subject (Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983; Kintsch, 1998). The teacher's role is to provide the learner with the necessary skills to perform all the related tasks to achieve a clear comprehension of the text. However, as shown by the PIRLS results (Howie *et al.*, 2017a; National Center for Education Statistics, 2023) discussed in section 1.1, learners in South Africa struggle to read for meaning; they often do not comprehend the texts they read. This could contribute to the development of negative reading attitudes; if students struggle to understand what they read, they may not find it enjoyable.

The Construction-Integration Model (Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983; Kintsch, 1998) posits that reading comprehension is achieved when the reader has constructed a coherent mental representation of the text. This goes beyond simply understanding the individual words in the text to internalising the meaning of the text and integrating the concepts presented in the text with related information already stored in the memory, making it part of the reader's background knowledge. The text becomes part of the reader's knowledge in two phases. During

the first phase, the construction phase, which is based on the text itself, the reader engages with the text, background knowledge is activated almost automatically, and the new concepts in the text are compared to or connected with background knowledge. In the second phase, background knowledge and the new concepts from the text are integrated into one coherent mental representation, producing the "situation model" (Kintsch, 1998; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983: 336-346; Pearson & Cervetti, 2013: 515).

According to Kintsch's (1998) Construction-Integration model (also see van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983; Kintsch, 2018), the text is represented in three forms or levels: the "surface form", the "text base" and the "situation model". The surface form is made up of the actual words and sentences in the text, which are not necessarily related to reading comprehension on their own. Simply performing the task of reading the words does not facilitate comprehension. The text-base representation includes the ideas, concepts, and propositions of the text, the semantic content of the text. The reader's ability to understand the text base depends on the text's quality, the reader's ability to accurately decode the text, and the generation of connections and inferences in the mind of the reader (Coté, Goldman & Saul, 1998). The situation model representation is the actual information or knowledge provided by the text (Pearson & Cervetti, 2013), which has been integrated with the relevant existing knowledge in the reader's memory. The reader does not need to remember the text verbatim, but the information has been understood and internalised; it has become part of the reader's background knowledge.

It seems that, in the case of many learners and students in the South African education system, the situation model is not being adequately achieved in the minds of readers. The 2016 PIRLS results indicate that the majority of learners cannot read for meaning in Grade 4 (Howie *et al.*, 2017a). This dilemma continues throughout the remainder of their schooling, as the high failure

rate of South African matric learners suggests that they cannot yet "read to learn" (Pretorius, 2002: 172). The situation model may be difficult for readers to achieve if they are reading in a second language; they may encounter too much unfamiliar vocabulary to understand the text base. Also, many literacy teachers in South Africa are not equipped with the theoretical knowledge, experience, or resources to teach reading comprehension strategies explicitly or effectively (Mudzielwana, Joubert, Phatudi & Hartell, 2012; Taylor, 2014; Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). Learners may be able to sound out each word and read the text aloud without fully comprehending the text's meaning or integrating the new knowledge into their memory. If learners are not able to read for meaning, or read well enough to learn, the chances of encouraging a love for reading and also establishing healthy reading habits are diminished.

The following section looks at factors that may have impacted the development of the research cohort's reading skills, attitudes, and habits, such as their early experiences with learning to read, and their ability to comprehend texts in later phases of their education.

2.4 Development of reading skills and attitudes

Emergent readers need a solid foundation of basic reading skills and positive reading role models, among other factors, to develop their own reading attitudes and personal reading habits. Ideally, readers begin to acquire basic reading skills in the home, during shared book reading (Rose, 2005; Chow, McBride-Chang, & Cheung, 2010; Law, *et al.*, 2018) and when observing the reading behaviour of their caregivers (Mancini, Monfardini & Pasqua, 2017). The parent or caregiver reads stories aloud to the child while pointing at the written text and pictures in the book, which helps to establish the fundamental concept of making meaning from the text. The child begins to learn the basic concept of making meaning from text and that the

marks on the page (letters) correspond with sounds, which are blended together to make words. If the child enjoys the stories and time spent during parent-child reading, enjoyment is more likely to be associated with the act of reading. When caregivers are seen reading books they enjoy and share their positive reading experiences, a further opportunity is provided for the child to associate reading with pleasure (Mullan, 2010). Therefore, early, positive experiences with reading and exposure to positive reading role models form the foundation of a positive reading attitude in the child. These pre-reading skills and early reading attitudes are then expanded upon in pre- and primary school. However, in reality, many South African children do not learn these foundational skills; many come from text-poor households in which there is not a strong reading culture.

In South Africa, most of the population does not use English as their dominant or home language, yet many learners are schooled in English as a second or additional language, especially from Grade 4 (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019). Having to read in English could prove to be a serious challenge, and if they are not adequately supported by teachers and caretakers, the learners may find reading in English very difficult. Moreover, since many learners come from text-poor homes, their parents or guardians may not have modelled reading behaviour that indicates reading to be an enjoyable activity. It is therefore possible that learners could develop negative or deferent reading attitudes (Smith, 2012) early on, due to difficulty in reading and comprehending the target language, inadequate exposure to text, and a lack of positive reading role models.

Learning to read in a language not familiar to the learner can be ineffective (Slavin & Cheung, 2004). According to the Language-in-Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997), South African education advocates for an additive multilingualism approach that preserves

indigenous languages by giving schools the choice between any official language as the LoLT, especially in Grades 1-3, while learners study another language as a subject. Some schools in South Africa choose English as the LoLT from Grade 1, especially if the learners do not share one dominant language. This is most common in Gauteng schools (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019: 150) and can be a hurdle for learners; if the LoLT is not familiar to learners, then it may be very difficult for them to learn important reading skills. However, learners do not necessarily need to be proficient readers in their home language to begin reading in a second language. Some studies provide evidence for a bilingual approach in which learners are taught to read their home language and then English at different times of day (Willig, 1985; Greene, 1997). Thus, they can develop their ability to read in both languages (Slavin & Cheung, 2004), as suggested by the Language-in-Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997). This approach allows learners to use their developing phonics skills to sound out words in their own language and in English.

The linguistic interdependence hypothesis, which was originally conceptualised by Cummins (1979, 1980, 1989), and adapted for the South African context by Robertson and Graven (2020), posits that L2 reading success is highly dependent on L1 reading skills. When children learn the necessary literacy skills to read in their first language, the implicit metalinguistic knowledge can also be utilised when reading in their second language. Once learners are familiar with the alphabet in Afrikaans or isiXhosa, for example, they can draw upon that existing knowledge when they begin to learn English. These underlying concepts are referred to as the "common underlying proficiency (CUP)" (Robertson & Graven, 2020: 6), which affects reading success in both L1 and L2 language acquisition and reading and writing skills. This concept can be illustrated by using the metaphor of an iceberg with two peaks, sharing

one foundation beneath the water, as shown in Figure 1. This figure shows Robertson and Graven's (2020) CUP iceberg model, which was adapted from Cummins (2005).

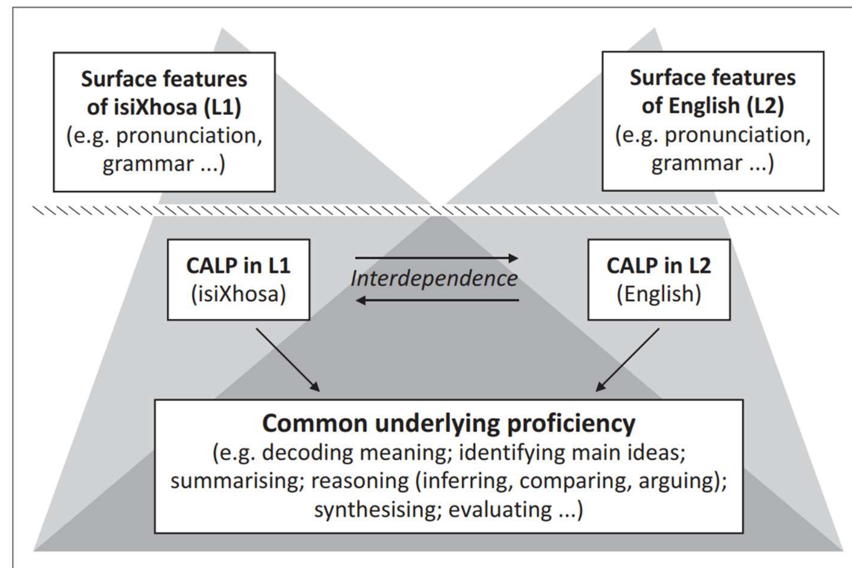


Figure 1: Common underlying proficiency iceberg (Robertson & Graven, 2020: 6)

As has been stated, most South Africans do not speak English as their first language, but the dominant language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in schools and universities is English. Some schools, particularly in multilingual communities, use English as the LoLT from Grade 1. However, more than 70% of learners, according to Spaull and Pretorius (2019: 150), begin their schooling in their home language and take English as an additional language. They switch to English as the LoLT when they reach Grade 4 (Spaull & Pretorius, 2019: 150). This does not in itself constitute an issue, as the linguistic interdependence hypothesis suggests that learners who first begin reading in their home language can master the necessary foundational skills involved in reading without the added challenge of learning a new language at the same time. Thereafter, the CUP can be applied to reading in the new language (English). As educators design and implement learning programs, applied linguistics design principles should play a role. Weideman (2017) calls for accountability and critical reflection on how

language is taught, rather than blindly adhering to teaching principles and practices that may have worked well in other places and contexts. In the case of most South African learners, it is therefore not sufficient to take the English language and teach its constituent parts, such as vocabulary and phonics, and assume that learners are prepared to achieve reading comprehension in English. This may be effective for L1 learners of English, but South African learners are often additional language learners or multilinguals – many without a dominant language. Different approaches to literacy may be needed. Pretorius (2019: 73) writes: "Early reading instruction that is attuned to the linguistic and orthographic features of the languages in question may increase the chances of children's getting reading right from the start of schooling". Pretorius (2019) provides specific guidelines for literacy teachers working with learners who are learning to read in African languages. It is crucial to anticipate potential issues while emergent readers are learning to read and provide support where necessary.

As previously mentioned, a key issue concerning emergent readers is that many have not yet mastered CUP, such as phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge, in their mother tongue (or any language) before they are expected to read in English. This can be because learners come from text-poor homes and communities, due to a lack of resources. Thus, they do not have the necessary pre-literacy skills to learn the conventions of reading and spelling in Grades 1-3. Another issue concerns the poor results of those learners who wrote PIRLS in African languages (their home languages), which suggests that learners have not grasped the skills they need to comprehend text even in their home languages (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016; Spaull, 2015). They therefore risk falling behind in their reading journeys in their first language and in English. Without this foundation, weak reading skills can persist throughout the lower grades and have detrimental effects when learners switch to English as the LOLT in Grade 4 —the grade in which students are expected to begin reading to learn instead of learning to read,

and when reading comprehension is crucial (Pretorius, 2002; Spaull, Pretorius & Mohohlwane, 2020). It follows that if learners struggle to read in their home language and in their L2 (which is usually English), their attitudes towards reading in English may be negatively impacted.

Research in other countries has shown that L1 reading attitudes can form a foundation for additional language (AL) reading attitudes (Yamashita, 2004; Lee & Schallert, 2014; Akbari *et al.*, 2017). Lee and Schallert (2014: 553) found that L1 reading attitudes correlated with L2 reading attitudes, but that "reading attitudes in L1 and L2 exhibited different tendencies". Cognitive attitude (whether the reader thinks reading is valuable or important) and language proficiency contributed to L1 reading comprehension. However, only reading proficiency seemed to have an impact on L2 reading achievement. Their data also showed that "proficiency in both L1 and L2 was associated with more positive reading attitudes and fewer negative feelings about reading in the corresponding language" (Lee & Schallert, 2014: 553). The study concluded that access to books (in L2), length of private instruction, encouragement from teachers, and gender all contributed significantly to L2 reading attitudes. These studies emphasise the need for solid language and literacy instruction – especially for L2 readers – as well as access to appropriate resources that form a strong foundation on which to build reading attitudes. Unfortunately, such resources are often sorely lacking in South Africa (Spaull, 2015; Nortje, 2017; Kutu, Nzimande & Grace, 2020; Meiklejohn, Westaway, Westaway, & Long, 2021).

Yamashita's (2004) study amongst 59 Japanese university students found that what students *think* of reading (how much they value reading or whether they think it is practically useful) transfers from L1 to L2, but what they *feel* (enjoyment, anxiety, and self-perception as 'good' or 'bad' readers) is less transferable. She concluded that merely thinking that reading is

valuable or beneficial is not enough to prompt a person to read, which reflects the findings of Rimensberger (2014). Akbari *et al.* (2017: 2) also found that students were convinced of the intellectual, practical, and linguistic value of reading, but they were less positive about reading in their additional language. South African literacy teachers, many of whom are L2 users of English themselves, are often serving learners from multilingual backgrounds who do not speak English at first-language level. Thus, if the goal is to develop positive reading attitudes and robust reading habits in learners, concerted efforts must be made to develop both their L1 and L2 proficiency.

Akbari *et al.*'s (2017) study of L1 and L2 reading sheds light on L2 reading attitudes and L2 reading achievement, as well as the connection between L1 and L2 reading attitudes in an Iranian EFL context. Their data showed that L1 and L2 reading attitudes are highly correlated, but only L2 reading attitude makes a significant impact on L2 reading achievement. In other words, L1 reading attitudes have an impact on L2 reading attitudes, but L1 reading attitudes do not affect L2 reading achievement. The researchers stress "the importance of developing positive attitude among L2 learners generally and L2 readers particularly" (2017: 1). Although the participants in Akbari *et al.*'s (2017) study were not pre-service teachers, their findings are relevant to the present study whose participants are also mostly non-native English speakers. For this reason, a modified version of their L2 Reading Attitude survey instrument (see annexure A) was used in the present study, the details of which will be discussed in chapter 3. Because of the link between L2 reading attitudes and L2 reading achievement, the present study seeks to learn more about participants' attitudes towards reading and their reading habits, specifically with regard to reading in English, the language in which the cohort is studying and in which they are likely to teach their future students.

In summary, children who first learn to read in their home language and then in another language such as English, or who learn to read in a bilingual setting, may have a better chance of achieving reading comprehension and reading proficiency in their L2. However, many South African learners do not seem to have learned the necessary skills to comprehend text in their home languages or in English, indicating a failure on the part of the school system to engage with multilingual learners in a meaningful way. This is exacerbated by a lack of appropriate pre-reading skill development and role modelling in the home environment. Furthermore, learners' L1 reading attitudes could be negatively impacted by their lack of L1 text comprehension, which, in turn, may impact their attitudes toward reading in English (L2). In other words, learners could develop negative reading attitudes because they lack the foundational skills needed to comprehend text, leaving them struggling as a result of ineffective reading instruction at school level.

South African learners and students may also experience challenges similar to those encountered by foreign language learners. Reading in a foreign language can be especially challenging owing to a lack of skill and confidence (Tran, 2012), and is likely to evoke feelings of anxiety in the reader that could contribute to negative attitudes towards reading. Teachers need to be aware of such challenges their students may be experiencing; they need to have empathy for their students and keep in mind that the development of positive reading attitudes in their students is as important as the development of strong reading skills if learners are expected to develop healthy, lifelong reading habits. In developing positive reading attitudes in learners, the teacher is not only the instructor but also the role model, and the teacher's reading habits could influence instructional practices. Some teachers could be modelling reading attitudes that do not encourage engaged, enthusiastic reading, and so their lack of love for reading is transferred to their learners, some of whom become teachers, and the cycle

repeats (Rimensberger, 2014; Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Applegate, Applegate, Mercantini, McGeehan, Cobb, Deboy, Modla & Lewinski, 2014; Mckool & Gespass, 2009; Pretorius & Klapwjik, 2016). The following section details transactions between reader and text, as well as different reading stances.

2.5 Reader-text transaction types

McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang and Meyer (2012: 285) define reading attitudes as "acquired predispositions to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to aspects of reading." They go on to specify two factors which influence reading: its medium and its purpose. The reading medium (or mode) is significant; for example, reading on a digital device is a very different process to reading a printed page; this is discussed further in section 2.7.6. As to the purpose of reading; Louise Rosenblatt (1986: 123), a seminal theorist on the importance of the purpose in reading, writes:

> Reading is a transactional process that goes on between a particular reader and a particular text at a particular time, and under particular circumstances. All of these factors affect the transaction.

The transaction between the reader and the text is different depending on the approach taken or expectations of the reader. This section discusses three important stances taken by readers, namely Rosenblatt's (1985, 1986, see also Chaplin, 1982) efferent and aesthetic stances, and Smith's (2012) deferent stance. Deferent, efferent, and aesthetic readers approach reading with different expectations and different purposes. Aesthetic readers hold fewer expectations; they engage with the text to absorb what it has to offer. Aesthetic reading experience is very personal; the reader is focused on what is being "lived through, cognitively and affectively, *during* the reading event", and "savouring the private and personal aspects of what is being

perceived" (Rosenblatt, 1985: 102). The transaction with the text is both cognitive and affective; the aesthetic stance being more concerned with the qualitative experience of reading. An aesthetic reader may "attend not only to the referents but also to the sound and rhythm of the words, to their qualitative and associational overtones, and live through, evoke, a "pop" poem" (Rosenblatt, 1986: 125). C. S. Lewis illustrates the aesthetic reading stance in the quote: "in reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself ... I see with a myriad eyes, but it is still I who see" (Lewis, 1961: 141). Aesthetic readers enjoy reading for its own sake; they react more deeply to what they have read and tend to be more engaged and enthusiastic towards reading. The aesthetic reader is most likely to find and internalise information not previously known, not necessarily because they find reading easy, but by persevering through the confusion and insecurity that comes with reading a challenging text, all the while keeping an open mind and allowing for new ideas to enter (Smith, 2012). This is an important skill to develop for pre-service teachers, who will need a deep understanding of the texts they teach and must be prepared to guide conversations with students who may develop new and interesting insights into texts they read, or who may need some help to do so.

Efferent readers read to find a specific answer to a specific question; their gaze is narrower, and they might not internalise new information if they are not looking for it. As Rosenblatt states; "[t]he purpose of accumulating evidence for a verifiable result would require the efferent stance" (Rosenblatt, 1986: 124-125). Efferent reading is more selective and not necessarily based on a love for reading but the need to reach some other goal; for example, to study for a test, or find information on a particular topic. The efferent reader "focuses attention on public meaning, abstracting what is to be retained after the reading – to be recalled, paraphrased, acted on, analyzed" (Rosenblatt, 1985: 101). This stance is not necessarily a negative one. Any

student will learn to read texts with specific information in mind to complete assignments and meet course requirements.

Rosenblatt (1985;1986) posits that all reading transactions exist somewhere on the spectrum between aesthetic and efferent. However, whether they are reading aesthetically or efferently, the readers continuously focus their attention on the text, and connect the text to their own knowledge and experiences. Both stances have their uses, and both can facilitate reading comprehension. However, the aesthetic stance encourages a deep and thoughtful connection with the text, which facilitates more engaged and enthusiastic reading. Teachers of literature, in particular, would do well to take an aesthetic stance to at least some of the texts they discuss in class, if their goal is to impart a love for reading and literature itself. Using the aesthetic stance could better facilitate classroom discussions in which learners engage independently with the literature, using their own experiences to connect with the text. Over time, teachers may then build on learners' interpretations by supplying them with references.

Smith (2012) introduces a third approach to reading: the deferent stance. Struggling readers with the deferent stance expect reading to be a negative, confusing, and uncomfortable experience. They give up at the first sign of difficulty and emotionally numb themselves to the task to avoid the negative emotions they have often felt while reading (Smith, 2012: 64). Like efferent readers, deferent readers narrow their focus and look for the "right" answer. They could also labour under an "inattentional blindness", which prevents them from fully engaging with the text. They sometimes find information that is not there at all, due to their failure to comprehend the text, an occurrence that stems from their narrow focus, which blocks out the intertextual relationships, subtleties and interpretations, or possible meanings of the text (Smith, 2012: 64).

The reason why struggling and deferent readers may “numb” themselves emotionally when confronted with a reading task, could be related to reading anxiety. According to Tran (2012), readers who experience foreign-language reading anxiety struggle to comprehend what they read when faced with a text that is unfamiliar or too challenging, or when faced with anxiety-inducing tasks, like reading aloud. It would follow that those students who associate reading with anxiety are more likely to develop a deferent stance towards reading. They may assume that reading is always confusing, uncomfortable, and difficult, because that is how they have experienced it in the past, which brings on feelings of anxiety. To cope with the negative emotion, they may numb themselves to it, resulting in little reading comprehension.

To prevent the development of such negative reading attitudes in learners, teachers need to teach them the necessary skills to navigate challenging texts and encourage the positive reading attitudes needed to engage and persevere through the initially uncomfortable challenge of reading a more difficult text. Applegate *et al.* (2014) state that to break the cycle of uninspired students becoming uninspiring teachers, we will need an army of teachers who do more than work through the lesson content; rather, they inspire and leave a lasting impression on their students. Such teachers can “engage students in intellectual discovery, set high expectations, and provide students with the logical tools to think deeply about what they read” (Applegate *et al.*, 2014: 190). Teachers may be more likely inspire a love for reading in their students if they themselves see reading as a pleasurable activity, and love to read for its own sake. This kind of reading attitude leans towards the aesthetic, rather than the efferent. That is not to say that teachers should expect all their learners to develop an aesthetic reading stance; there is simply a possible correlation between teachers who themselves have an aesthetic appreciation for reading and instructional practices that encourage reading engagement (Applegate *et al.*, 2014).

Section 2.6 discusses specific studies which focus on the reading attitudes and habits of teachers and pre-service teachers. These studies inform the present study and provide valuable insights.

2.6 Studies on reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers

Two studies that influenced the current investigation are Applegate and Applegate's (2004) study called "The Peter Effect", and a follow-up study, "The Peter Effect: Revisited" (Applegate *et al.*, 2014). The researchers use an analogy called the "Peter Effect" to characterise teachers whose responsibility it is to convey a love and enthusiasm for reading, which they themselves do not possess. The term is based on a Bible story in which the disciple Peter meets a beggar who asks for money. Peter replies that he cannot give what he does not have (Acts 3:1-7). The premise is relevant to the current study. By studying the reading attitudes and habits of recent graduates of the South African government school education system, it may be possible to observe the "Peter Effect" in terms of what students have 'received' from their teachers. This also provides an opportunity to reflect critically on the compulsory university English language program for BEd students in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases and whether it is designed to facilitate a love for literature and reading that might be modelled for learners in future.

The first study, called "The Peter Effect" (Applegate and Applegate, 2004), consisted of a pilot and a follow-up study that focused on reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers at two universities in the USA, and potential factors which influenced reading attitudes. Using a survey instrument with open-ended questions, the researchers were able to learn about

participants' reading activity over their summer holidays, their self-reported levels of reading enjoyment, and the extent to which the reading instruction they received at school emphasised reading enjoyment, reading skill, and activities such as "remembering details, reacting, discussing reactions, and completing assignments or reports" (Applegate & Applegate, 2004: 557). The respondents of the completed surveys were then classified as enthusiastic or unenthusiastic readers. Enthusiastic readers were those who reported a love for reading and who engaged in reading during their summer holidays. Enthusiastic reading included reading at least one non-prescribed book over the holidays. Unenthusiastic readers were those who reported little or no enthusiasm for reading and did little or no non-prescribed reading during the holidays. Responses which indicated reading enjoyment, but contained no holiday reading, were classified as 'lukewarm', neither enthusiastic or unenthusiastic. Out of 184 participants, 48,4% were classified as unenthusiastic readers. A correlation was found between college reading experiences and reading enjoyment. According to the researchers, this suggests that "college can provide both powerful and proximate experiences that can affect a student's perspectives on reading" (Applegate & Applegate, 2004: 560). This finding supports the relevance of the present study, which finds great value in encouraging healthy reading experiences, attitudes, and habits in school and teacher training contexts.

The Applegate study found that reading instruction in the early school years correlated significantly with respondents' reading attitudes. Many recalled specific negative reading experiences: "being placed in the lowest reading group, being labelled as learning disabled, or simply not getting the help they needed" (Applegate & Applegate, 2004: 560). Other respondents recalled good reading experiences, such as teachers recommending good books, being offered a choice in what they could read, and the pride their parents and teachers took in

their reading achievements (Applegate & Applegate, 2004: 561). Positive early reading experiences were much more likely to result in positive reading attitudes.

Another interesting finding was that teachers' reading attitudes were quite transparent to students. They were able to tell whether their teachers liked reading or not; 18 respondents reported that their teachers' reading attitudes were negative. Applegate and Applegate (2004: 561) stress that "it is vitally important that we identify and address teacher attitudes toward and beliefs about the nature of reading, particularly because our data suggest that early negative reading experiences can have long-lasting, harmful effects on children."

In "The Peter Effect Revisited" (Applegate *et al.*, 2014), a sequel to the original Peter Effect study, the researchers decided to include students who were not studying to be teachers, as well as students majoring in education. They sought to ascertain whether or not pre-service teachers' love for reading has at all improved since the original study in 2004, and whether low enthusiasm for reading is endemic to education majors or if it extends to students in other fields (Applegate *et al.* 2014: 191). Specific points of interest in the 2014 study were whether these students were able to avoid the possible effects of reading instruction from uninspired teachers; whether certain kinds of literacy teaching were more effective in promoting engagement and enthusiasm for reading in the participants; and what their reactions were to the different kinds of literacy instruction they experienced in school.

The cohort consisted of 1025 students from seven colleges and universities in the USA. Respondents completed the same survey from the original study which aimed to assess their reading activity over their summer holidays and their self-reported reading attitudes. Respondents were also asked to describe early literacy experiences and rate the instructional

emphases their teachers used in elementary and secondary school. Lastly, they were asked if their teachers had successfully instilled in them a love for reading.

Responses were again classified into enthusiastic and unenthusiastic, with a few intermediary groups added. Enthusiastic readers were classified as appreciative, focused, or engaged and avid. The different categories were defined as follows: "*Appreciative* readers were those who reported (a) the reading of at least one book over the course of the summer and (b) a positive attitude toward reading in general. *Focused* readers were those who reported enthusiasm only for particular types or genres, but also exercised that preference over the course of the summer. *Engaged and Avid* readers were those who reported a love of reading and read broadly and extensively over the summer" (Applegate *et al.*, 2014: 192). Unenthusiastic readers were classified as lukewarm, reluctant, or unwilling readers. *Lukewarm readers* either reported little enthusiasm for reading and did not read during the summer, or reported some reading enjoyment, but did not read at all during the summer. *Reluctant* readers reported a stronger dislike for reading. They did the academic reading required of them, but only out of a sense of responsibility, not a love for reading. *Unwilling* readers expressed a dislike for reading, and actively excluded reading from their lives wherever possible, be it academic or personal (Applegate *et al.*, 2014: 192).

Of the respondents, 46,6% could be classified as 'enthusiastic' readers; within that group, only 5,7% were classified as "engaged and avid" readers. Responses were unpredictable and complex, but key themes that emerged from the data were "a view of reading as intellectual challenge, the influence of parents and teachers on student growth, the effects of one's view of reading on attitudes and habits, and reactions to experiences with reading instruction" (Applegate *et al.*, 2014: 193). Of those respondents who saw reading as an adventure or

intellectual challenge, 84% were classified as enthusiastic readers. However, of those who saw reading as a responsibility to advance their career or to get good grades, only 19% were classified as enthusiastic.

Parental influence was shown to have a profound impact on students' reading attitudes; "Many respondents clearly viewed parental influences on their attitude toward reading as more important, and in some cases infinitely more important than their school experiences" (Applegate *et al.*, 2014: 198). Teachers' influences were proven to be important as well. Many respondents were able to recall the names of specific teachers and how they were able to convey a love for reading to the student in the early grades. Teachers who promoted student autonomy and gave them a choice in what they read, allowed students to discuss what they read and took the time to recommend books to individual students were most likely to leave a lasting impression (Applegate *et al.*, 2014: 198).

Respondents who took a more passive approach to reading (expecting the book to impress or captivate them before they decided to finish it) were much less likely to be classified as enthusiastic readers. However, respondents who viewed reading as an opportunity to escape into another world or get into the minds of new and interesting characters were likely to be described as enthusiastic. Rosenblatt's (1985; 1986) aesthetic view of reading emphasises a balance between the effort of the reader and the input from the text; "[f]ully 90% of the respondents who cited elements of an aesthetic view of reading were classified as enthusiastic readers" (Applegate *et al*., 2014: 195).

Early reading experiences played a large role in shaping reading attitudes. Of the respondents who mentioned negative experiences, for example "being placed in the lowest reading group,

being pulled out of their regular classroom for extra work in reading, or being declared learning disabled" (Applegate *et al*., 2014: 196), 63% were classified as unenthusiastic. Some respondents in this group said they were able to overcome their early reading struggles and that their reading attitudes did improve over time, but many remained averse to reading. However, 51,8% of respondents who had positive, successful reading experiences in the early years were enthusiastic readers.

The cohort included 348 education majors. In Applegate and Applegate's 2004 study, only 48,5% of respondents were classified as enthusiastic readers. In 2014, the number had risen marginally to 51,1%. This group contained the most enthusiastic readers; of the students with other majors, only 44,3% were enthusiastic. One particularly disconcerting finding was that 63% of education majors who declared a desire to teach the earliest grades, K-1st grade, were unenthusiastic readers. This is concerning since "initial experiences with reading can have profound and long-lasting effects on emerging readers" (Applegate & Applegate, 2004: 197).

Applegate *et al.* (2014) recommend that educators and policy makers work towards the development of a unified vision across schools and teacher training institutions of what it means to be literate, despite the complex nature of human motivation and engaged reading (Applegate *et al.,* 2014: 200). Further research into the effects of reading attitudes, as well as factors that influence reading attitudes, will benefit those who endeavour to design reading instruction programs for future teachers. Applegate and Applegate's (2004) survey was not used as the research instrument for the present study because it was developed for an American context, and may not have been appropriate for a South African cohort of predominantly L2 language learners. Also, it would have been much more difficult to work through hundreds of open-ended survey questionnaires. The research instrument used for this study was developed

from Akbari *et al.*'s (2017) L2 Reading Attitudes Survey (annexure A). The instrument is discussed in further depth in chapter 3.

Other studies have confirmed the findings of Applegate and Applegate (2004). Nathanson, Pruslow and Levitt (2008) also conducted a survey in the USA. They assessed the reading attitudes of 747 respondents, 38% of whom were full-time teachers, and 62% were graduate students who were either studying to become special or regular education teachers or waiting to be appointed as teachers (Nathanson *et al.*, 2008: 316). Using the survey instrument developed by Applegate and Applegate (2004), they assessed self-reported reading enjoyment and compared it to actual reading done during the summer holidays. Their findings mirrored those of Applegate and Applegate (2004); the data revealed a lack of reading enthusiasm among in-service and pre-service teachers. Data showed that 17% of respondents reported little or no pleasure in reading, about a third reported that they did like reading when they had the time, and 47% reported that they were enthusiastic readers. Although the enthusiastic readers were more likely to read during the summer, the data suggested that most respondents did not have well-ingrained reading habits (Nathanson *et al.*, 2008: 319).

Strong evidence was found for parental influences on reading attitudes; many respondents noted a difference between school and home reading, and a preference for their early home-reading experiences. The researchers recommend that school reading experiences be designed to build and support the development of personal reading habits in young children. Involving parents in reading instruction could help (Nathanson *et al.*, 2008: 319). Parental involvement in literacy education may be a missing factor for many South African pre-service teachers and their learners.

Enthusiastic readers were more likely to remember a former teacher's love for reading inspiring their own reading enthusiasm. Enthusiastic readers were also more likely to recall an emphasis on discussion and making interpretations about the literature they read. This provided evidence that discussion could be an effective motivational tool from elementary school to university. Furthermore, the researchers believed an aesthetic stance in the literature classroom could help transform reading attitudes and encourage reading enthusiasm (Nathanson *et al.*, 2008: 319).

Benevides and Peterson (2010) studied the reading habits and attitudes of pre-service teachers at a university in Canada. They based their study on the premise that pre-service teachers' reading habits and literacy abilities could have an impact on their perspectives on literacy teaching and how they would implement literacy instruction in their own classrooms. Research instruments used were the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, a questionnaire focusing on participants' reading habits, and a writing sample submitted by each participant (they were required to write a short story). The researchers found that participants who recalled a heavier emphasis on enjoying stories and acquiring strong reading skills, taking more trips to the library, being read to in the early years, and a greater degree of enjoyment connected with reading, were more likely to score higher on the Reading Test. Participants who enjoyed reading in the early years and had positive experiences with reading at school were more likely to have current positive reading attitudes and more robust reading habits (Benevides & Peterson, 2010: 291). Also, the availability of books when they were young and frequent library trips were correlated with current positive reading attitudes and habits (Benevides & Peterson, 2010: 298).

The studies mentioned above do not cover additional language learning specifically. The following two studies included participants whose first language was not English. Some

significant information is revealed in these studies, which is pertinent to the present study. Tercanlioglu (2001) conducted a study amongst 132 pre-service teachers enrolled full-time in a 4-year TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) degree in Turkey. All participants spoke Turkish as their first language. The study's aims were to learn more about pre-service teachers' perspectives on themselves as readers, and their perspectives on teaching reading once they are appointed as teachers of EFL reading. The research data suggest that pre-service teachers did not see themselves as competent readers. There could be a connection here to foreign-language reading anxiety (Ahmad *et al.*, 2013); participants' self-perception as inadequate or ill-equipped to tackle the formidable task of reading in a foreign language (Tercanlioglu, 2001) may impact their desire to read in English.

When participants did report engaging in reading themselves, they were intrinsically motivated to read. The belief that reading teachers should be good readers themselves, and should read with their students, was prevalent among participants. They were not, however, very excited about teaching their future EFL students to read, although they would be expected to do so. In summary, many respondents were not confident in their own EFL reading ability, they were ambivalent about their responsibility to teach reading effectively, and they did not feel adequately equipped to do so (Tercanlioglu, 2001). Interestingly, participants who perceived an improvement in their reading abilities (who felt they themselves were progressing towards becoming better readers) were more likely to report a desire to use reading in their future classes, and to read with and motivate their students. They were also more likely to share the view that all teachers should be proficient readers (Tercanlioglu, 2001).

There is a paucity of South African research into reading attitudes of pre-service teachers. However, one study on the subject shows findings similar to those of Applegate and Applegate

(2004), and Applegate *et al.* (2014). Rimensberger's (2014) study centres on reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers studying to be teachers at a South African teacher training institution in Durban. Some themes that are more specific to South Africa are covered. South Africa's reading population is relatively small, and many literate citizens choose not to read, even though they are able to (Rimensberger, 2014: 1). Also, South Africa's schooling system struggles to graduate students with functional literacy skills (Howie *et al.*, 2012: 112-113). As mentioned in Chapter 1, Rimensberger (2014) conducted her study using the rationale that "without fully understanding student teachers' own attitudes towards reading, the challenges of literacy and reading in the classroom cannot be fully addressed" (Rimensberger, 2014: 1). The study included 171 participants who responded to a survey which explored the amount and nature of reading they did for pleasure, specifically whether they were engaged readers of extended texts like novels, and the roles that books played in participants' lives.

The study found that though the respondents believe reading is important, most do not have robust reading habits, and many do not seem to enjoy reading. Their attitudes towards reading, or at least the attitudes they reported, were at odds with their actual reading habits. Participants were readily able to name the benefits of reading and in many cases expressed positive attitudes about books. However, since these positive reading attitudes were in stark contrast with participants' actual reading habits, or lack thereof, their positive attitudes were "interpreted as wanting to 'give the right answer'" (Rimensberger, 2014: 6). Rimensberger (2014) expresses the concern that, once the participants enter the classroom as teachers, they may give a mixed message to students: "that reading is important, but not pleasurable" (Rimensberger, 2014: 6). Although there is a growing emphasis in the education sphere on engaging children in reading and building positive reading attitudes, Rimensberger's (2014) study shows that teacher education institutions must continue to encourage intrinsic reading motivation in pre-service

teachers. Pre-service teachers must be made aware of their future responsibilities as reading role models for their students, and ideally, they need a solid foundation of intrinsic motivation to read.

Pre-service teachers also need a deep understanding of the importance and value of literature in teaching reading, especially teaching higher-level reading skills that facilitate critical thinking. Such methods are neglected in teacher training programs, and so teachers may simply use the instructional techniques they remember from school. If those techniques were ineffective, the teacher simply reproduces the same results instead of potentially using better techniques guided by sound curricular philosophy. Some such philosophies and techniques are discussed below.

2.7 Instructional approaches for meaningful reading practices

This study draws upon the Humanist and Social Reformist curricular philosophies (Maley, 2012: 301). The first is founded on the hope that education can serve individuals by offering them opportunities to engage in personal development, and the second foregrounds the use of education as a vehicle for social reform (Maley, 2012). Literature can be a powerful tool for reaching Humanist and Social Reformist goals in education. It is postulated that the way in which literature is taught could help cultivate positive reading attitudes that would benefit future generations of learners, thus breaking the "Peter Effect" cycle and allowing learners to engage in reading for their personal development and enrichment. Also, the literature classroom can be a space in which learners develop critical thinking skills, among many others, which could help them to break out of poverty cycles. In order to make a case for more

beneficial use of literature in the classroom, it is first necessary to clarify what literature refers to.

2.7.1 Literature as concept

Broadly stated, the term 'literature' can refer to any text which is not expected to be true, written, or spoken (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019: 212). Literary works conform to the "norms, styles and conventions that govern particular *genres* (text types) at different times" (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019: 212). Literature is a 'cultural artefact' (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019: 211), which means that it is not a static concept, but a fluid one that changes as culture does. Maley (2012) posits four more specific definitions of literature. First, "Literature with a capital 'L'" (Maley, 2012: 302), which regards literature as a collection of texts that are "most significant" to a cultural group. English examples include the works of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dickens, etc. This definition often removes the original work from the centre and includes the body of discussions and debates surrounding it. The second definition (Maley, 2012: 302) reflects a view of literature as any text that needs to be read aesthetically, not efferently (Kramsch, 1993: 122-124). This is referred to as "literature with a small 'l'" (Maley, 2012: 302; Mcrae, 1991), in which the text itself is centred and readers are encouraged to respond emotionally. Third, literature is defined as "a limited number of more or less rule-governed genres or text types" (Maley, 2012: 302) – for example, fiction, short-stories, poetry, biographies, etc., as well as spoken stories, such as plays, radio-drama, and speeches. The focus here is on the construction and function of the text, as well as its value within its community of users. Fourth, literature is comprised of "special uses of language peculiar to itself" (Maley, 2012: 302). The focus is on technical aspects of the language, such as literary devices found in high proportions in literary texts – for example, the figurative or metaphorical aspects of

literary texts and the high degree of patterning found in them at all levels: phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discoursal (Maley, 2012).

Teachers of additional-language learners are no longer obliged to adhere to the traditional canon of English, which may not be suitable for their learners and students. The purposes of teaching literature include the development of reading competence, by familiarising readers with the conventions of different genres, so that readers can fully comprehend different texts. It is important to note that, due to its cultural context, literature is not simply comprehended by the reader, it is also interpreted. The reader's engagement with the text extends beyond a passive ability to read and into an ability to bring meaning to the text, understanding it in its original context, and in the context of the reader's life and experiences. Thus, the teaching of literature needs to include the voice of the reader (the learner) as much as the voice of the author or the text itself.

2.7.2 Teaching literature

How, then, should literature be taught? Traditionally, two different approaches have been used in language-teaching programs: "Literature as Study", which focuses on *teaching about* literature, or telling students about the particular work and its significance; and "Literature as Resource", where the teacher uses literature as an anchor for language-learning activities; in other words, the teacher *teaches with* literature. The "Literature as Study" approach tends to adopt the first definition of literature stated above: "Literature with a capital 'L'", selecting texts that are deemed culturally significant, often in the Western canon. "Literature as Resource" is more concerned with the third and fourth definitions of literature— using the text as a kind of catalyst for a study of the language, and the function and structure of the text. Both approaches have been criticised. The "Literature as Study" approach tends to validate texts

from Inner-Circle countries (Kachru, 1992), which often are not relevant to students' lived experiences. Also, the student becomes a passive recipient of information, instead of engaging with the text personally. The "Literature as Resource" approach, on the other hand, undervalues the actual text in favour of attending to the linguistic content. According to Maley (2012: 303), "[t]his approach may be reduced to a box of tricks which students rapidly tire of."

Maley (2012: 304) makes the case for a third approach: "Literature as Appropriation". This approach is closely connected to Maley's (2012: 302) third definition of literature, which focuses on the structure and function of the genre of the text and includes texts from a variety of authors, not just texts from the academic cannon. "Literature as Appropriation" takes a more inclusive stance; students are encouraged to make literature their own and "appropriate" texts in such a way that it is personally relevant, with a focus on affective factors influencing reading and language acquisition. Students are therefore given the opportunity to learn language *through* literature. Education specialists and scholars recommend extensive reading (Nation, 1997; Maley, 2012; Van der Walt & Evans, 2019; Renandya, 2007; Izaks, 2015: 42) as a method for promoting language acquisition, especially vocabulary. As Nation (1997: 13) states, extensive reading has the important benefit of allowing learners to follow their own interests while reading, and learners of different proficiency levels are able to read texts that suit their own level, instead of only following a rigid class program. The "Literature as Appropriation" approach also requires texts chosen by teachers to be relevant to the students and inclusive of the variety and nuance of English and its different uses. This is particularly relevant in EIL contexts since, according to Maley (2012: 304), "a personalised and critical appreciation of English is crucial to students' development as independent users of the language". This approach to teaching literature potentially offers an effective way to nurture positive reading attitudes and habits in the EIL literacy classroom by encouraging students to read for their own

enjoyment; reading is its own reward. Thus, aiming to ‘appropriate’ literature in the classroom could help to foster healthy reading attitudes, and provide an enjoyable way for students to develop their English skills. Models for using literature in EIL classrooms are discussed below.

2.7.3 Models for using literature in EIL contexts

Maley (2012) discusses three models for the use of literature in EIL contexts: the linguistic model, the cultural model, and the personal-growth model. These three models present different perspectives on the potential benefits of English literature study. According to the linguistic model, English literature offers exposure to vocabulary, grammar, and variations of English found in different societies, cultures, professions, and geographical locations. The cultural model focuses on literature as a window through which students can glimpse different cultures. Maley (2012: 300) explains that “literature cannot be used to ‘teach’ culture but it can illuminate the multi-facetted contexts, practices, and beliefs our students may be expected to encounter in their professional and personal lives outside the classroom.” Also, as Kramsch (1993: 233-259) points out, literature can provide “third places” or a vantage point from which they can examine their own and others’ cultures and biases. Lastly, the personal-growth model encourages the use of literary study in the pursuit of personal growth. By studying different narratives, we can better understand human motivation and action. Maley (2012: 300) writes that “[s]tudents exposed to such texts are opened to better critical understanding of themselves and of others in a rapidly-changing and often confusing and paradoxical world”. These models are not mutually exclusive; they can be used simultaneously to create a learning environment that serves the students of today in relevant, inclusive ways.

Addressing reading attitudes has the potential to empower students and teachers to overcome many of the language-related challenges they face today. Maley (2012: 305) makes a

compelling case for the use of literature in the language classroom. Throughout their lives, learners will encounter various kinds of English, not just the colonial British English of the classical canon. They will benefit from an inclusive teaching approach rather than an elitist, exclusionary one. Also, as English is used in business settings around the world by more people, it is no longer enough to speak English averagely well (Graddol, 2006). Those who can use English proficiently will benefit from the skill, especially in their professional lives. Reading, both academically and for pleasure, can be an effective tool used to help navigate these contemporary challenges, especially if educators are intentional about the texts they select in their courses and the way in which educators use those texts. In South Africa, the professional sphere is largely an English one, and South African educators (including pre-service teachers) can use effective literature instruction to develop their learners' English skills and critical thinking skills, which will greatly benefit them in the future.

In the South African context, English literature is mostly taught to second or additional-language learners of English of varying ability; very few are native or first-language speakers of English. It is in the best interest of learners in South Africa to look at literature from the perspective of English as an international language rather than colonial (i.e., UK standard) language, not only because our students are not native English speakers, but because EIL literature can be instrumental to facilitating decoloniality in the classroom. Teachers who use literature to facilitate the development of a broader, more global, and more inclusive perspective in their classrooms will pay attention to the kinds of pronunciation, idioms, and language rules they teach, as well as the kinds of texts they prescribe. Such a teacher needs to be familiar with different dialects of English, and different kinds of texts and stories their learners can relate to, which would require an extensive reading habit. It has become a trend in language courses offered to foreign students and for specific purposes to ignore the role of

literature in language learning. However, this does not apply to South African school contexts where the study of literature remains a firm part of the language curriculum. Teachers can use a variety of methods in the literature classroom to achieve the goals mentioned in this section; some classroom strategies are discussed below.

2.7.4 Classroom strategies for integrated language and literature study

The first important consideration teachers face is that of text selection, especially at the lower levels "where the foundation of literary appreciation is laid" (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019: 221). The cohort involved in this study will be teaching at these levels once they graduate, so their ability to choose texts is especially important. A key factor in choosing effective texts, according to Van der Walt and Evans (2019), is the reading attitudes and habits of the teacher. Teachers must "read widely and develop [their] own norms for quality and suitability" (2019: 221). It may be helpful if the teacher enjoys the text since the teacher's own enthusiasm is more likely to be communicated to his or her learners. This reinforces the importance of developing positive reading attitudes and robust reading habits in teachers.

Once the appropriate text has been selected, teachers can choose between various methods of literary instruction. The method they choose will depend on the text, the skill level of the learners, availability of resources, etc. As has been mentioned before, the value of teaching literature goes beyond language development. Also, teaching learners a list of important facts from the text, such as traits of the main character or the plot, only to have learners reproduce the information verbatim in a test or examination, defeats the greater purpose of engagement with and appropriation of the text. In an effective literature class, the learner is an active participant in "speculation and reassessment, in questioning the text" (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019: 223). To this end, Van der Walt and Evans (2019: 224) suggest a reader-response

approach to literature instruction, using specific activities which fall within three stages; pre-reading, reading and focused reading, and post-reading. The process flows as follows:

> Learners read the text → initial responses (orally or in writing) follow → sharing in groups/pairs → focused reading/re-reading → teacher intervention in the form of, for example, guiding questions → adapting/refining responses with reference to the text → final response.

The goal is to actively involve learners at every stage and facilitate their personal engagement with the text. As Gajdusek (1988: 254) writes: "Unless we structure the classroom experience so as to make *the students* discover what is there, we are not really teaching literature – or anything else – in [English as a Second Language]." Teachers need to engage learners at every point and allow them to appropriate the text in their own ways to successfully achieve the goals of effective EIL literary instruction (Maley, 2012).

There are teaching methods which can help those learners who are behind in their reading education, not only in the early years, but later in their academic careers as well. One such method is the *Learning to Read: Reading to Learn* methodology (further referred to as the *RtL* method), developed in Australia to help "at risk" students to learn to read (Rose, 2005). This method is currently being used in Australia, Africa, and Latin America, and has shown to be very effective in accelerating the reading and writing development of learners of all ages and skill levels (Rose, 2005, 2010; Mataka, 2017, 2020).

The *RtL* method begins in much the same way as the method proposed by Van der Walt and Evans (2019); *Preparing before Reading* by covering the context of the text, major themes, difficult vocabulary, etc., followed by *Detailed Read*ing that requires learners to read the text carefully on their own. This is followed by four writing activities: *Preparing before Writing*, *Joint Reconstruction*, *Individual Reconstruction,* and *Independent Writing*. Figure 2 shows the entire *RtL* process.

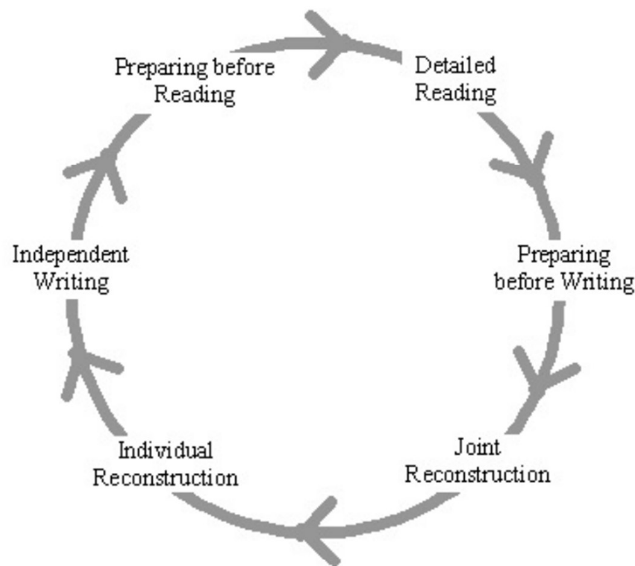


Figure 2: Stages of Learning to Read: Reading to Learn methodology (Rose, 2005: 147)

Learners first prepare by taking notes, discussing the text, and deepening their comprehension during the *Prepare before Reading*, *Detailed Reading*, and *Preparing before Writing* stages. Then, they attempt to reconstruct the text using new information. In the *Joint Reconstruction* stage, the teacher directs the entire class to write a new story using similar language patterns and new content. This is done by having the class suggest their ideas while learners take turns to scribe on the board. Of course, the class will not be able to rewrite an entire novel; they will use either textual extracts, short stories, or create a story summary. Once the *Joint Reconstruction* stage is complete, learners will use what they have learned in previous activities to write a story on their own in the *Individual Reconstruction* stage, again using text patterns and ideas from the text, but inserting new content to create an original story. Lastly, the teacher will set an *Independent Writing* task on which learners can be assessed. This form of explicit teaching was designed to be implemented at any stage in the learners' reading development journey and has been demonstrated to assist even the weakest learners in acquiring fundamental literacy skills in just a year, with only 2 or 3 lessons a week (Rose, 2005: 141). This method

could be an effective way to facilitate the "Literature as Appropriation" approach detailed by Maley (2012); learners can "get inside the skin" of the text and then replace its organs with original ideas, creating something new while achieving a vivid comprehension of the original text. Also, this method involves a combination of writing and reading skills, as well as speaking during discussion components of the methodology. An integrated, or skills-neutral, approach to language instruction and literacy development has been shown to be very effective (Weideman, 2017). Thus, instead of teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking as separate skills, literacy instruction should include all these skills working in conjunction with each other.

Van der Walt and Evans' (2019) method, as well as the *RtL* method, are both examples of methodologies that teachers can use to guide their literature lessons. However, literacy teachers in South Africa do not seem to be using these effective methods. The reality of literature instruction in South African classrooms is discussed below.

2.7.5 Literature in the prescribed South African school curriculum

The present study included a cohort of first-year, pre-service teachers and is primarily aimed at understanding their reading attitudes and habits. However, their learning experiences in their high school literature classes may have influenced their attitudes and habits. This aspect was also probed, since the methods with which literature is taught can have an impact on learners' reading attitudes, as has been established in previous sections, and participants are more likely to remember their high school experiences than those of their earlier years. To better understand the kinds of experiences the study cohort may have had with literature in high school, this section looks at South Africa's nationally-prescribed curriculum as it pertains to the teaching of literature in high school.

The curriculum currently prescribed by the Department of Basic Education is the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). At first glance, it is apparent that the CAPS seems to have reasonable expectations and goals. The document contains a brief section on teaching literature, and the recommended approach can be summarised in the following quote:

> The main reason for reading literature in the classroom is to develop in learners a sensitivity to a special use of language that is more refined, literary, figurative, symbolic, and deeply meaningful than much of what else they may read. […] The teaching of literature is never easy, but it is impossible without personal, thoughtful, and honest interpretations and comments from the learners themselves. Unless they learn how to understand a literary text on their own, they will not have learnt much (Department of Basic Education, 2011a: 16).

This quote reflects tenets of both the "Literature as Appropriation" and the "Literature as Resource" approaches (Maley, 2012). Teachers are encouraged to allow learners to appropriate the text, focusing on the responses of their students, and to "[search] for what is meaningful to [them]" (Department of Basic Education, 2011a: 16). Also, literature is framed as a resource for learning the subtleties of the English language. However, there does not seem to be any mention of EIL or teaching different kinds of English, which may be an oversight given the multilingual context of most English classrooms in South Africa and the drive to decolonise Education.

Ways in which to teach literature presented in CAPS include reading as much of the text as possible during class time and focusing on the structure of texts and how they have been created. Teachers are advised to connect creative writing to literary study in their classrooms and to keep in mind that studying literature is less about learning the "right answers", and more

about finding meaning in the text. The approaches prescribed in CAPS align with those advocated in the preceding discussion, at least in theory. However, time allocation and logistical issues may obstruct the implementation of the curriculum.

CAPS allows for nine hours of language instruction in a two-week cycle of classes, four hours being allocated to "Reading and Viewing: Comprehension & Literature" (Department of Basic Education, 2011a: 17). This implies that two hours of class time per week are allocated to reading. That may not be enough time to achieve the goals presented by CAPS. In their evaluation of the FET Phase CAPS document, Grussendorf, Booyse and Burroughs (2014: 47), find an internal inconsistency in the CAPS between the breadth of content and the time allocated to cover it; they write:

> … the CAPS teaching plans provided (pp 53-76) have not managed to incorporate all of the specified content in the teaching time available. As a result, there is considerable disparity between the topics included in the CAPS content overview and the topics represented in the teaching plans. […] This points to a serious issue with the English FAL CAPS, as there is internal misalignment of the prescribed content within the document itself. With regard to the question of overall breadth of content in the CAPS, the evaluation team expressed the concern that the list of content topics that is prescribed in the content overview remains too broad, and that learners 'will require more time to engage meaningfully with all of the curriculum demands'.

Teachers may be rushing through the content, or leaving sections out, in order to keep up with their schedules. To save time, teachers may be reading and explaining texts to students, who are expected to memorize answers to recall for assessment; the text is not studied, but learned, with little critical thinking or individual literary analysis involved. Perhaps an integrated approach in which literature content is used as a basis to address all four language skills would ensure more coverage of the language curriculum and would ensure that reading forms an

integral part of each class. Teaching literature in this way, however, may prove difficult for inexperienced or under-trained teachers.

CAPS stipulates *what* needs to be taught and assessed, but there is little support for teachers when it comes to *how* to teach. One could assume that the *how* would be taught at university or at other teacher training institutions, but, as Taylor (2014) found, teacher training programs at many prominent South African universities lack adequate coverage of theoretical frameworks and teaching practices related to literature teaching.

Teachers in South Africa lack the necessary content knowledge specific to their discipline or subject; pedagogical knowledge about how to teach their subject effectively; and curriculum knowledge, or a bird's eye view of the content they are teaching and its context in the curriculum (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016; Rule & Land, 2017; Taylor, 2014, 2019). Of particular concern is the apparent lack of attention paid to reading instruction in teacher training programs. In terms of ineffective teaching methods, many teachers in South Africa are not equipped with the necessary skills to teach foundational reading skills (Taylor, 2014). Taylor (2014: 17) writes:

> …across all five institutions, there may be insufficient focus on equipping student teachers to guide [intermediate phase (IP)] learners to become proficient readers and writers/producers of texts in a range of genres and modes. In particular, little or no attention is given to reading pedagogies across the sample.

Pedagogical strategies that are used in the language classroom seem to favour a focus on 'decoding' and 'phonics' skills, especially in the early years, as well as a lot of attention paid to the correct pronunciation of words when reading aloud; often with a glaring lack of comprehension and reading strategies taught explicitly (Spaull, 2015; Pretorius & Klapwijk,

2016; Rule & Land, 2017). Teachers do a lot of choral reading in their classes, where the whole class reads out loud together (Spaull, 2015), and sometimes assess comprehension informally by asking questions of the class (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). Written responses to assess comprehension are few and far between, though they are more common in more advantaged schools (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). According to Van der Walt and Evans (2019: 176), senior-phase reading lessons in South Africa often follow this structure:

a) The teacher pre-teaches the vocabulary.
b) The teacher reads the passage aloud.
c) The learners re-read the passage silently.
d) The teacher goes through the set of questions with the class.
e) The class responds orally or in writing.
f) The answers are checked.

This method does not explicitly teach learners practical strategies for reading and comprehension and offers no opportunities for the teacher to notice a student who is having any difficulty early on before students are assessed. Prior knowledge is not activated, and the teacher's questions test the learners instead of scaffolding their learning. There is the danger that students are only being tested on their knowledge of the text being read in this specific activity – a text which they will never see again. A focus on the structure of the text, and activities that engage the learners' own comprehension and interpretive skills could be more useful.

Reading comprehension in contemporary times has new challenges which must be addressed along with those discussed above. The advent of digital technology has been momentous, and it comes with great advantages, as well as potential pitfalls. The following section briefly discusses the use of digital technology in the reading classroom.

2.7.6 Digital reading in the literature classroom

With the rapid progression and development of technology, educators must continuously reassess their practices and methodologies in the classroom. Digital tools such as computers, smartphones, and the internet offer a range of advantages, but they are relatively new to teachers and learners in many public-school classrooms in South Africa; teachers must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of digital resources, and literature and literacy teachers are no exception. The following brief discussion refers to specific studies focused on the use of digital reading in the literature classroom.

No conclusive agreement has yet been reached on the effectiveness of printed text as opposed to digital text in educational contexts (Pardede, 2019). Clearly, digital tools have their advantages and disadvantages. Computers and the internet can be very convenient and useful tools, particularly in the ESL classroom. The internet is a rich resource for information, and digital tools can help to save paper, as well as provide flexibility and autonomy to learners. Teachers can use multimodal text (which includes hyperlinks, audio files, videos, etc.) to link to definitions or incorporate fun videos into their lessons. Students using digital devices can also benefit from the ease and convenience which come with access to the internet, as well as the ability to copy and paste, and otherwise take advantage of computer programs. Moreover, the internet can provide learners with the opportunity to easily follow intellectual pursuits according to their own interests. The traditional long-accepted norms of the face-to-face classroom – in which the teacher presents the content and learners follow his or her guidance and instruction – are interrupted if learners can access information on their own, instead of simply reading texts given to them by the teacher. All these advantages make digital reading an attractive option for educators. However, access in South Africa remains a serious issue when as much as 80% of South African public schools do not have access to the internet for

the purposes of teaching and learning (Department of Basic Education, 2021: 11). Also, it is the goal of literature teachers to develop a love for reading in their learners and to facilitate the skills learners need to read and appropriate entire novels on their own. In this endeavour, digital tools may not be helpful; they may distract the learners and undermine extensive reading skills.

Reading a printed book may have some benefits over digital reading, especially when reading long texts. Print reading may improve reading comprehension and help readers remember what they have read (Singer Trakhman & Alexander, 2017). When reading a printed book, the reader navigates the information presented by the author in a similar way to how a hiker follows a trail. The reader can more easily see the location of the information being read, and thus the reader may find it easier to contextualise and remember the information than if it is found somewhere amongst the endless scrolling text on a digital screen. To quote Jabr (2013: 51): "[t]he human brain may perceive a text in its entirety as a kind of physical landscape. When we read, we construct a mental representation of the text that is likely similar to the mental maps we create of terrain and indoor spaces." The information on an endlessly scrolling screen may be more difficult to recall because the reader does not easily see its location in relation to the rest of the text. Also, digital devices and internet applications are often full of distractions such as hyperlinks, advertisements, social media, and messaging apps, etc., which may negatively impact reading comprehension and reading recall by breaking the readers' focus and tiring the reader out physically and mentally (Wästlund, Reinikka, Norlander & Archer, 2005). Reading print seems to allow readers to draw conclusions using mental abstraction, and to synthesise information (Kaufman & Flanagan, 2016). Also, research has shown that long periods of screen exposure can cause eye strain, so reading an entire novel on a screen may be uncomfortable or even harmful. Another disadvantage of screen reading is that readers only

see smaller chunks of text at one time, which can result in comprehension challenges (Coiro, 2003).

Thus, though digital tools are very useful and beneficial in certain contexts, they may not be as conducive to developing a love of reading and are particularly unsuited to reading longer texts such as novels. The goal of literature teachers is to encourage a love for reading and deep engagement with literature. Such engagement can facilitate language acquisition, and it can give learners the opportunity to engage with different cultures and different kinds of English. Learners may also use their experiences with literature to critically evaluate or interrogate their own and others' beliefs (Maley, 2012). The slower, more abstract and reflective thinking required to engage with literary texts may best be done using print materials, and not digital ones.

2.8 Conclusion

In summary, reading attitudes are influenced largely by the readers' early experiences with reading through parent-child reading or shared book reading; their exposure to a wide variety of texts; and their language and vocabulary development at home. However, their reading attitudes are in large part attributed to the decisions made by schools and by literacy teachers through their text selection, their choice of assignments, and the availability of resources such as school libraries. Merisuo-Storm (2006:114) reminds us that "[i]n school the quality of the instruction depends on the teacher's expertise and the curriculum. The teacher's love for literature, and ability to find reading and writing material that interests pupils, are crucial". The reading attitudes of teachers have a substantial influence over the decisions they make in the classroom, and the kind of reading habits they model to their students. Literacy teachers are

called upon to provide their students with the right information, environment, and encouragement to become “ideal readers” (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Applegate *et Al.*, 2014). To foster the kind of culture that produces the ideal reader, and to achieve the important goals of EIL literature instruction, commonly-used teaching methods (cf. Van der Walt & Evans, 2019: 176) we see in South African classrooms today will not be enough.

Effective models and methods for teaching literature have been discussed in section 2.7, and some of the realities of literature study in South African classrooms have been discussed as well. However, it seems that effective literature instruction is not always the norm, due to poor teacher training, and a lack of resources. Also, beyond the framework or methodology used in the literature classroom, the influence of the teacher has a profound impact. A teacher’s enthusiasm for reading and for the text sets the tone, and the reading behaviour that the teacher models may determine their effectiveness more than anything they say to their learners (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Applegate *et al.*, 2014; Van der Walt & Evans, 2019: 216). Studies have shown that teachers in South Africa do not engage in reading for pleasure themselves and claim to be teaching reading and writing much more effectively than is reflected in their learners’ assessment scores (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016: 1). As Rimensberger (2014) shows, teachers may be convinced that reading is important and pay lip service to that belief, but they have not cultivated a robust reading habitus themselves. They may not be modelling healthy reading habits, and the fact that they do not read very much themselves could have a negative impact on their instructional practices.

Pre-service teachers represent an ideal cohort for disrupting the cycle of negative or indifferent attitudes passing from teachers to learners. Thus, studying the reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers can shed light on the kinds of reading attitudes that are being transferred

to students, and could illuminate pathways to cultivating positive attitudes and habits before teachers enter the classroom. Chapter 3 discusses the specific research methodology used for this study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the blueprint for the study by describing the methodology employed to investigate the reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers. Research objectives are presented in detail, as well as the theoretical justification for the research design and the decision to use a mixed methods approach. The cohort of participants and the process of developing the data-collection instrument are also described. Lastly, data analysis methods and ethical considerations are discussed.

3.2 Research objectives

The primary objective of this study is to explore the reading attitudes and actual reading habits of Foundation and Intermediate Phase Education students. The study also aims to ascertain the possible reasons for those attitudes and habits, particularly if they are negative or unhealthy. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading?
2. What kinds of reading do pre-service teachers engage in?
3. What are the underlying reasons for pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading?

As stated by Rimensberger (2014), challenges in the literacy classroom cannot be fully addressed unless we understand pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading. Understanding their reading attitudes and habits can help course designers to better prepare pre-service teachers to teach reading in such a way that healthy reading attitudes and more robust reading habits are achieved.

3.3 Research design

Many research paradigms exist for researchers to situate their research within a clear theoretical framework that directs and focuses their study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Nguyen, 2019). This study used a mixed-methods research methodology as a pragmatic way to explore participants' actual behaviour, the beliefs that inform and motivate their behaviour, and the consequences of that behaviour (Nguyen, 2019: 6). The following section briefly describes the pragmatic paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and explains the study's use of a mixed-methods methodology.

3.3.1 The pragmatic paradigm

The pragmatic paradigm is concerned with "what works – and solutions to problems" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 48). This paradigm bases inquiry on the desire to derive knowledge about the problem itself and uses multiple approaches to understand it, rather than providing a solution or testing a specific hypothesis. As Creswell and Creswell (2018: 48) state; "[i]nstead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasize the research problem and question and use all approaches available to understand the problem". Pragmatism is a philosophical foundation for mixed-methods research studies; it "opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 48). Critics of the pragmatic paradigm note that its focus on the research question "limits its ability to identify and analyse structural social problems" (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019: n.p.). However, in the instance of exploratory research, the pragmatic approach is not problematic, especially when accompanied by data collection techniques that probe potential reasons for phenomena under investigation in addition to deriving knowledge about them, as this study has done. The pragmatic paradigm provided a suitable framework within which to conduct this exploratory research, which included quantitative and qualitative data

focused on the experiences and beliefs of participants. A positivist approach that relied solely on quantitative data would not have been satisfactory or suitable for an exploratory study of reading attitudes and habits.

3.3.2 Mixed-methods approach

The study used a mixed-methods research method. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed by the researcher in the form of responses to closed- and open-ended survey questions. A mixed-methods approach was chosen because using only quantitative or qualitative data would have been inadequate to explore the research problem; the combined strengths of each research method can provide valuable insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 57). Quantitative data from this study can provide insights into the specific topics covered in the survey (detailed in section 3.5). However, reading attitudes of pre-service teachers is a fluid subject; participants may have something to say that other research did not predict or include. Qualitative questions can provide respondents an opportunity to expand or elaborate on their responses, providing the researcher with more useful, contextual information. Thus, a qualitative aspect was added to the research instrument.

Creswell and Creswell (2018: 52) focus on three kinds of mixed-methods research designs commonly found in the health and social sciences: explanatory sequential mixed-methods, exploratory sequential mixed-methods, and convergent mixed-methods. In explanatory sequential mixed-methods research, the researcher conducts quantitative research first, and once the results are analysed, they are further elaborated on using qualitative research. The quantitative data is thus explained by the qualitative data in two sequential phases: quantitative, then qualitative. This design has a strong quantitative orientation but can run into problems

when the researcher must choose which quantitative results to explore further, and if the sample sizes in the two phases are unequal or incompatible in any way.

Exploratory sequential mixed-methods research reverses the two phases. First, qualitative research is conducted to explore and analyse the beliefs or views of participants. The results are then used to "build an instrument that best fits the sample under study, to identify appropriate instruments to use in the follow-up quantitative phase, to develop an intervention for an experiment, to design an app or website, or to specify variables that need to go into a follow-up quantitative study" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 52). The main challenge when using this design is choosing the correct qualitative data on which to focus and selecting samples for each phase.

Convergent mixed-methods research entails merging both quantitative data and qualitative data to produce a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The researcher collects the qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and integrates both into the interpretation of the overall results. As Creswell and Creswell (2018: 52) state, "[c]ontradictions or incongruent findings are explained or further probed in this design". The current study used this method; the survey that was administered contained both qualitative and quantitative questions which were interpreted together and enhanced each other. Of particular interest was the matter of whether reading attitudes and habits aligned.

3.4 Participants

Non-probability, convenience sampling was used for this study, due to financial and time constraints. Instead of seeking out and recruiting participants who meet specific criteria, the

researcher provided every student registered for ENGE1608 the opportunity to complete the survey questionnaire. The study included students enrolled in the ENGE1608 module at the UFS in 2022 (a language module taken by all students registered in the BEd program for Foundation and Intermediate Phase teaching). Although early literacy is generally associated with the Foundation Phase, in the South African context many learners have not mastered basic literacy skills even after Grade 3, and the early literacy that should be in place by then has to be developed in the subsequent grades. This means that language teachers must continue to devote attention to literacy throughout the learners' years of schooling. Thus, participants included pre-service teachers training to become teachers in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases. Among other topics, the ENGE1608 module covers both mastery of English language skills and principles of teaching young learners to read, which made this cohort particularly relevant for this study. Since the researcher was a learning facilitator for this module, she had access to this group of students. She was also motivated by the fact that the information gained from this research could benefit her as a facilitator of this module and in other areas of her career as a teacher educator; the study could identify areas on which she could focus in future to best serve her students.

The selected cohort is of particular interest because the students themselves are products of the very education system for which they are being trained. Their reading attitudes can indicate the kind of attitudes being cultivated by South African primary and secondary education. If the goal is to cultivate healthy reading attitudes and habits in young learners in South Africa, our pre-service teachers could be in a perfect position to learn effective methods of reading instruction and ways in which to nurture their own reading attitudes, hopefully to such an extent that they can pass on their love for reading to their learners when they become teachers themselves. They will either reproduce the ineffective teaching practices that they experienced

in their schooling, or, given the right tools, they could be a group that makes a meaningful change and breaks the cycle that Applegate and Applegate (2004) call the "Peter Effect", detailed in chapter 2.

There were 688 students registered for ENGE1608 in 2021 on the Bloemfontein campus, and 484 students were registered in 2022. All students enrolled in ENGE1608 in 2022 were given the opportunity to complete a survey on Blackboard, the university's online learning management system. Those who participated did so based on their availability and willingness to participate. Students enrolled in the same module, ENGE1608, in 2021 were selected as the sample for the piloting of the survey. Since this group had much in common with the 2022 sample, such as demographics, learning environment, choice of course module, etc., they were a suitable sample (Bhattacherjee, 2019) for the pilot study. The students were free to complete the survey according to their availability and willingness to participate. Since the 2021 cohort did not form part of the current study, their responses to survey questions are not analysed or reported here. They participated merely for the purpose of determining the reliability of the survey instrument and to see where survey items could be improved for the actual study.

3.5 Development of the survey instrument

Data for this study were collected through the administration of a cross-sectional survey questionnaire, called the English Reading Attitudes Survey (ERAS). As stated by Paltridge and Phakiti (2010: 22), survey research has been used as a powerful tool with which to investigate the "characteristics, attitudes and opinions of language learners". Abstract notions, such as beliefs, attitudes, anxiety, or motivation, are psychological constructs, and so they cannot be observed directly; they exist within the minds and experiences of individuals (Brown, 2001).

Thus, survey research can provide researchers with a way to operationalise and thereby measure these constructs by allowing participants to express their beliefs and attitudes in response to survey statements and questions. Survey research will often include both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (close-ended) components (Brown, 2001), as is true for the survey instrument used in this study.

There are two kinds of survey instruments used for data collection: interviews and questionnaires. Interviews are usually used to obtain more specific information. However, the goal was not to focus on one specific aspect, but to gain a broader understanding of the reading attitudes of participants. Also, questionnaires are more efficient, especially when working with a large number of participants. In the case of the present study, a written questionnaire was chosen as the data-collection instrument, since the researcher was conducting exploratory research, which is better suited to a broader investigation.

Survey research can provide valuable insights, but it has inherent limitations which need to be acknowledged. When exploring abstract concepts like reading attitudes, the researcher must remember that the phenomenon under investigation is unobservable, multidimensional, and inconstant and that the survey instrument includes a limited number of statements and questions for the participant to respond to. Also, language and literacy issues may affect results; thus, every effort has been made by the researcher to write statements and questions in such a way that they can be easily understood by participants. However, no guarantees can be made about the participant's ability to understand questions, especially when the survey is completed online and the researcher is not present to answer any questions the participant might have. Respondents may also fail to take the questionnaire seriously or answer untruthfully. Therefore,

although survey research can be very valuable and is certainly worth doing, its limitations must be acknowledged and kept in mind (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2010: 35).

The following sections detail the process followed to design the ERAS, including the selection of items used in the questionnaire, as well as the piloting and refinement of the survey items in 2021 before the full study was conducted in 2022.

3.5.1 Design of the pilot survey questionnaire

After planning the study carefully, the researcher must select the survey instrument (either by creating one or adapting an existing instrument), pilot the instrument, and revise it based on the information obtained from the piloting process. The survey instrument designed for this study, the ERAS, was based on the survey instrument developed by Akbari *et al*. (2017): the L2 Reading Attitudes survey. The rationale for choosing the L2 Reading Attitudes survey as a starting point for developing the ERAS is explained below.

In this study, the researcher wanted to investigate reading habits and attitudes of pre-service teachers, specifically those enrolled in ENGE1608, as has been explained above. Instead of creating a new survey instrument, the researcher decided to develop a survey instrument using an existing questionnaire. Adapting an existing survey instrument saves time and can add credibility to the study because the research instrument has been 'tested' before.

This study was premised on similar studies, most importantly Applegate and Applegate (2004), Applegate *et al.* (2014), and Rimensberger (2014), all of whom were studying reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers. Another very influential study was that of Akbari *et al.* (2017), which focused specifically on students studying English as a foreign or additional

language. The studies which included pre-service teachers used survey instruments designed to measure reading attitudes, but did not focus on reading in a second language. Akbari *et al.*'s (2017) L2 Reading Attitude survey dealt in more detail with factors reflecting L2 reading attitudes than survey instruments used in other studies like Applegate and Applegate (2004), Applegate *et al.* (2014) or Rimensberger (2014). The L2 Reading Attitudes survey was developed by Akbari *et al.* (2017) based on the findings of Lee and Schallert (2014), Mathewson (1994), and Yamashita (2004). Since a majority of South African students do not speak English as their home language, using an L2 reading attitude survey would provide more relevant insights. Thus, instead of using a questionnaire adapted from those used in the studies that focused on a similar cohort – education students – but who spoke English as their first language, the researcher chose to adapt Akbari *et al*.'s (2017) L2 Reading Attitude survey for use as the research instrument in this study. The L2 Reading Attitude survey was also chosen for its reliability, which is further discussed in section 3.6.

The ERAS consists of statements that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale; *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neutral*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. Each option was associated with a numerical value so that the responses could be used to create an attitude score. The Likert scale is commonly used in survey research due to its simplicity and efficacy, and the ease with which it can be used for quantitative analysis. A number of items can be used to measure a specific attribute, such as "reading anxiety".

Likert scales are very common, but using them as scale items is not accepted by all statisticians (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2010: 28). They are not really interval scales, because the intervals between each response are inevitably not equal; they are more accurately described by Paltridge

and Phakiti (2010: 28) as ordinal data. However, most applied linguists still treat Likert scale items as interval data (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2010: 28).

The ERAS questionnaire produces an attitude scale that was used to measure the L2 reading attitude of each participant (further discussed in section 4.5). The scale is made up of five subscales: cognitive attitudes, conative attitudes, negative affect, anxiety, and self-assessment. Cognitive factor pertains to "the intellectual, practical, and linguistic values of reading" (Akbari *et al.*, 2017: 3). Conative is related to the actual behaviour of readers, whereas negative affect and anxiety are related to negative attitudes and feelings of anxiousness associated with reading in English, and self-assessment pertains to students' perceptions of their own reading competence (Akbari *et al.*, 2017: 3). These subscales provide a comprehensive view of participants' reading attitudes and allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of their attitudes towards reading in English.

3.5.2 Piloting the questionnaire

In survey research, the term 'piloting' refers to "administering the instrument to a sample of participants who are similar to the target group of people for whom it has been designed" (Dörnyei & Csizer 2012:79). The ERAS questionnaire was piloted in 2021 to make sure the questions were understandable, and to ensure that it was feasible for participants to complete it via the online platform. Issues concerning students' access to devices on which to complete the questionnaire and navigation of the online platform would have come up during the pilot. These proved not to be of concern; the online format worked very well for the purposes of this study and was therefore used for the full study in 2022. The pilot phase was used only for the calculation of the reliability coefficient and the refinement of the research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha measured at 0.86 for the pilot survey. The researcher made a few changes

after the pilot, which are discussed in section 3.5.3. The refined research instrument was made available to the 2022 cohort of students registered for ENGE1608 at the beginning of the second quarter of the academic year once ethical clearance had been granted. An email was sent via Blackboard to all ENGE1608 students and those students who wished to participate were able to click on the link to the survey and complete it online.

3.5.3 Refinement of the questionnaire

The L2 Reading Attitude survey used by Akbari *et al.* (2017) contained 30 statements in total, but the number of statements per subscale varied. There were nine for 'Cognitive', eight for 'Negative', seven for 'Conative', and only three each for 'Anxiety' and 'Self-Assessment'. According to Paltridge and Phakiti (2010: 28), three items or statements per subscale would be too few; in general, the more statements measuring one scale, the more reliable the data. However, the survey participants may be fatigued if they are expected to respond to too many statements (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2010: 34). Thus, the researcher decided to keep the total number of statements at 30, but evened out the scales by using six statements per subscale. New items were added for the 'Anxiety' and 'Self-Assessment' subscales, and some were removed from the other categories. Also, some statements were modified if they used language that may be foreign or confusing to the South African cohort. Some statements were reverse coded to ensure consistency of all variables when determining subscale scores; this was carefully considered when analysing the data. Survey statements were provided in a random order to prevent respondents from connecting certain items with others, since this could influence their responses. For example, if all the 'Anxiety' statements were listed together, the respondent may mentally connect them together and give similar responses to all the statements since they all have the same theme.

Twelve demographic questions were included in the pilot questionnaire. These provided objective information about individual participants: the level at which they learned English at school, the nature of their experiences in the literature classroom, whether their school had a library, and their preferred types of reading (print or digital). The researcher removed four questions when refining the ERAS, after the pilot, to decrease the chances of participants experiencing fatigue due to answering too many questions. The final eight demographic questions are listed in the table below.

Table 1: Final language background and contextual information questions

1	At what level did you learn English at school? • First additional language • Home Language
2	Which of the following kinds of English texts did you study in Grade 12? (Enter all that apply.) • Novels • Short Stories • Plays • Poems
3	Did you have access to a school library with books to read? • No • Yes
4	Did you enjoy your high school English literature classes? • No • Yes
5	Select the statement that best describes how you were taught literature in class in high school. • My teacher asked us to read the literature after school on our own, but we had class discussions based on the texts. • My teacher introduced the text and concepts, then let us work in groups, gave us a literature passage to read and questions that we had to answer on our own. • My teacher read the texts to us in class, taught us what the texts were about, and then gave us notes that we had to learn for tests and exams. • My teacher used a workbook with notes on the stories that we had to study and exercises that we had to do. We used the workbook in class. • None of the above.
6	Select the statement that applies most of all to you. • I like listening to audio recordings more than reading. • I prefer reading from printed texts and books rather than digital devices. • Reading on a digital device is my favourite way to read.

7	How often do you read a text that is longer than 20 pages? • Less than once a week • About once a week • Nearly every day • Every day
8	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)? • Never • During holidays • Over weekends • Nearly every day • Every day

Table 2 below lists the original L2 Reading Attitudes survey questions and the modifications made by the researcher to create the ERAS, together with the rationale for the changes. The statements are organised according to the specific subscale they are measuring. Four newly-formulated statements are also listed; the rationale for each new formulation is explained in a brief section below.

Table 2: L2 Reading Attitude Survey statements with modifications.

Anxiety	**Suitability**	**Modification**
I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read.	Revised for clarity and to cover academic reading content	I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read in my coursework.
I feel anxious if I don't know all the words in reading passages.	Suitable	
I feel overwhelmed whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.	Suitable	
I feel anxious about the amount of academic reading I have to do at university.	New item — focused on academic reading	
When I read in English, I find it difficult to concentrate.	Suitable (Moved from 'Negative' variable category of original questionnaire).	
I get nervous when I have to read academic texts on a digital device.	New item	
Cognitive		
I can acquire English vocabulary if I read English.	Revise in plain English	I can learn more English vocabulary if I read English.
Reading English is useful to get a good job in the future.	Suitable	
I can acquire broad knowledge if I read English.	Revise in plain English	I can increase my knowledge if I read English

I can develop my English reading ability if I read English.	Omitted — Too obvious	
I can develop my English writing ability if I read English.	Revise for clarity	I can improve my English writing ability if I do English reading.
I can become more knowledgeable if I read English.	Omitted — duplication of item	
Reading English is useful to get a good grade in class.	Suitable	
I can improve my sensitivity to the English language if I read English.	Omitted — too vague	
I get to know different values if I read English.	Revise for clarity	Reading helps me to learn different points of view on matters.
Conative		
If someone tells me that he or she likes an English book very much, I am going to read it too.	Revise in South African English.	If someone tells me that they like an English book very much, I will read it too.
During my vacation I want to read at least one English book.	Suitable	
I want to read many English books in the future.	Suitable	
I try to find time for reading in English.	Suitable	
I sometimes visit English websites and read them on the Internet.	Revise for clarity	I often visit English websites and read on the Internet.
I go to a library to borrow or read English books.	Revise – double-barrel question (ask one thing at a time)	If I could go to a library, I would definitely take out English books to read.
Negative		
If I do not understand content in reading, I skip the part.	Revise for simplicity.	I like to skip sections that I do not understand when reading English.
Reading English is dull.	Revise in plain English.	Reading English is boring.
I don't mind even if I cannot understand the book content entirely.	Omit – meaning unclear	
I want to avoid reading in English as much as possible.	Revise in plain English.	I avoid reading in English as much as possible.
I feel tired if I read English.	Revise to cover academic reading	Just thinking about academic reading makes me tired.
I do not want to read in English even if the content is interesting.	Suitable	
When I read in English, I find it difficult to concentrate.	Suitable – closer to anxiety. Changed variable to 'anxiety'.	
I would rather do nothing than read a book.	New item	
Self-assessment		
I am good at reading in English.	Suitable	
My grades for English reading tests at middle school are very good.	Revise for South African context.	My grades for English reading comprehension in high school were good.
I feel confident when I am reading in English.	Suitable	

Reading English is troublesome.	Revise in plain English. (Changed variable from ‘Negative’ to ‘Self-assessment’)	Reading English is easy.
I am comfortable with my reading speed.	New item	
I can figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words by reading the rest of the sentence or paragraph.	New item	

New items were formulated for three subscales – ‘Anxiety’, ‘Self-Assessment’ and ‘Negative’ – to even out the number of statements per section. For the ‘Anxiety’ subscale, the researcher added “I feel anxious about the amount of academic reading I have to do at university” to learn more about participants’ feelings towards their academic reading workload, and “I get nervous when I have to read academic texts on a digital device” to probe participants’ feelings towards reading using digital devices. The researcher included the statement focused specifically on academic reading, since most of the other questions were focused on reading in general. Students’ attitudes towards reading in general and academic reading may differ. For the ‘Self-Assessment’ subscale, the researcher added “I am comfortable with my reading speed” to learn about participants perceptions of their own reading speed, and “I can figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words by reading the rest of the sentence or paragraph” to gain insight into how participants feel about their understanding of English texts (whether they find it difficult or not). One new item was developed for the ‘Negative’ subscale; “I would rather do nothing than read a book”. It is possible that participants who agree with this statement, and would choose boredom over reading, may have an especially strong distaste for reading.

The researcher added two open-ended questions at the end of the ERAS (the L2 Reading Attitude survey has no open-ended questions). These questions gave participants the opportunity to respond more freely about their own experiences.

Table 3: Open-ended questions

39	Mention anything about reading that worries you.	New item
40	Mention anything about the teaching of literature at school that you think is important.	New item

The final ERAS questionnaire, as well as the POPIA consent form made available to all participants, are attached as annexure B and C.

3.6 Statistical procedures

The data collected in this study were analysed using several statistical procedures. The researcher acknowledges the assistance of the UFS Statistical Consultation Unit, and specifically Dr Sean Van der Merwe, for his help in analysing and understanding the collected data.

As stated earlier, survey research has its limitations. The results of the survey data cannot be generalised to other cohorts, as they involve making evaluative judgments about the perceptions of students. The survey was presented to a specific group and the results should not be extended beyond that group without seriously considering and accounting for any systematic differences between that group and any broader group. Also, the data analysed are inherently random, and if the survey were to be repeated, the results could be different. Nonetheless, every effort was made to estimate the extent to which results may differ if the survey were to be repeated. Lastly, although the computer software used is tried and tested, there are multiple human elements involved in the data analysis and both the researcher and the statistician may have introduced human error at various stages of the research process. Thus, no guarantee can ultimately be given of the exactness of any findings. The data may be useful as a source of insight, while keeping these caveats in mind.

As detailed in previous sections, this study entailed the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data via open and closed-ended survey questions. The programs used to analyse the quantitative survey data were the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and R. These programs help with analysing quantitative data and were used to analyse the responses to all the closed-ended questions of the ERAS survey. The responses to the two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire were thematically coded and analysed manually by the researcher.

Before conducting data analysis, the data must first be prepared. Paltridge and Phakiti (2010) describe six data-preparation stages: checking and organising the data, data coding, data entry, data screening and cleaning, reliability analysis, and data reduction. SPSS and R made this process very simple, especially because the surveys were completed online, so that the raw data could quickly be transferred to the data analysis programs.

A t-test and Wilcoxon signed-rank test were used to provide a basic descriptive summary for the results of each Likert scale survey question. The numeric codes were summarised by their count, average (mean), standard deviation, and lower and upper confidence limits for the average. The data analyst also calculated the p-value to determine whether specific results were coincidental or significant, as they relate to the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis states that results are due to chance; if the null hypothesis proves to be wrong, then the results are not due to chance and are therefore considered to be significant. This is further explained in chapter five.

Researchers need to determine whether their research instruments are reliable. The analyst's goal was to determine the extent to which specific sets of questions measure the same thing. For example, whether the questions allocated to the 'Anxiety' subscale indeed measure the same thing. If a question seems to be measuring something different to the others in the subscale, it could be unreliable. This is based on factor analysis, where the analyst tries to find an underlying factor explaining the responses to a group of questions. The measures of reliability included in this study were Cronbach's alpha and Omega, which was added because it is considered to be more accurate. The reliability estimate (Cronbach's alpha) ranges from 0 to 1. A reliability coefficient higher than 0.70 is considered acceptable (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2010: 42). Any value lower than 0.70 suggests that multiple concepts are being measured. However, if Cronbach's alpha measures above 0.95, the set of questions is likely to be measuring exactly the same thing; the researcher is asking the same question in different words. If the researcher is trying to measure a single concept reliably, then Cronbach's alpha should measure between 0.70 and 0.95. An important reason why the researcher chose Akbari *et al.*'s (2017) L2 Reading Attitude survey was its reliability: Cronbach's alpha indicated an index of 0.86 for internal consistency. The factor analysis conducted for the 2022 ERAS survey measured Cronbach's alpha at 0.85, and thus the instrument can be considered reliable.

The analyst also explored correlations between ERAS statements and questions by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficients. A positive correlation indicates that answers move in the same direction (in essence, the answer to one question is usually similar to another question), whereas a negative correlation indicates that responses counter each other. A correlation of zero means that responses are not related at all; they do not correlate. Correlations between variables in the ERAS data are discussed in Chapter 5.

3.7 Ethical considerations

The researcher has made every effort to act in accordance with the university's ethical standards. She is aware of the importance of protecting the interests and identities of participants, handling collected information in a confidential way, and reporting results accurately (De Reuck, 2014: 47). Before participating in the survey, respondents were asked to complete an informed consent form (see annexure C) containing all relevant information concerning their data and the nature of the research study in which they were participating, in accordance with POPIA regulations. The purpose of the questionnaire was made clear to the participants, and they were informed that the results would be used for research purposes only and kept anonymous. All relevant data was stored on a password-protected computer. Ethical clearance was granted by the UFS Ethics Board. The ethical clearance number is UFS-HSD2021/1715/22.

In the following three chapters, the results of the 2022 survey are presented and discussed.

Chapter 4: Reliability of ERAS and analysis of descriptive statistics

4.1 Introduction

This chapter first discusses the reliability of the scaled items of the ERAS according to the results of tests performed by the Statistical Consultation Unit at the University of the Free State. Thereafter, the chapter reports and analyses responses to the first eight questions that formed part of the contextual section of the survey questionnaire; these questions covered the language background of students, their high school literature classes, access to a school library, and reading habits. Finally, this chapter reports and analyses responses to the scaled survey items, which formed the bulk of the ERAS. Before presenting the data analysis, however, some cautionary remarks must be made.

The quantitative data collected from the demographic questions and Likert scale statements are enhanced by the qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions. Although only two open-ended questions were included, the responses provided further elucidation on how reading attitudes and habits can be influenced. The fact that more open-ended questions could not be included is a limitation of the study. It would be fruitful to expand the research to include interviews with pre-service teachers to gain a fuller picture of how healthy reading attitudes and habits can be shaped and supported in language classrooms. This falls beyond the scope of the current study; a single survey instrument cannot cover, in depth, every concept related to something as abstract as reading attitudes.

Further to the above, it is important to note that response bias may have influenced the participants' answers to the survey questions. Responses to the survey indicate that participants

do think reading is important, but they may be selecting the responses that "we want to hear" instead of answering honestly. However, participants were notified of the importance of honesty in maintaining the integrity of the research, and the fact that all responses are anonymous may have encouraged participants not to over-report their abilities or edit their experiences. Also, it should be noted that the survey was completed by a cohort experiencing the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Factors related to the pandemic may have had an impact on their responses, though it is difficult to ascertain what that impact may be. The researcher kept this in mind while analysing the data; no significant issues were raised which the researcher believed to be related to the pandemic. Future research will reveal the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on reading attitudes, along with many other facets of learners and students' educational experiences.

The issue of reliability has been carefully considered in this study; the ERAS can be considered reliable according to several tests conducted by the data analyst at the UFS Statistical Consultation Unit. Although analysis of the pilot and the main survey responses (in 2021 and 2022) indicated that the survey was producing reliable data, researchers should keep in mind that, if given to a different cohort, results may greatly differ. Therefore, any interpretations of this data should not be extended beyond this group, and the researcher cannot establish cause and effect. Some suggestions can be made as to the reasons for participants' choices and potential implications which can be studied in the future.

4.2 Reliability of the survey scale used in the ERAS questionnaire

When conducting survey research, it is very important to be sure that the survey instrument shows consistency and that it measures what it intends to measure. This section first discusses

the reliability of the ERAS as a whole, followed by an examination of the reliability of the different subscales for future refinement of the survey instrument. The subscales relate to the following categories of reading attitudes as identified by Akbari *et al.* (2017): cognitive, conative, anxiety, negative, and self-assessment.

As was mentioned in section 3.6, Cronbach's alpha should measure between 0.70 and 0.95 for a research instrument to be considered reliable. For the purpose of the refined and modified survey questionnaire, subsequently named the ERAS, both Cronbach's alpha and Omega were used to indicate reliability. The reason for this is that Cronbach's alpha underestimates reliability and assumes that scale items are "repeated measurements" (Peters, 2014: 56). Although Cronbach's alpha remains useful, Omega measurements are increasingly considered to be better indicators of the reliability of a total survey scale (Peters, 2014; Nelson, 2021; Revelle & Zinbarg, 2009; Icen, 2020). The following section reports the reliability of the ERAS based on different reliability coefficients.

4.2.1 Reliability of the ERAS using Cronbach's alpha and Guttman's Lambda (G6)

Table 4 summarises the reliability of the ERAS that was administered to the ENGE1608 students in 2022. Nelson (2021: 2) explains that Cronbach's alpha and standardised alpha differ in terms of the models on which they are based. Where the former assumes "equal inter-item covariances", standardised alpha assumes that items are "parallel" and that "all items have the same variance". The third reliability estimate in Table 4 refers to Guttman's Lambda (G6), which is used to determine the reliability of individual items and how well they reflect particular concepts (Guttman, 1945). The lower and upper boundaries refer to the lowest and highest possible reliability coefficients based on the analysis of the survey data.

Table 4: Reliability of the ERAS using Cronbach's alpha and Guttman's Lambda (G6)

raw_alpha	std.alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.85	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.7	0.01	3.7	0.38	0.15
95% confidence boundaries								
	Lower	alpha	upper					
Feldt	0.82	0.85	0.87					
Duhachek	0.82	0.85	0.87					

The alpha coefficients indicate the reliability of the scale as a whole. In addition to reliability coefficients, the internal consistency of a scale can also be indicated through the mean inter-item correlation (average r). The ERAS shows a mean of 0.16 for inter-item correlation. A mean inter-item correlation of between 0.15 and 0.50 is advised (Clark & Watson, 1995:316). Too high a mean inter-item correlation would indicate that items are too close and unnecessary repeats of other items.

To ascertain whether there is an item that is problematic in terms of its wording or whether it does not correlate well with the other items, the statistician also calculates the reliability of the scale if an item is removed. The reliability is tested in this way for each item to see if reliability increases or decreases when the item is removed. If Cronbach's alpha increases when a specific item is removed, then that item may need to be dropped or modified, since it negatively affects the reliability of the scale. Table 5 shows how the reliability of the ERAS can be increased if each of the items is removed.

Table 5: Reliability of the ERAS scale if item is dropped as calculated through R

	raw alpha	std. alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	alpha se	var.r	med.r
Item 9	0.85	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.7	0.010	0.015	0.15
Item 10	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.6	0.011	0.015	0.16
Item 11	0.84	0.85	0.87	0.16	5.5	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 12	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.4	0.011	0.014	0.15
Item 13	0.84	0.85	0.87	0.16	5.5	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 14	0.85	0.85	0.88	0.17	5.7	0.010	0.015	0.16
Item 15	0.85	0.85	0.88	0.17	5.7	0.010	0.015	0.16
Item 16	0.84	0.85	0.87	0.16	5.5	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 17	0.83	0.84	0.87	0.15	5.2	0.011	0.014	0.15
Item 18	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.6	0.011	0.015	0.15

Item 19	0.85	0.86	0.88	0.17	6.0	0.010	0.013	0.16
Item 20	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.6	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 21	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.4	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 22	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.15	5.3	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 23	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.6	0.011	0.016	0.16
Item 24	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.3	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 25	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.6	0.011	0.015	0.16
Item 26	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.5	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 27	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.4	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 28	0.84	0.85	0.87	0.16	5.5	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 29	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.5	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 30	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.4	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 31	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.3	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 32	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.4	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 33	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.15	5.3	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 34	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.6	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 35	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.7	0.010	0.015	0.16
Item 36	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.4	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 37	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.16	5.5	0.011	0.015	0.15
Item 38	0.84	0.84	0.87	0.16	5.4	0.011	0.015	0.15

As highlighted in Table 5, removing Item 19 results in increased reliability of the ERAS. Item 19 covers anxiety related to a limited vocabulary: “I feel anxious if I don’t know all the words in reading passages.” Why it measured differently from the other items covering anxiety warrants further investigation. The item may need to be reworded in future administrations of the ERAS.

It is also clear from the item statistics provided in Table 6 below that item 19 does not fit as well as the rest of the items. The table shows different correlations (r) of each survey item with the total score of the scale and the effect of removing an item. Item 19 has a much lower correlation (r. cor = 0.024) than the remaining items do.

Table 6: Item-total statistics of the ERAS calculated through R[4]

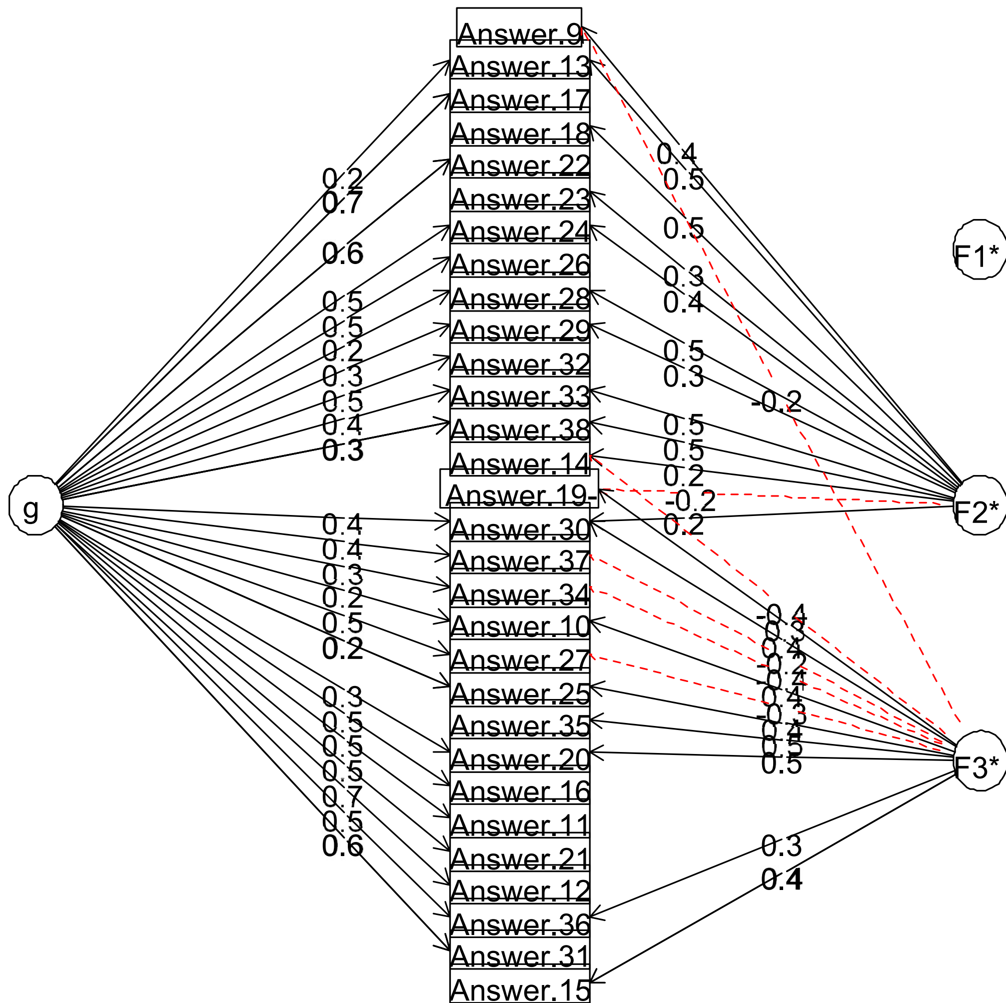
	n	raw.r	std.r	r.cor	r.drop	mean	Sd
Item 9	442	0.36	0.322	0.282	0.258	3.3	1.21
Item 10	442	0.30	0.344	0.303	0.249	4.6	0.57
Item 11	442	0.45	0.445	0.418	0.373	3.6	1.00
Item 12	442	0.56	0.547	0.537	0.499	3.6	1.02
Item 13	441	0.42	0.432	0.410	0.370	4.0	0.74
Item 14	442	0.29	0.256	0.214	0.212	2.0	0.90
Item 15	442	0.22	0.251	0.201	0.152	4.3	0.82
Item 16	442	0.44	0.431	0.405	0.360	3.6	1.05
Item 17	442	0.64	0.644	0.641	0.602	4.1	0.80
Item 18	441	0.40	0.381	0.347	0.313	3.8	1.01
Item 19	441	0.11	0.082	0.024	0.028	1.9	0.92
Item 20	440	0.34	0.391	0.363	0.289	4.6	0.68
Item 21	438	0.49	0.500	0.480	0.434	3.8	0.86
Item 22	439	0.58	0.584	0.575	0.528	4.2	0.81
Item 23	439	0.36	0.366	0.325	0.289	3.9	0.83
Item 24	439	0.57	0.556	0.541	0.512	3.9	0.84
Item 25	439	0.31	0.351	0.314	0.253	4.4	0.70
Item 26	439	0.43	0.410	0.377	0.348	3.1	1.12
Item 27	439	0.55	0.524	0.508	0.488	3.4	1.02
Item 28	439	0.43	0.448	0.420	0.373	4.2	0.75
Item 29	439	0.43	0.405	0.369	0.351	3.6	1.03
Item 30	439	0.47	0.507	0.487	0.420	4.4	0.63
Item 31	439	0.57	0.570	0.559	0.508	4.0	0.94
Item 32	439	0.51	0.531	0.517	0.465	4.4	0.72
Item 33	438	0.59	0.597	0.591	0.535	3.9	0.87
Item 34	438	0.41	0.368	0.338	0.327	2.3	1.10
Item 35	437	0.27	0.320	0.282	0.219	4.5	0.65
Item 36	437	0.49	0.507	0.488	0.434	4.1	0.84
Item 37	438	0.45	0.417	0.385	0.365	3.5	1.09
Item 38	438	0.50	0.504	0.483	0.444	3.5	0.87

Apart from determining the internal consistency of measurement, the objective of calculating the reliability of a scale is also to establish the extent to which sets of items measure the same phenomenon, part of the process to determine the construct validity of a scale. Factor analysis is used to see if there is an underlying factor or set of factors that explain the responses to a group of items as a whole. This is where the Omega is particularly relevant.

[4] Item raw r refers to the correlation of an item with the total score, not corrected for any item overlap; std. r refers to the correlation of an item with the total score if the items were standardized; r cor refers to the item whole correlation corrected for item overlap and reliability of scale (see https://search.r-project.org/CRAN/refmans/psych/html/alpha.html).

4.2.2 Reliability of the ERAS using Omega as calculated through R

Scales such as the ERAS are usually developed to have one latent variable that is being measured. This variable is not directly observable but has to be inferred from other observable variables by means of mathematical modelling. To examine the internal structure of a survey scale, two properties are investigated. The first property concerns whether all of the scale items measure a common latent variable. The second property relates to the proportion of variance that there is in the scale scores accounted for by the common latent variable. A variance ratio is calculated as both a reliability and validity coefficient that is important for the construct validity of the scale (Zimbarg, Yovel, Revelle & McDonald, 2006). The reliability and validity coefficients are reported in Figure 3 which shows the results of the factor analysis of the ERAS as produced by R.




```
Omega
Call: omegah(m = m, nfactors = nfactors, fm = fm, key = key, flip = flip,
    digits = digits, title = title, sl = sl, labels = labels,
    plot = plot, n.obs = n.obs, rotate = rotate, Phi = Phi, option = optio
n,
    covar = covar)
Alpha:                 0.85
G.6:                   0.88
Omega Hierarchical:    0.68
Omega H asymptotic:    0.78
Omega Total            0.87

Schmid Leiman Factor loadings greater than  0.2
               g   F1*   F2*   F3*   h2   u2   p2
Answer.9                  0.35 -0.21 0.20 0.80 0.11
Answer.10   0.20              0.37 0.19 0.81 0.22
Answer.11   0.49                   0.28 0.72 0.86
```

```
Answer.12   0.67                   0.45 0.55 0.99
Answer.13   0.25        0.47       0.28 0.72 0.22
Answer.14               0.24 -0.37 0.22 0.78 0.08
Answer.15                     0.39 0.17 0.83 0.11
Answer.16   0.49                   0.27 0.73 0.90
Answer.17   0.69                   0.49 0.51 0.99
Answer.18               0.49       0.27 0.73 0.11
Answer.19-             -0.21  0.32 0.16 0.84 0.02
Answer.20   0.28              0.49 0.33 0.67 0.24
Answer.21   0.51                   0.29 0.71 0.92
Answer.22   0.58                   0.36 0.64 0.92
Answer.23               0.34       0.16 0.84 0.14
Answer.24   0.45        0.38       0.39 0.61 0.53
Answer.25   0.22              0.40 0.22 0.78 0.22
Answer.26   0.46                   0.22 0.78 0.97
Answer.27   0.54             -0.26 0.37 0.63 0.79
Answer.28   0.22        0.48       0.30 0.70 0.16
Answer.29   0.29        0.29       0.21 0.79 0.40
Answer.30   0.38        0.21  0.43 0.37 0.63 0.39
Answer.31   0.60                   0.39 0.61 0.93
Answer.32   0.51                   0.29 0.71 0.89
Answer.33   0.41        0.49       0.42 0.58 0.40
Answer.34   0.32             -0.38 0.27 0.73 0.37
Answer.35                     0.46 0.25 0.75 0.12
Answer.36   0.53              0.26 0.35 0.65 0.78
Answer.37   0.37             -0.22 0.22 0.78 0.60
Answer.38   0.29        0.50       0.34 0.66 0.26

With eigenvalues of:
  g F1* F2* F3*
4.8 0.0 2.0 1.9

general/max  2.35   max/min =   Inf
mean percent general =  0.49    with sd =  0.35 and cv of  0.71
Explained Common Variance of the general factor =  0.55

The degrees of freedom are 348  and the fit is  1.74
The number of observations was  444  with Chi Square =  748.56  with prob
<  2.1e-31
The root mean square of the residuals is  0.05
The df corrected root mean square of the residuals is  0.05
RMSEA index =  0.051  and the 10 % confidence intervals are  0.046 0.056
BIC =  -1372.79

Compare this with the adequacy of just a general factor and no group facto
rs
The degrees of freedom for just the general factor are 405  and the fit is
3.73
The number of observations was  444  with Chi Square =  1607.59  with prob
<  1.2e-142
The root mean square of the residuals is  0.1
The df corrected root mean square of the residuals is  0.11

RMSEA index =  0.082  and the 10 % confidence intervals are  0.078 0.086
```

```
BIC =  -861.22

Measures of factor score adequacy
                                                 g F1*  F2*  F3*
Correlation of scores with factors            0.93   0 0.84 0.85
Multiple R square of scores with factors      0.86   0 0.70 0.72
Minimum correlation of factor score estimates 0.71  -1 0.40 0.45

 Total, General and Subset omega for each subset
                                                 g F1*  F2*  F3*
Omega total for total scores and subscales    0.87  NA 0.80 0.74
Omega general for total scores and subscales  0.68  NA 0.45 0.64
Omega group for total scores and subscales    0.13  NA 0.35 0.10
```

Figure 3: Omega factor analysis of the ERAS

Items that are related to other items should be internally consistent, which means that the items should show a strong and positive correlation to one another. The Omega factor analysis showed responses to item 19 to be negatively correlated to other responses, once again indicating that rewording of this item is necessary for future administrations of the survey instrument.

The Omega analysis helps us to see how each item relates to the whole construct. Exploratory factor analysis is used to estimate Omega Hierarchical, which is an indication of the general factor saturation. In addition to Omega Hierarchical, R also calculates Omega Total, which is an estimate of the total reliability of the survey scale (see Revelle, 2023 for a detailed discussion on R and Omega coefficients). For the purposes of the current study, the Omega analysis produced a high reliability coefficient, as evident in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Summary of all reliability coefficients

Alpha:	0.85
G. 6:	0.88
Omega Hierarchical:	0.68
Omega H asymptotic:	0.78
Omega Total	0.87

The Omega reliability of the survey scale is 0.87, indicating that the instrument consistently measures the reading attitudes of participants. In addition to reliability estimates, the Explained Common Variance (ECV) is reported as being 0.55 (see Figure 3). This is considered to be a good indicator of unidimensionality and shows that most of the variance can be accounted for by the general factor (Revelle, 2023). The next section looks at subscale reliability and how the items contribute towards each of the five subconstruct categories.

4.2.3 Reliability of subscales

In order to calculate subscale reliability, the survey items were grouped according to the five categories used by Akbari *et al.* (2017) to examine the relationships within groups.

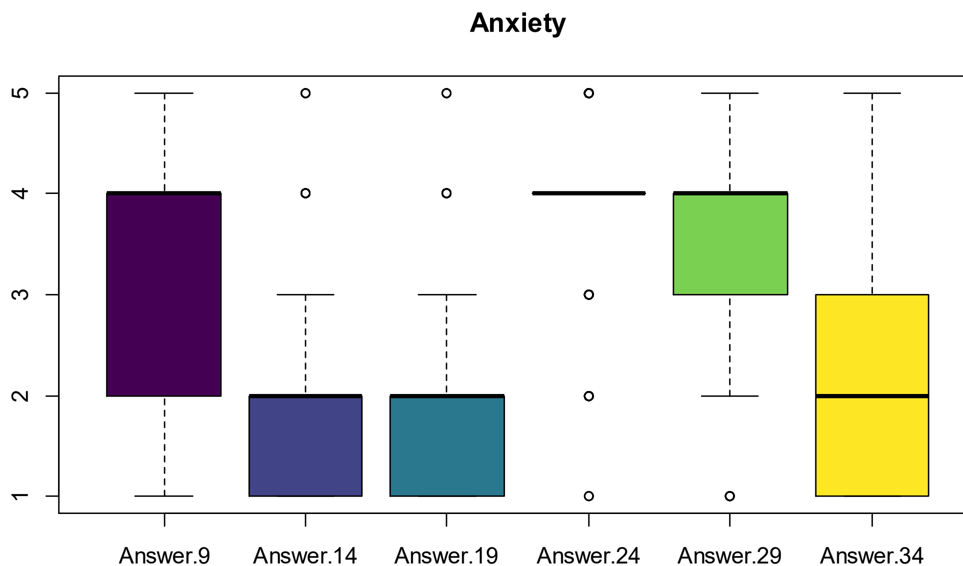


Figure 4: Distribution of responses to items within the 'Anxiety' subscale

As shown in Figure 4, the 'Anxiety' subscale showed the greatest variation between responses to different survey items. In other words, the responses of participants to items in this subscale were far more spread out when compared to the dispersion of responses in other subscales. Cronbach's alpha measured at 0.65 for the 'Anxiety' subscale, which is the lowest reliability

score of the five subscales. However, the average r (mean inter-item correlation) fell within the 0.15 to 0.50 parameter, which indicates that the items correlate adequately and measure the same subconstruct without being a repeat of any item. Nonetheless, refinement of this subscale can be considered in further studies.

Table 8: Reliability analysis for 'Anxiety' subscale

Reliability analysis								
Call: alpha(x = gdata)								
raw_alpha	Std alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.65	0.65	0.62	0.24	1.9	0.026	2.8	0.61	0.23
95% confidence boundaries								
	lower	alpha	upper					
Feldt	0.59	0.65	0.7					
Duhachek	0.60	0.65	0.7					
Reliability if an item is dropped:								
	raw_alpha	Std alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	alpha se	varr	medr
Item 9	0.60	0.60	0.57	0.23	1.5	0.029	0.0092	0.25
Item 14	0.58	0.58	0.54	0.22	1.4	0.031	0.0059	0.23
Item 19	0.63	0.64	0.59	0.26	1.8	0.027	0.0027	0.27
Item 24	0.61	0.61	0.57	0.24	1.6	0.029	0.0053	0.23
Item 29	0.62	0.62	0.58	0.25	1.6	0.028	0.0076	0.25
Item 34	0.58	0.58	0.55	0.22	1.4	0.031	0.0072	0.23
Item-total statistics:								
	total	Raw.r	Std.r	r.cor	r.drop	mean	sd	
Item 9	442	0.65	0.61	0.48	0.39	3.3	1.21	
Item 14	442	0.64	0.66	0.56	0.45	2.0	0.9	
Item 19	441	0.51	0.53	0.37	0.29	1.9	0.92	
Item 24	439	0.57	0.59	0.46	0.38	3.9	0.84	
Item 29	439	0.58	0.57	0.42	0.34	3.6	1.03	
Item 34	438	0.67	0.65	0.55	0.44	2.3	1.1	

According to the statistical report, item 19 does contribute towards the 'Anxiety' subscale, although its correlation of 0.37 with the total 'Anxiety' scale is lower than that of the other items. It should not necessarily be removed, but it could be refined. Further testing would reveal more details as to what kind of wording would be more effective, but this would need to be

done as part of a separate study. Reading anxiety would be an interesting topic to research more closely; the variance between responses to this subscale suggests that there is more to be learned. The two open-ended questions added at the end of the ERAS provided further insights, as discussed in Chapter 6.

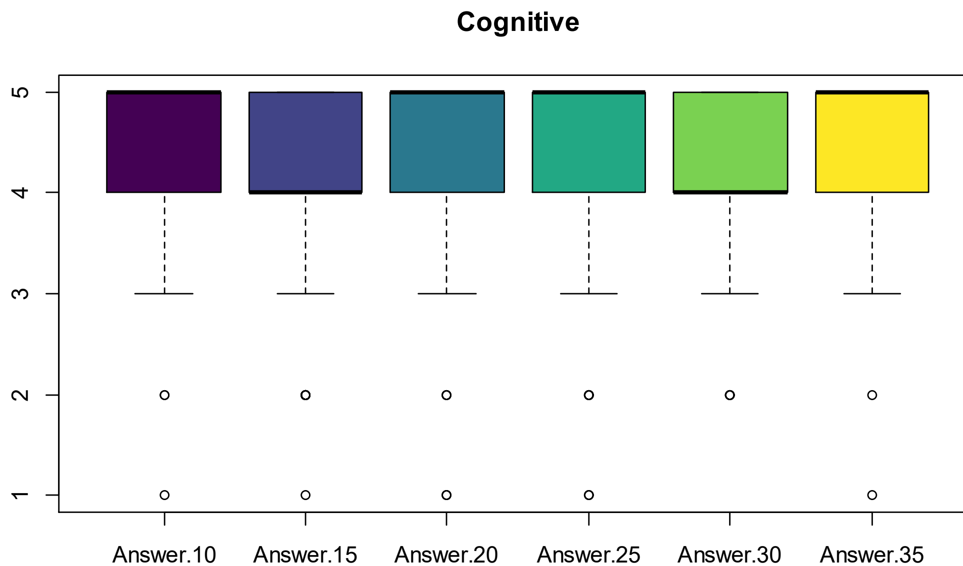


Figure 5: Distribution of responses to items within the 'Cognitive' subscale

Figure 5 illustrates the dispersion of responses to items in the 'Cognitive' subscale, which measures participants' attitudes towards reading with respect to its practical utility, importance, and potential to benefit them in their personal and professional lives. For example, reading can increase vocabulary, provide new knowledge, improve writing ability, and expose the reader to different points of view. Responses to items in this subscale are almost completely uniform, with very little variance between them. Statistical information from R shows that the subscale can be considered to be reliable, as shown below.

Table 9: Reliability analysis for ‘Cognitive’ subscale

Reliability analysis								
Call: alpha(x = gdata)								
raw_alpha	Std alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.69	0.70	0.67	0.28	2.3	0.023	4.5	0.43	0.3
95% confidence boundaries								
	lower	alpha	upper					
Feldt	0.65	0.69	0.73					
Duhachek	0.65	0.69	0.74					
Reliability if an item is dropped:								
	raw_alpha	stdalpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	alpha se	varr	medr
Item 10	0.66	0.67	0.62	0.29	2.0	0.026	0.0035	0.32
Item 15	0.69	0.69	0.64	0.31	2.2	0.023	0.0014	0.32
Item 20	0.63	0.64	0.60	0.26	1.8	0.028	0.0044	0.28
Item 25	0.65	0.66	0.61	0.28	1.9	0.026	0.0040	0.29
Item 30	0.64	0.65	0.61	0.27	1.9	0.027	0.0039	0.27
Item 35	0.64	0.65	0.61	0.27	1.9	0.027	0.0051	0.29
Item-total statistics								
	total	Raw.r	Std.r	r.cor	r.drop	mean	sd	
Item 10	442	0.58	0.61	0.48	0.40	4.6	0.57	
Item 15	442	0.61	0.56	0.41	0.34	4.3	0.82	
Item 20	440	0.67	0.67	0.58	0.48	4.6	0.68	
Item 25	439	0.65	0.64	0.53	0.43	4.4	0.70	
Item 30	439	0.64	0.66	0.55	0.45	4.4	0.63	
Item 35	437	0.65	0.65	0.55	0.46	4.5	0.65	

Cronbach’s alpha for the ‘Cognitive’ subscale tested at 0.69, and the average r of 0.28 for the subscale fell between 0.15 and 0.50, which indicates that items are measuring the same construct without simply repeating the same statement in slightly different ways. If any one item in this subscale is dropped, the alpha drops as well, apart from item 15; when item 15 is dropped, the alpha stays at 0.69. Therefore, this subscale can be considered to measure consistently.

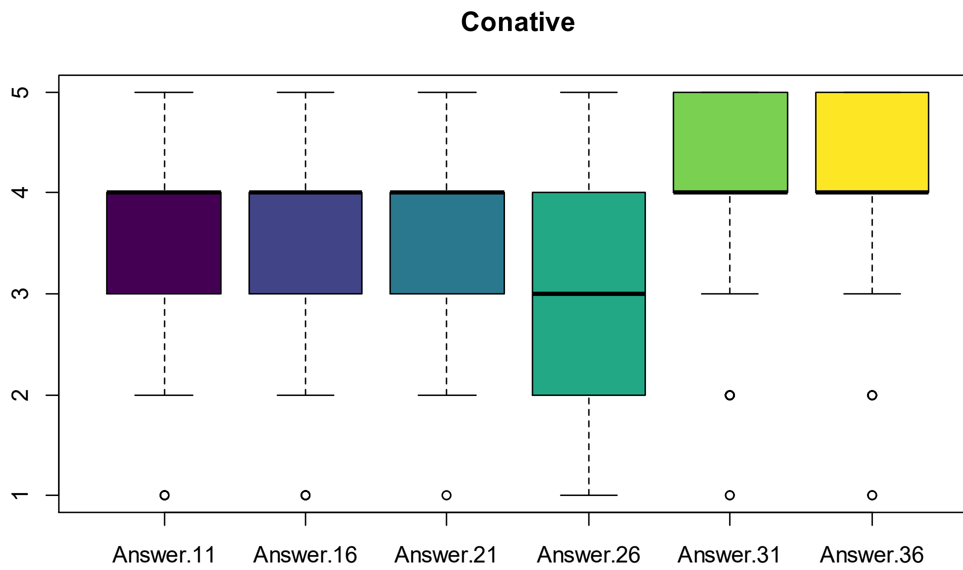


Figure 6: Distribution of responses to items within the ‘Conative’ subscale

Figure 6 illustrates the responses to items in the ‘Conative’ subscale, which measures participants’ actual reading behaviour, as opposed to their beliefs about reading. Items in this subscale included statements focused on pleasure reading or reading in participants’ leisure time. Responses were somewhat varied within this subscale, but information from R shows that the subscale tests reliably.

Table 10: Reliability analysis for ‘Conative’ subscale

Reliability analysis								
Call: alpha(x = gdata)								
raw_alpha	Std alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.73	0.73	0.7	0.31	2.8	0.36	3.7	0.63	0.33
95% confidence boundaries								
	lower	alpha	upper					
Feldt	0.69	0.73	0.76					
Duhachek	0.69	0.73	0.77					
Reliability if an item is dropped:								
	raw_alpha	stdalpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	alpha se	varr	medr
Item 11	0.68	0.69	0.65	0.31	2.2	0.024	0.0045	0.32
Item 16	0.69	0.70	0.66	0.31	2.3	0.023	0.0042	0.33
Item 21	0.70	0.70	0.66	0.32	2.4	0.023	0.0021	0.33
Item 26	0.72	0.72	0.67	0.34	2.5	0.021	0.0012	0.33
Item 31	0.68	0.68	0.64	0.30	2.1	0.024	0.0041	0.32
Item 36	0.68	0.69	0.65	0.31	2.2	0.024	0.0045	0.32
Item-total statistics								
	total	Raw.r	Std.r	r.cor	r.drop	mean	sd	
Item 11	442	0.68	0.67	0.57	0.49	3.6	1.00	
Item 16	442	0.67	0.66	0.55	0.47	3.6	1.05	
Item 21	438	0.61	0.64	0.52	0.44	3.8	0.86	
Item 26	439	0.62	0.60	0.46	0.39	3.1	1.12	
Item 31	439	0.68	0.69	0.60	0.51	4.0	0.94	
Item 36	437	0.66	0.68	0.58	0.50	4.1	0.84	

The ‘Conative’ subscale items’ reliability tested at 0.73. Dropping any of the items in the subscale led to a decrease in Cronbach’s alpha, indicating that all items are measuring what they intended to measure. The mean inter-item correlation for this subscale is 0.31, which falls between the recommended 0.15 and 0.50 mean. This means that the subscale items are representing the same subconstruct without duplication of items.

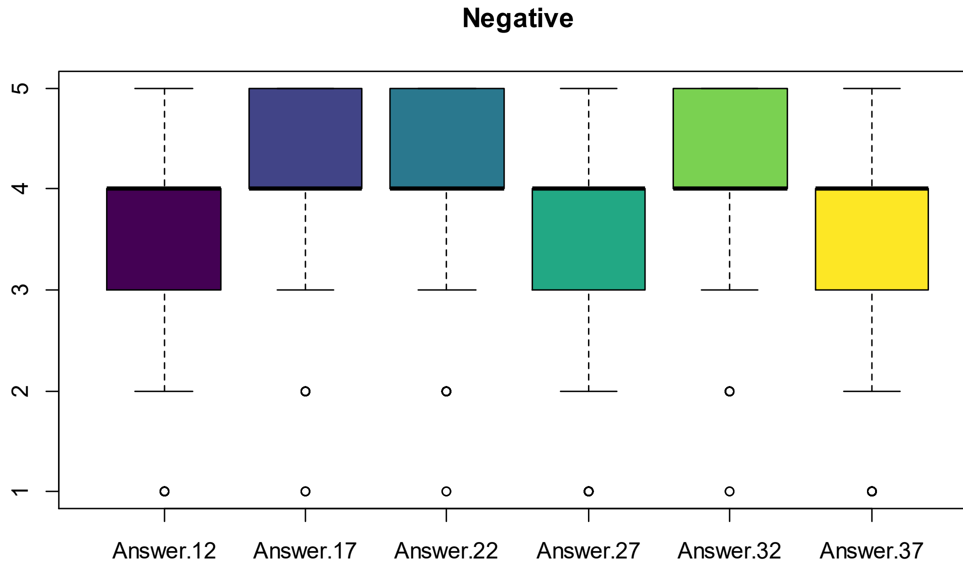


Figure 7: Distribution of responses to items within the 'Negative' subscale

The 'Negative' subscale items' reliability tested at 0.74. Dropping any of the items, apart from item 37, led to a lower alpha value. Removing item 37, "I like to skip sections that I do not understand when reading English" led to a slight increase in Cronbach's alpha, from 0.74 to 0.75. We also see that item 37 does not correlate as highly with the subscale as the rest of the items do (shown in Table 11). This may indicate that item 37 is not measuring a negative reading attitude quite as reliably as the other items in the subscale.

Table 11: Reliability analysis for ‘Negative’ subscale

Reliability analysis								
Call: alpha(x = gdata)								
raw_alpha	Std alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.74	0.76	0.74	0.34	3.1	0.019	3.9	0.61	0.35
95% confidence boundaries								
	lower	alpha	upper					
Feldt	0.71	0.74	0.78					
Duhachek	0.71	0.74	0.78					
Reliability if an item is dropped:								
	raw_alpha	stdalpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	alpha se	Var.r	medr
Item 12	0.69	0.71	0.68	0.33	2.4	0.023	0.0087	0.29
Item 17	0.68	0.70	0.66	0.32	2.3	0.023	0.0073	0.29
Item 22	0.70	0.72	0.68	0.34	2.5	0.022	0.0063	0.32
Item 27	0.71	0.73	0.70	0.35	2.7	0.022	0.0102	0.37
Item 32	0.71	0.72	0.69	0.34	2.6	0.022	0.0081	0.34
Item 37	0.75	0.76	0.73	0.39	3.2	0.018	0.0049	0.40
Item-total statistics								
	total	Raw.r	Std.r	r.cor	r.drop	mean	sd	
Item 12	442	0.73	0.71	0.64	0.55	3.6	1.02	
Item 17	442	0.72	0.74	0.67	0.58	4.1	0.80	
Item 22	439	0.66	0.69	0.62	0.51	4.2	0.81	
Item 27	439	0.68	0.66	0.55	0.48	3.4	1.02	
Item 32	439	0.63	0.68	0.58	0.49	4.4	0.72	
Item 37	438	0.60	0.56	0.40	0.36	3.5	1.09	

The statistical analysis suggests that item 37 should be refined. It is possible that participants did not understand the statement, or that they might skip sections when reading, but not as a result of negative reading attitudes. Rather, they may do so to save time while studying, or because they find the text boring, even if they do understand it. If the research instrument were to be developed further, it may thus be useful to experiment with the wording of item 37 to see if it can be clarified and test more reliably within this subscale.

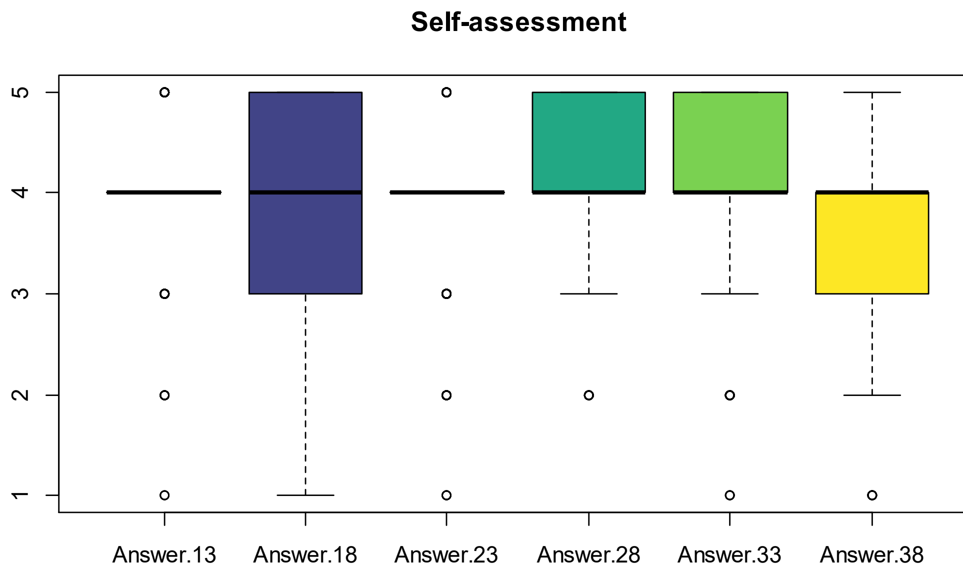


Figure 8: Distribution of responses to items within the 'Self-assessment' subscale

Figure 8 summarises the dispersion of responses to items within the 'Self-assessment' subscale, which refers to participants' personal beliefs about their own reading ability or proficiency. Some variance in responses is evident within this subscale, though most responses leaned towards a score of 4 (*Agree*) or 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Responses to item 18, 'I am comfortable with my reading speed', varied the most. The reliability indicators of this subscale are summarised and discussed below.

Table 12: Reliability analysis for ‘Self-assessment’ subscale

Reliability analysis								
Call: alpha(x = gdata)								
raw_alpha	Std alpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	ase	mean	sd	median_r
0.72	0.72	0.70	0.3	2.6	0.02	3.9	0.55	0.3
95% confidence boundaries								
	lower	alpha	upper					
Feldt	0.68	0.72	0.76					
Duhachek	0.68	0.72	0.76					
Reliability if an item is dropped:								
	raw_alpha	stdalpha	G6(smc)	average_r	S/N	alpha	Var.r	medr
Item 13	0.67	0.67	0.63	0.29	2.0	0.025	0.0067	0.28
Item 18	0.68	0.68	0.65	0.30	2.2	0.024	0.0121	0.28
Item 23	0.73	0.73	0.69	0.35	2.7	0.020	0.0047	0.34
Item 28	0.68	0.69	0.65	0.31	2.2	0.024	0.0131	0.32
Item 33	0.66	0.66	0.62	0.28	2.0	0.025	0.0059	0.29
Item 38	0.67	0.67	0.64	0.29	2.1	0.025	0.0092	0.31
Item-total statistics								
	total	Raw.r	Std.r	r.cor	r.drop	mean	sd	
Item 13	441	0.67	0.69	0.61	0.52	4.0	0.74	
Item 18	441	0.69	0.65	0.54	0.46	3.8	1.01	
Item 23	439	0.52	0.52	0.35	0.29	3.9	0.83	
Item 28	439	0.62	0.64	0.53	0.45	4.2	0.75	
Item 33	438	0.70	0.70	0.63	0.52	3.9	0.87	
Item 38	438	0.68	0.68	0.59	0.50	3.5	0.87	

The R reliability analysis indicated an alpha value of 0.72, which is one of the three highest alpha values of the five subscales. Only one item resulted in an increase in the alpha value when dropped — item 23, ‘I can figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words by reading the rest of the sentence or paragraph.’ Though the increase in reliability is small, from 0.72 to 0.73, it may be worthwhile experimenting with this item should the research instrument be developed further in a future study, as the correlation of 0.35 does not correlate as highly with the total subscale score as the remaining items do.

To conclude this section, it is important to note that all the different reliability estimates indicate consistency of measurement. Where reliability scores below 0.70 would indicate multiple concepts are being measured; reliability scores above 0.95 would suggest that the concepts being explored are too homogenous. The Omega total of 0.87 shows that the survey scale items contain sufficient variation, but remain related to a dominant concept, namely that of attitudes to reading. This is also borne out by the fact that the ERAS tested reliably with two different cohorts (the pilot study in 2021 and the full study in 2022). The reliability of the ERAS scale furthermore indicates that it is unidimensional. Thus, the statistical report demonstrates the usefulness of the ERAS for exploring the reading attitudes of the pre-service teachers.

The following section reports and analyses responses to the first eight ERAS questions that focused on demographic information.

4.3 Descriptive statistics covering educational and language background

The first section of the survey constituted eight questions pertaining to participants' educational and language backgrounds. In the discussion that follows, the responses to each question are reported in a table, after which inferences are made based on the survey data. Table 13 reports the survey respondents' school level of English.

Table 13: School level of English (N=444)

Response	Frequency	Relative.Frequency
First additional language	392	0.88
Home language	52	0.12

The responses to this item indicate that there are disturbingly few pre-service teachers who mastered English at L1 level at school. Of the 444 respondents, 88% took English as a first additional language and 12% took it at home language level. Of those who did English HL at school, not all would be actual L1 speakers; some would be FAL or multilingual students attending former Model C schools. The lack of home or first-language English speakers studying to be teachers could, in part, explain the shortage of teachers with strong English language skills (Hugo & Nieman, 2010), and emphasise the importance of ensuring that teacher training programs make every effort to equip pre-service teachers with the necessary language skills to teach in English. However, as Taylor (2014) found, most university programs spend very little time on language development and on language and literacy instruction. This lack of training may leave pre-service teachers unprepared to teach successfully in English, or to be successful English language teachers.

The second question aimed to ascertain what kinds of texts participants were exposed to in their matric English literature curriculum. Participants' responses were manually coded using Microsoft Excel; they are summarised in Figure 9.

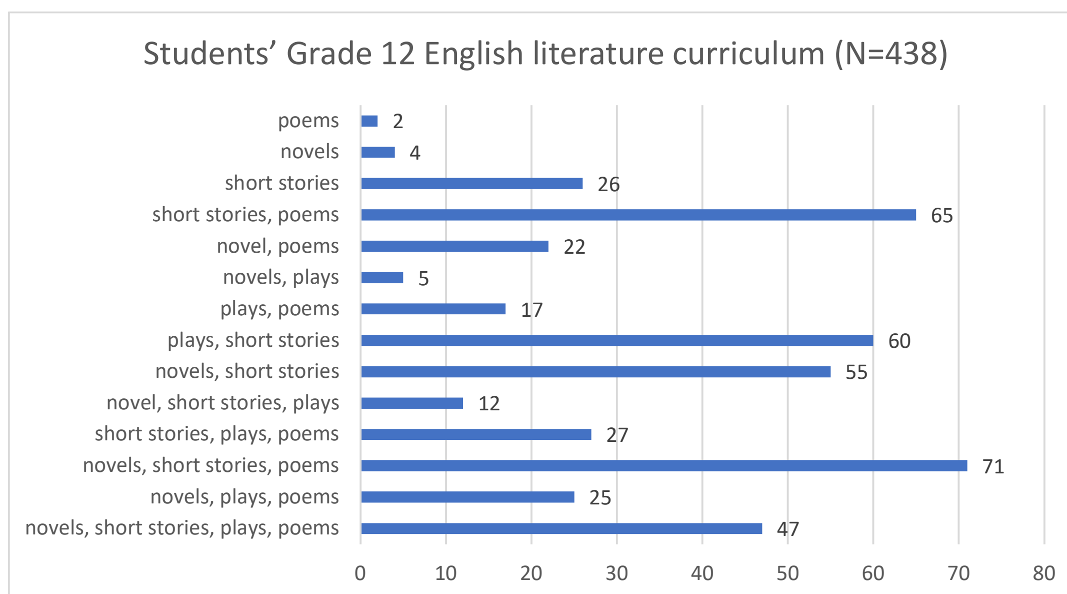


Figure 9: Students' Grade 12 English literature curriculum (N=438)

Participants were asked which texts they remembered studying in Grade 12: novels, short stories, poems and/or plays. The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English FAL (previously discussed in section 2.7.5) stipulates that learners must study a minimum of two texts from the four prescribed literary genres (Department of Basic Education, 2011a: 18). The CAPS for English HL requires students to study three genres: drama, poetry and novels, as well as short stories for enrichment (Department of Basic Education, 2011b: 25-27). The fact that 47 participants remember studying all four genres is encouraging. However, these are likely to be learners from schools where English was studied at HL level. Surprisingly, 32 participants remember studying only one genre (two studied only poems, four only novels, and 26 studied only short stories), despite CAPS stipulating that at least two need to be studied. It is possible that these participants simply forgot about any other texts they may have interacted with, but this could imply that those texts did not make much of an impression on these participants, which, in turn, could indicate that their literature program did not hold their interest or engage them. If they did only have the opportunity to

study one genre throughout their matric year, that would indicate a serious failure on the part of their schools and teachers.

Many pre-service teachers remember studying a combination of short stories and poems (65 participants or 15%), or novels, short stories, and poems (71 participants or 16%). It seems that short stories made up a significant amount of participants' literature lessons; a total of 83% (363 participants) remembered studying short stories among other texts. This may indicate that teachers are taking advantage of the short story, which can be a particularly effective text for school-aged learners (Van Der Walt & Evans, 2019). Perhaps teachers find short stories more convenient or perceive short stories to be easier than longer novels. Two thirds (63%) of the cohort remember studying poetry as well (276 participants). In the researcher's experience, poetry is particularly challenging for first-year pre-service teachers, and students struggle to engage meaningfully with poetic texts. This seems surprising, considering how many participants remember studying poetry at school. If students study poetry at school but enter university without the skills they need to read and engage with a poem, it could be worth questioning how poems are being taught and assessed in schools. Perhaps future rounds of the ERAS, or a different study altogether, could investigate whether poetry is being introduced in meaningful ways so that language and critical skills can be developed, or if learners are memorising literal meanings provided by teachers.

A total of 45% (197 participants) do not remember studying a single novel, which may be cause for concern. Novels may offer what other genres cannot; readers can see through the eyes of one or a few characters for an extended period, examining a different era, country, or culture in which the characters find themselves. The length of the novel allows readers to immerse themselves in the story more deeply than they would in the case of a poem, short story, or even

a play. Plays can be difficult for learners to read and are best experienced when performed, rather than read like a book (Van Der Walt & Evans, 2019). Studying a novel may be a very effective way to encourage learners to appropriate a text (Maley, 2012), whereby learners receive the opportunity to share their own understanding of the text and personal insights gained. They may also develop insight into human nature through the characters' actions and responses to situations, and they may recognise traits and real-life situations to which they can relate. This would allow them to reflect on what they (the readers) would have done differently in the same circumstances. This deeper engagement could help build essential literacy and literary skills, and positively impact their reading attitudes, particularly if learners are encouraged to formulate their own connections with and opinions about the text. That so many participants do not remember studying a novel in Grade 12 may indicate a lost opportunity on the part of teachers and learners.

Question 3 asked participants whether they had access to a school library with books to read. Access to a library can provide learners with the opportunity to choose texts freely, according to their own tastes, which may encourage extensive reading and foster positive reading attitudes, and a love for reading. Responses to Question 3 are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Access to a school library with books to read (N=442)

Response	**Frequency**	**Relative.Frequency**
No	217	0.49
Yes	225	0.51

Responses to Question 3 indicate that 49% of participants did not have access to school libraries. That only half of the participants had access to school libraries may seem disappointing, but this is also a surprising statistic if we consider reports of research studies indicating that less than 18% of ordinary operational public schools in South Africa have

stocked libraries (Department of Basic Education, 2021: 7; Department of Arts and Culture & the National Council for Library and Information Services, 2014). Learners who did not have access to a library at school may have had less exposure to books in contexts where they can choose what they would like to read and finish books at their own pace for pleasure. Those who did have access to school libraries may have had varying experiences there. Libraries that are well stocked with material that engages learners could positively impact their reading attitudes and encourage reading for fun. However, uncomfortable and noisy library environments and a book collection that learners perceive as uninteresting, irrelevant, or childish may dissuade them from reading for pleasure. This survey question cannot provide insights into the library experiences participants may have had; this would warrant a separate study. Still, the 49% who had no access to school libraries were most likely at a disadvantage in the development of their reading attitudes and habits.

The following two questions focused on participants' experiences of their literature classes in high school. Question 4 required participants to answer whether they enjoyed their high school literature classes; Question 5 asked participants how they were taught literature in school. Their responses are indicated in Tables 15 and 16 and are discussed in the paragraph that follows.

Table 15: Enjoyment of high school literature classes (N=443)

Response	**Frequency**	**Relative.Frequency**
No	51	0.12
Yes	392	0.88

Table 16: How participants were taught literature in high school (N=443)

Response	Frequency	Relative.Frequency
My teacher asked us to read the literature after school on our own, but we had class discussions based on the texts.	53	0.12
My teacher introduced the text and concepts, then let us work in groups, gave us a literature passage to read and questions that we had to answer on our own.	83	0.19
My teacher read the texts to us in class, taught us what the texts were about, and then gave us notes that we had to learn for tests and exams.	253	0.57
My teacher used a workbook with notes on the stories that we had to study and exercises that we had to do. We used the workbook in class.	40	0.09
None of the above.	14	0.03

It is encouraging to learn that 88% of respondents enjoyed their high school literature classes. Enjoyable classes provide an environment more conducive to learning and can provide a safe place for learners to develop their ideas and opinions and engage in discussion. However, in response to Question 5, "How were you taught literature in high school?", 57% of participants selected "My teacher read the texts to us in class, taught us what the texts were about, and then gave us notes that we had to learn for tests and exams." This aligns with research illustrating that teachers sometimes use methods that take the emphasis off the learner's comprehension and appropriation of the text (Van der Walt & Evans, 2019). Rather, teachers provide learners with the themes, ideas, and meaning in the text, which learners need to memorise in order to pass a test or examination with a rigid memorandum. In effect, the teacher tends to teach learners what to think without encouraging learners to appropriate the text and make it their own, or engage in critical thinking. Perhaps this explains why many schools choose the poetry and short story genres (or at least, participants remember schools choosing these kinds of texts). The shorter texts could make it easier for teachers to simply hand out notes explicitly stating themes or ideas they want their learners to memorise; this would be more difficult when dealing with longer texts with more characters, themes, etc. One of the reasons why students enjoyed their literature classes may also be related to the fact that it was easy to get good marks because of the way the texts were taught. This kind of rote learning is not conducive to the development

of critical thinking that could be encouraged in an ideal literature class, and it does not encourage learners to relate to the text personally. On the other hand, 19% of participants did indicate that their literature teachers introduced the text and concepts, but let learners read the text on their own and work in groups to answer questions. This teaching approach would be more likely to facilitate deeper textual comprehension, develop critical thinking, and benefit from the deeper engagement facilitated by the "Literature as Appropriation" approach as suggested by Maley (2012).

An interesting and relatively new topic of research on the use of digital tools and texts in the literature classroom formed part of Question 6. As has been discussed in section 2.7.6, digital reading, and other modes of reading besides print, are becoming increasingly popular, and different reading modes may impact reading attitudes. The following table summarises participants' preferred reading modes.

Table 17: Reading preferences (N=442)

Response	**Frequency**	**Relative.Frequency**
I like listening to audio recordings more than reading.	46	0.10
I prefer reading from printed texts and books rather than digital devices.	327	0.74
Reading on a digital device is my favourite way to read.	69	0.16

In response to Question 6, participants expressed a preference for printed text (74%), as opposed to digital texts (16%) or audiobooks (10%). This is not surprising; research shows that most people still prefer paper to digital reading, despite the availability of ebooks, audiobooks, and other digital media (Jabr, 2013; Merga, 2014). It is unclear what the implications of the survey cohort's preference for print might be. This cohort is likely to do much of their reading on digital devices, since most of their coursework is available on the university's online learning management system. The amount of digital reading they need to do could negatively

impact their reading attitudes. However, providing reading content in printed form is becoming less and less realistic or convenient as we continue into the digital age.

The 7th and 8th questions (summarised in Tables 18 and 19 below) dealt with participants' actual reading behaviour, with some interesting results.

Table 18: How often participants read texts longer than 20 pages (N=441)

Response	**Frequency**	**Relative.Frequency**
Less than once a week	129	0.29
About once a week	161	0.37
Nearly every day	105	0.24
Every day	46	0.10

Table 19: How often participants read for pleasure (N=442)

Response	**Frequency**	**Relative.Frequency**
Never	74	0.17
During holidays	183	0.41
Over weekends	115	0.26
Nearly every day	52	0.12
Every day	18	0.04

Almost 37% stated that they read a text that was more than 20 pages long every week, and many participants (34%) indicated that they read more than 20 pages nearly every day or every day. We cannot deduce from Question 7 alone whether the reading that participants do is for academic purposes or for pleasure. However, 41% of participants reported that they only read for pleasure during the holidays, so we can assume that most participants who read 20 or more pages a week do so for compulsory academic purposes. Only 26% of participants read for pleasure on the weekends, and 16% read for pleasure every day or nearly every day. It is worth noting that 17% never read for pleasure. Pleasure reading, or aesthetic reading as described by Rosenblatt (1985; 1986), can give readers the opportunity to broaden their general knowledge,

gain insights into the lives of different people and their circumstances and develop their vocabulary and language skills. Therefore, it is important to encourage learners to read for pleasure, simply for its own sake, during their school years and foster a reading culture that will extend beyond their school years and throughout their lives. It is disappointing to see that this does not seem to have happened for at least 17% of this cohort, particularly considering that reading for pleasure is doubly important and beneficial for future teachers who soon will be largely responsible for cultivating positive reading attitudes in their learners. As has been found by other researchers, teachers who read for pleasure are more likely to use best practices in their literature classes and to impart their love of reading to their learners (McKool & Gespass, 2009).

The next section presents and discusses the Likert-scale data in detail.

4.4 Summary statistics of the scaled survey items

The ERAS includes 30 Likert-scale items, which can be divided into five subscales, as discussed above. Responses to these items reveal much about participants' attitudes towards reading. Table 20 provides a summary of responses to the 5-point Likert scale items from the survey, arranged according to the mean or average per response item. The average is useful to describe the central tendency of responses. Some item responses were reverse coded (commonly referred to as 'flipped') because they measure an attitude that is considered undesirable and that is in conflict with healthy reading attitudes. A detailed analysis of the summary statistics is provided below.

Table 20: Summary statistics of Likert scale items

Item	Count	Average	StdDev	Statement	Category
10	442	4.615	0.573	I can learn more English vocabulary if I read English.	Cognitive
20	440	4.568	0.678	I can increase my knowledge if I read English.	Cognitive
35	437	4.455	0.654	Reading English is useful to get a good grade in class.	Cognitive
25	439	4.446	0.703	I can improve my English writing ability if I do English reading.	Cognitive
30	439	4.358	0.632	Reading helps me to learn different points of view on matters.	Cognitive
32	439	4.353	0.716	I do not want to read in English, even if the content is interesting. [Flipped]	Negative
15	442	4.299	0.817	Reading English is useful to get a good job in the future.	Cognitive
22	439	4.210	0.806	I avoid reading in English as much as possible. [Flipped]	Negative
28	439	4.191	0.752	My grades for English reading comprehension at school were good.	Self-assessment
36	437	4.133	0.838	I want to read many English books in the future.	Conative
17	442	4.097	0.804	Reading English is boring. [Flipped]	Negative
31	439	4.023	0.938	If I could go to a library, I would definitely take out English books to read.	Conative
13	441	3.975	0.737	I am good at reading in English.	Self-assessment
24	439	3.941	0.845	When I read in English, I find it difficult to concentrate. [Flipped]	Anxiety
33	438	3.936	0.875	I feel confident when I am reading in English.	Self-assessment
23	439	3.925	0.831	I can figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words by reading the rest of the sentence or paragraph.	Self-assessment
18	441	3.841	1.010	I am comfortable with my reading speed.	Self-assessment
21	438	3.797	0.860	I try to find time for reading in English.	Conative
12	442	3.593	1.024	I would rather do nothing than read a book. [Flipped]	Negative
29	439	3.592	1.027	I feel overwhelmed whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me. [Flipped]	Anxiety
11	442	3.570	1.004	If someone tells me that they like an English book very much, I will read it too.	Conative
16	442	3.568	1.055	During my vacation I want to read at least one English book.	Conative

38	438	3.516	0.871	Reading English is easy.	Self-assessment
37	438	3.475	1.090	I like to skip sections that I do not understand when reading English. [Flipped]	Negative
27	439	3.442	1.016	Just thinking about academic reading makes me tired. [Flipped]	Negative
9	442	3.301	1.207	I get nervous when I have to read academic texts on a digital device. [Flipped]	Anxiety
26	439	3.098	1.119	I often visit English websites and read on the Internet.	Conative
34	438	2.260	1.102	I feel anxious about the amount of academic reading I have to do at university. [Flipped]	Anxiety
14	442	2.023	0.903	I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read in my coursework. [Flipped]	Anxiety
19	441	1.905	0.919	I feel anxious if I don't know all the words in reading passages. [Flipped]	Anxiety

By looking at the averages, some interesting observations can be made. Firstly, all six statements in the 'Cognitive' category appear amongst those items with the highest averages. ENGE1608 students are clearly convinced of the utility and importance of reading, or the potential benefits reading may have in their lives, as indicated by participants' selection of *Agree* or *Strongly agree* in response to all items in the 'Cognitive' subscale. This aligns with the findings of research discussed in Chapter 2; pre-service and in-service teachers believe that reading is important and beneficial in both their personal and professional lives (Rimensberger, 2014). However, this belief does not necessarily lead to investing more time or effort in reading.

Two 'Negative' category statements have high averages: Item 32, "I do not want to read in English, even if the content is interesting", has an average of 4.353, and Item 22, "I avoid reading in English as much as possible", has an average of 4.210. We must remember that the results of these two statements (along with other statements in the 'Anxiety' and 'Negative' categories) are reverse coded (flipped). Thus, the high averages of Items 32 and 22 show that participants mostly disagreed with them; they in fact do want to read in English if the content is interesting, and they do not avoid reading English as much as possible. This aligns with their

responses to the Cognitive category items; they believe that reading in English is useful and/or beneficial to them.

Although survey responses to items in the 'Cognitive' category clustered closely together with the highest averages, indicating a high degree of consensus amongst respondents, responses to items from other categories did not show the same agreement. Responses to statements in the 'Self-assessment' category, connected to feelings of confidence while reading, the ability to learn word meanings from context clues, and comfort with reading speed, were more widely dispersed, as evident in Table 20. The first 'Self-assessment' statement, concerning participants' self-perception of their reading comprehension grades at school, had a high average of 4.191 (in comparison with the other averages in Table 20). It is difficult to verify whether participants did indeed have high marks for reading comprehension, but research suggests that reading comprehension is for the most part a great challenge for South African learners and university students (Pretorius, 2002; Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016; Pretorius & Spaull, 2019; National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Since the research cohort consisted of students who had been admitted into university, we can assume that they would be some of the higher achievers in the country. However, it is possible that their self-assessment does not equate to their actual performance. A study on the perceptions of postgraduate students showed the same results (Du Plessis, 2012).

A substantial amount of research has been done on the actual reading comprehension abilities of high school learners in South Africa. However, what could be further investigated is the reason for the erroneous beliefs in reading and language ability in English. Seeing as most of the responses to statements in the 'Self-assessment' category cluster around an average of 3.9, it can be assumed that most participants have some confidence in their own reading ability,

even though they do not necessarily find reading in English particularly easy. This is indicated by the only item in this category whose average is somewhat lower than 3.9: Item 38, "Reading English is easy", with an average of 3.516. Participants' actual reading behaviour was probed by statements in the 'Conative' category.

Responses to item statements in the 'Conative' category clustered toward the middle and the bottom of the averages table, indicating again that, although participants think reading is important, they do not necessarily have very robust reading habits themselves. The items with the highest averages (Items 36 and 31) were more hypothetical, concerning what reading participants would like to do in the future, or whether they would borrow a book if had access to a library. Both items had averages close to 4, indicating that the ENGE1608 pre-service teachers would like to engage in reading, given the opportunity. However, these statements do not reveal much about their current reading habits. Those statements that did focus on participants' actual reading behaviour yielded slightly lower averages; they ranged from 3.7 to 3.0. This means that most participants selected *Neutral* or *Agree* in response to these statements. It is good to see that participants did not report negative or deferent reading habits, but their self-reported neutral reading habits do not necessarily bode well, especially considering the cohort will soon be partially responsible for the development of the reading skills and habits of their learners. Previous research (Rimensberger, 2014; Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016) suggests that teachers are not immersed in robust reading practices themselves, and it seems that this cohort is not an exception. It should be noted that the fact that they think reading is important (as indicated by their responses to items in the 'Cognitive' category) could possibly have caused them to over-estimate or perhaps over-report their own reading habits, even if they are only neutral. They may be saying what they think they should say, instead of reporting their actual reading habits accurately.

Responses to items in the 'Negative' category showed considerable variances. The two items with the highest averages were discussed earlier. A somewhat encouraging result was the responses to Item 17, "Reading English is boring", which had an average of 4.097 when reverse coded. This means that most ENGE1608 students chose *Disagree* as their response and did not think that reading English is boring. This could indicate that reading English is interesting to them, despite it potentially being quite difficult, as indicated by their responses to Item 38, "Reading English is easy". Thus, we can assume that they do not feel an aversion to reading due to it being boring. An interesting result was participants' apparent neutrality in response to Item 12, concerning whether participants would rather do nothing than read a book, which had a scale average of 3.593. The frequency table below offers more detailed information.

Table 21: Distribution of responses to Item 12, "I would rather do nothing than read a book."

Response	Frequency	Relative.Frequency
Strongly Disagree	77	0.17
Disagree	194	0.44
Neither Agree nor Disagree	100	0.23
Agree	56	0.13
Strongly Agree	15	0.03

The majority of the cohort would prefer reading a book to doing nothing (a combined 61% chose *Disagree* or S*trongly Disagree*); 23% chose *Neither Agree nor Disagree*. However, a combined 16% would rather do nothing than read a book, which likely indicates a significant aversion to reading. This may seem like a small percentage. However, if the neutral category (*Neither Agree nor Disagree*) is added, the percentage is augmented substantially to 39% of the students, which could be cause for concern among a cohort of pre-service teachers who will soon be influencing the reading attitudes of their learners.

The last two ‘Negative’ statements (Items 37 and 27 in Table 20) provided neutral responses as well. The total average for the ‘Negative’ subscale responses is 3.862 (total averages for the subscales are shown in Figure 10 at the end of this section), which means that participants generally chose *Disagree* or *Strongly Disagree* in response to most of the ‘Negative’ statements. However, it would perhaps have been more encouraging to see much stronger disagreement with these statements since they indicate a particularly negative attitude towards reading. Though participants do not have aggressively negative reading attitudes, they do not necessarily have very positive reading attitudes either.

Responses to items in the ‘Anxiety’ category were particularly concerning. They clustered towards the bottom of the table, with three items having the lowest averages of all. The results for this category were all reverse coded. Item 19 had the lowest average of 1.905. This item had a negative correlation with the reading attitude scale and needs some rewording. However, it would stand to reason that participants feel anxious if they do not know all the words in a passage, since they may not entirely understand the passage and need more help comprehending it. Further testing is needed to refine this statement.

The item responses with the second and third lowest averages indicate a real anxiety that students currently experience related to their academic coursework. A more detailed view of responses to these two items is provided in Tables 22 and 23 below.

Table 22: Responses to Item 14, “I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read in my coursework.”

Response	Frequency	Relative.Frequency
Strongly Disagree	7	0.02
Disagree	32	0.07
Neither Agree nor Disagree	47	0.11
Agree	234	0.53
Strongly Agree	122	0.28

Table 23: Responses to Item 34, “I feel anxious about the amount of academic reading I have to do at university.”

Response	Frequency	Relative.Frequency
Strongly Disagree	11	0.03
Disagree	66	0.15
Neither Agree nor Disagree	73	0.17
Agree	164	0.37
Strongly Agree	124	0.28

A combined 81% of participants agree or strongly agree that they feel anxious that they may not understand what they read, and a combined 65% agree or strongly agree that they feel anxious about how much reading they have to do at university. Given the myriad problems learners experience at school concerning their reading skills, especially those who come from text-poor homes, problems with reading comprehension are likely to persist at university. It is disappointing to see that participants do not seem to have benefitted much from the host of reading programs and interventions implemented in this country at school level. The survey instrument did not test their reading comprehension, but their self-reported feelings of discomfort when faced with their academic reading and uncertainty of their own reading comprehension could add to the amount of stress they feel at university. These feelings also do not align with positive reading attitudes. There seems to be a contradiction between the responses to Item 28, concerning their school grades for reading comprehension, and their reading comprehension at university. Participants reported that their grades for reading comprehension at school were relatively good (item average of 4.191), but they seem unsure

of their reading comprehension at university, to the point that it may cause anxiety. Also, a strong theme that emerged in students' responses to the open-ended survey questions was their struggle to understand what they read (discussed further in Chapter 6). The contradiction raises the question of how participants struggle with reading comprehension at university when their reading comprehension grades were good at school. Perhaps this indicates a flaw in the reading comprehension assessment at school level. Regardless, it is discouraging to see that participants experience anxiety about their academic reading at university, despite supposedly being prepared for university at school.

A handful of Likert-scale items focused on digital reading. Item 9 probed participants' feelings of nervousness about doing their academic reading using a digital device. With an item average of 3.301, we may observe from responses to Item 9 that participants are ambivalent about reading on digital devices. Participants do a considerable amount of their academic reading using digital devices since many academic reading texts are provided on the university's online learning management system. These texts can be printed, but it requires some effort and cost to access printers on campus or elsewhere, making digital reading the cheaper and more convenient option. However, as many as 74% of the participants clearly indicated in the background and contextual section of the survey questionnaire (discussed in section 4.3) that they preferred reading print rather than digital texts. Also, in response to Item 26 concerning participants' online reading, the item average showed a neutral stance of 3.098, indicating that participants do not necessarily make a great effort to read online, despite its convenience and accessibility. Educators and trainers may feel that digital technology could be the solution to several problems in the education sphere, but it may not be the right tool to cultivate positive reading attitudes.

The above discussion has covered in detail the responses to the individual Likert-scale survey statements. Where Table 20, at the beginning of section 4.4, reported the average responses per item to show the central tendency of responses, Figure 10 shows how the averages compare for the respective subscales. This gives a broad overview of the uniformity of responses and the extent to which survey respondents agreed or disagreed with the survey statements in each subscale.

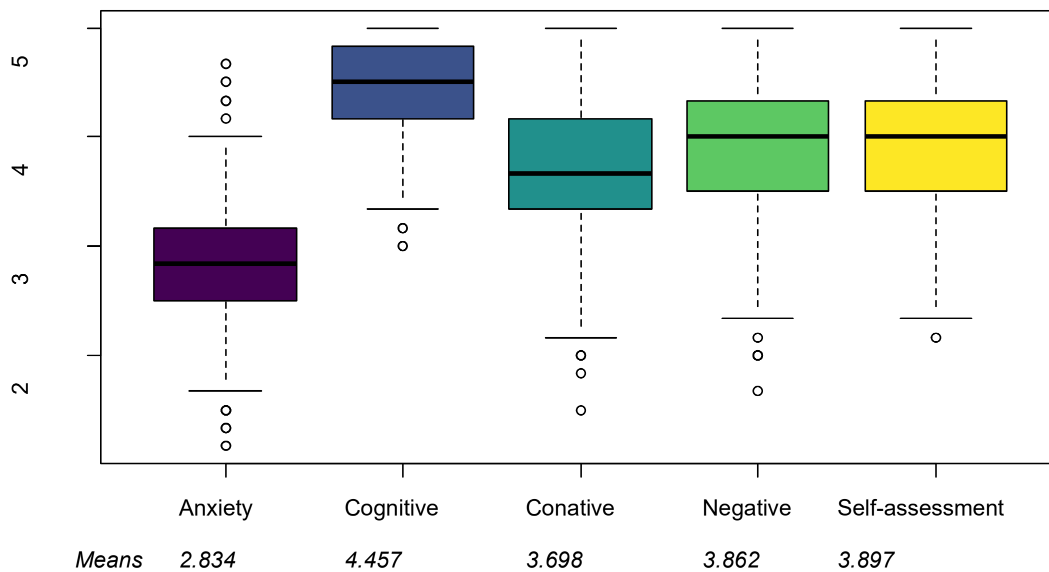


Figure 10: Summary of responses in each subscale

The responses to the ‘Anxiety’ subscale items show the most variation. As pointed out earlier, even students with robust reading habits indicated that academic reading makes them anxious. This explains why the average is lower than in the case of the remaining subscales. An average between 2 and 3 (*Disagree* and *Neither Agree or Disagree*) may be higher than desired, considering that reading anxiety could have a serious impact on the experiences of these participants. It may be useful to make efforts to learn more about reading anxiety and how it could be mediated in pre-service teachers.

The highest average is for the ‘Cognitive’ subscale, which aligns with existing research (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Applegate *et al.*, 2014; Rimensberger, 2014); most participants believe in the utility of reading. However, the ‘Conative’ subscale average is significantly lower than the ‘Cognitive’, indicating that although the cohort may think that reading is important, their reading habits do not reflect that belief. The averages for the ‘Negative’ and ‘Self-Assessment’ subscales are quite similar; they indicate that most participants have neutral-to-positive attitudes towards reading and think of themselves as competent readers.

The following section examines the reading attitudes of pre-service teachers based on a total reading attitude score calculated through SPSS.

4.5 Participants’ total reading attitude scores

Each participant’s responses to the Likert-scale items from the ERAS were used to calculate a total reading attitude score for the participant by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A numerical value of between 1 and 5 was allocated to each response, with the highest number representing the response considered most likely to support beneficial reading attitudes and habits. Because some items in the scale were worded negatively, the scores for those items were reversed to calculate the total score out of 150. It is important to note that the scores are not necessarily a perfect reflection of participants’ reading attitudes. Moreover, the intervals between the scales are not equivalent, which means that the total score cannot be used on its own to reach any conclusions. That being said, interpreting these scores may provide insight into the general reading attitudes of the cohort.

Of the 444 students who completed the survey, some had missing data in the section with scaled items. Ten cases with missing data could not be used to calculate a reading attitude score and were discarded. Table 24 shows the descriptive statistics for the total reading attitude score as processed using SPSS. The mean reading attitude score is 112/150, with the lowest score being 73 and the highest score being 144. It is disconcerting to find that some pre-service teachers have a reading attitude score as low as 73/150, indicating very negative and perhaps deferent feelings towards reading. However, the mean of 112 may be heartening, possibly indicating that most participants do in fact feel positive about reading. This does not, however, necessarily indicate healthy reading habits. As discussed in previous sections, closer inspection of responses indicates a disparity between reading attitudes and reading habits. Perhaps the generally positive attitude towards the idea of reading could provide a foundation on which educators involved with this cohort of pre-service teachers can build more robust reading habits in an effort to curb the “Peter Effect” (Applegate & Applegate, 2004). It would be interesting to see how their reading attitudes and habits could be improved as they progress through their study program in further research studies.

Table 24: Total Reading Score descriptive statistics from SPSS (N=434)

	Statistic	**Std. Error**
Mean	112.5691	.55079
95% Confidence Interval for Mean: lower bound	111.4866	
95% Confidence Interval for Mean: upper bound	113.6517	
5% Trimmed Mean	112.8057	
Median	113.0000	
Variance	131.664	
Std. Deviation	11.47448	
Minimum	73.00	
Maximum	144.00	
Range	71.00	
Interquartile Range	15.00	
Skewness	-.337	.117
Kurtosis	.210	.234

Figure 11 shows the distribution of scores on continuous variables. Where skewness indicates how symmetrical the distribution is, kurtosis gives information on how peaked the distribution is (Pallant, 2010: 57). The analysis shows negative skewness (see Table 24), as the scores cluster towards the high end of the graph. It is encouraging to see that relatively few participants have a score lower than 100. The 55 respondents who scored below 100 (13% of the cohort) selected neutral responses or responses that represent unhealthy reading attitudes. The majority of the participants scored between 100 and 120. Though such scores may not be considered extremely low, it would perhaps be preferable to see higher scores among the teachers of tomorrow. Since they will be a very important influence on the reading attitudes of their students, their reading attitudes and habits should be as robust as possible.

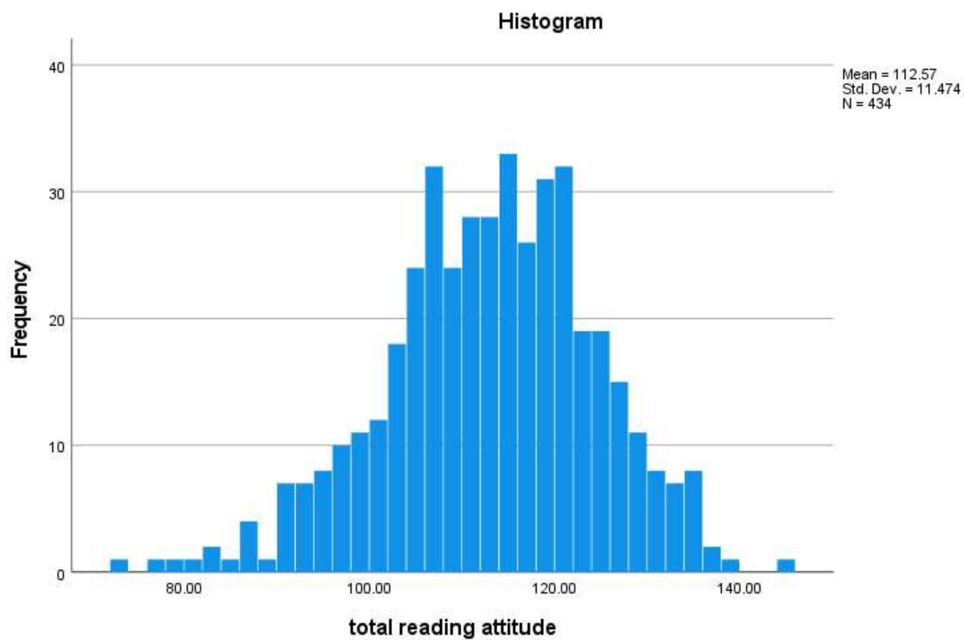


Figure 11: Histogram indicating total reading attitude scores for ERAS participants.

Data with a normal distribution produces a bell-shaped curve. Apart from determining the skewness and kurtosis, as described above, other tests of normality are used such as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk statistics.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilks tests determine the normality of the distribution. If the result is non-significant, the distribution is normal. The significance level (sig) is usually set at .05 (Pallant, 2010: 63). Tests of normality are relevant for conducting further statistical procedures, such as t-tests to compare different pairs of results or survey responses. These fell beyond the scope of the present study. Table 25 shows the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (Shapiro) tests. Again, for the null hypothesis of each test to be rejected, the tests' results should be smaller than or equal to .05. As shown in the table, the results of both tests were significant (*sig*. = .015 for K-S and .017 for Shapiro, both are < 0.05), indicating that the data did deviate significantly from normal distribution.

Table 25: Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			**Shapiro-Wilk**		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Total reading attitude	.049	434	.015	.992	434	.017
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

The Q-Q plot below (Figure 12) shows the normality of distribution by comparing the sample distribution with a standard normal distribution, clearly showing any data points which deviate from the expected norm; the detrended Q-Q plot magnifies the deviation from normal and allows the researcher to see the magnitude and direction of the deviation.

Another reason for the data's deviance from normal could be that the K-S and Shapiro tests are very sensitive to small deviations in normality in large sample sizes (Kent State University Libraries, 2023). A sample size of 434 could be large enough to influence the tests such that deviations from normality do not necessarily mean that the data cannot be used. Using Q-Q plots can clarify the deviation from normality indicated by the K-S and Shapiro tests.

Figure 12 shows a Q-Q plot of the total reading attitude scores. In the plot, the observed value (score) is plotted against the expected value. If there is a reasonably straight line, the distribution is normal. As can be seen in Figure 12, most of the data points follow the line, but there are some outliers.

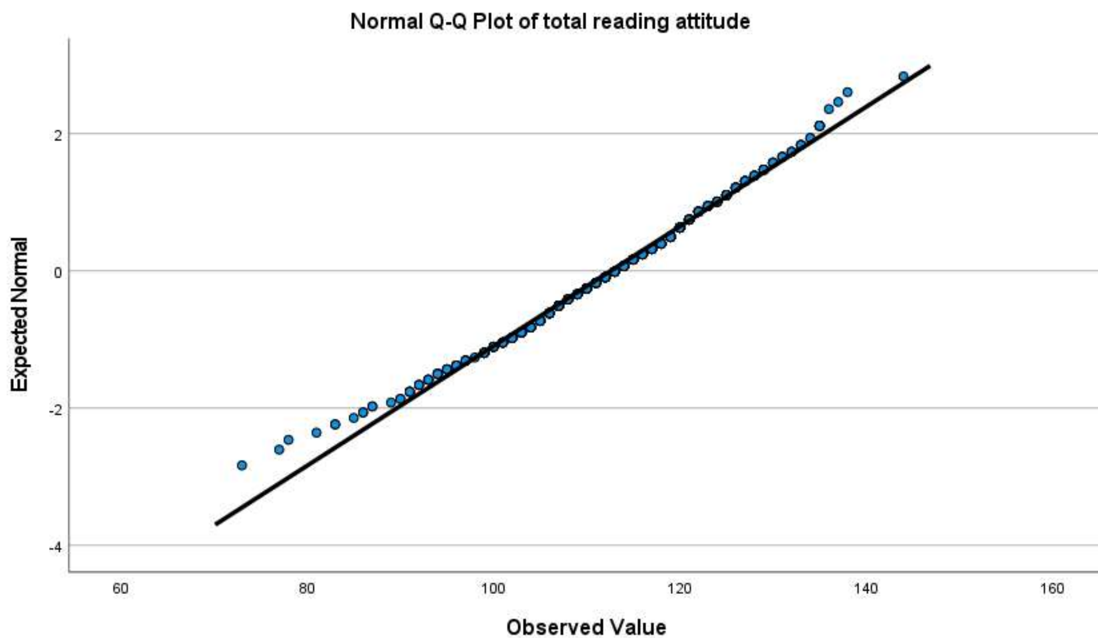


Figure 12: Normal Q-Q plot of total reading attitude

In the detrended plot (Figure 13) the horizontal line indicates the expected normal, and the dots represent the direction and magnitude of the deviation of each data point. There should not be

any significant clustering away from the horizontal line; most scores should accumulate close to the zero line. Figure 13 enables us to see the extreme outliers more clearly.

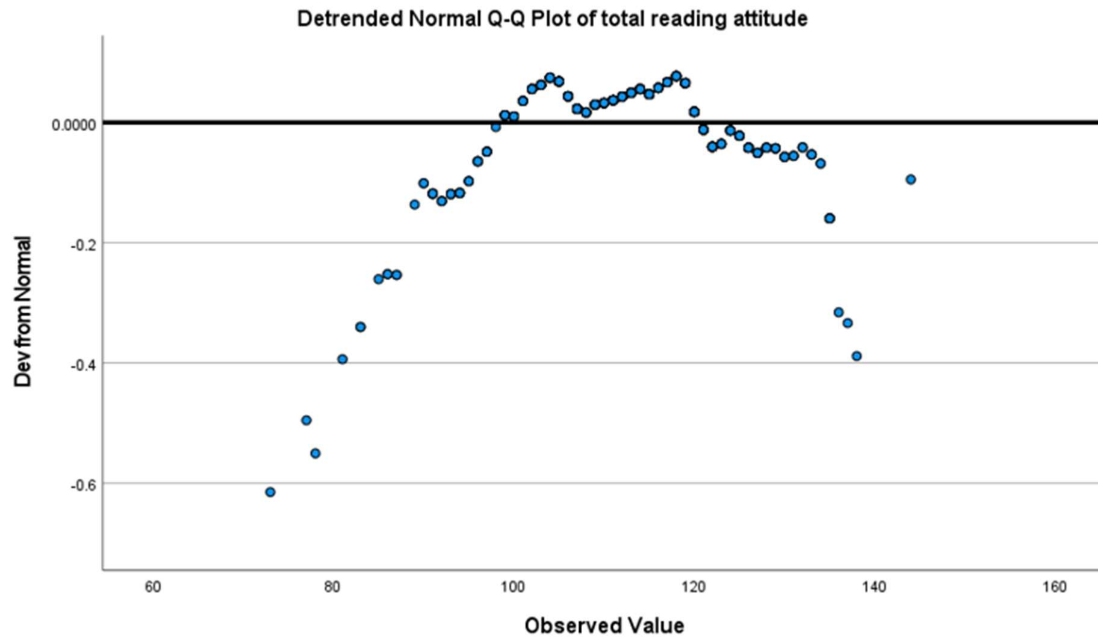


Figure 13: Detrended normal Q-Q plot of total reading attitude

Table 26 summarises the most extreme scores, the highest ranging from 135 to 144, and the lowest from 73 to 83.

Table 26: Upper and lower extreme reading attitude scores

		Case number	**Reading attitude score**
Highest	1	224	144.00
	2	290	138.00
	3	356	137.00
	4	259	136.00
	5	3	135.00[a]
Lowest	1	142	73.00
	2	37	77.00
	3	150	78.00
	4	80	81.00
	5	223	83.00[b]
a. Only a partial list of cases with the value 135.00 are shown in the table of upper extremes.			
b. Only a partial list of cases with the value 83.00 are shown in the table of lower extremes.			

Those respondents with the highest scores could be classified as enthusiastic or avid readers. They would have scored high in every subscale, meaning their beliefs concerning the value and importance of reading are aligned with their reading habits; they likely enjoy reading for its own sake. They are also the most likely to have aesthetic, as well as efferent reading stances, depending on the kind of texts they engage with and the purpose of their reading a particular text.

Participants with the lowest scores are likely to have a negative or even deferent reading attitude; they do not like reading and they do not read unless they must. These participants may have developed negative reading attitudes due to the attitudes modelled by parents and teachers who found reading to be a difficult or unenjoyable activity. Also, they may come from print-poor backgrounds, which is another reason for their not having been exposed to reading, particularly reading for fun. Certain instructional practices employed by their schoolteachers (discussed in section 2.7.4) and a lack of exposure to reading as a fun, pleasurable activity, both at school and at home, may have cultivated reading attitudes and habits that are not healthy. They may even be experiencing feelings of anxiety related to reading (discussed in section 2.5) which would need to be addressed by the teacher or educator in sensitive and specific ways.

This chapter has presented and discussed the reliability of the ERAS, as well as reported and analysed data obtained from different parts of the survey questionnaire: the language and educational background of the cohort, the summary statistics of the Likert-scale survey items, and participants' total reading attitude scores. Section 4.6 provides a brief summary of the main findings in this chapter.

4.6 Conclusion

In order to ensure the validity of any findings based on a survey, it is important to determine that the measuring instrument is reliable. As evident in section 4.2, the ERAS produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 for the scaled survey items and a mean of 0.16 for inter-item correlation. Furthermore, the Omega reliability of the ERAS was 0.87, indicating that the instrument measures the reading attitudes of participants consistently. The Omega analysis also supports the construct validity of the scale. The reliability of each subscale was reported in section 4.2.3. All analyses indicated that the subscales were reliable and contributed meaningfully towards the overall scale as an indicator of English reading attitudes, though the 'Anxiety' subscale had a slightly lower Cronbach's Alpha of 0.65 when compared to that of the other subscales. As was mentioned, reading anxiety is a subject that can be probed further in future rounds of the ERAS.

Section 4.3 presented the data obtained from the contextual and opening section of the survey instrument. Some interesting findings regarding the language and educational background of the cohort were made. Surprisingly few of the participants have mastered English at first language level, which could pose problems for effective English language teaching after the students have graduated if their English language abilities are not developed adequately as part of their training; 88% took English as a first additional language in high school. The first eight questions also probed participants' experiences in their high school literature classes. Most remember studying at least two genres in their literature classes, as stipulated by the CAPS; 197 participants do not remember studying novels; they only remember studying shorter texts such as poems, short stories, and plays. It is possible that teachers find these shorter texts easier to present in literature classes. As is reported in their responses to Question 4, over half of

participants (57%) experienced the kind of rote learning described by Van der Walt and Evans (2019), in which the teacher reads the text to learners in class, and then provides notes describing specific themes and ideas that learners are expected to remember and reproduce in tests and exams. This kind of teaching would be more difficult when dealing with novels that have more characters and themes, etc. Many participants (63%) remember studying poetry, but in the researchers' own experience, students struggle to engage with and analyse poetry, which could indicate a problem with how poems are being taught and assessed in high school. Almost half (45%) of participants do not remember studying a single novel. It is possible that their teachers chose not to cover any novels, which, arguably, is a serious oversight. It may also be that they forgot about any novels they studied, suggesting that their literature classes were not engaging or memorable. A large majority (88%) of respondents indicated that they enjoyed their literature classes, which is encouraging, but could be because they found literature easy, since teachers simply gave them notes to learn, rather than engaging learners in developing their own ideas and opinions or appropriating the text and making it their own.

Only half of the participants (51%) had access to school libraries; those who did not were likely at a disadvantage in the development of their reading attitudes and habits, particularly extensive reading habits, since they may have lacked the opportunity to choose texts to read according to their own interests. Lack of library access is particularly concerning when 74% of participants prefer reading printed texts over digital or audio reading, another important finding of this part of the survey. Their reading experiences at university could also be especially challenging, since much of the learning content is accessible via a digital learning platform, and comparatively little reading is done using printed articles or textbooks.

A substantial number of participants indicated that they often read texts longer than 20 pages (37% every week, 34% every day, or nearly every day). We can assume that this is compulsory academic reading, since 67% only read for pleasure in the holidays or over weekends. Disturbingly, 17% indicated that they never read for pleasure. Considering these participants will soon be partially responsible for cultivating the reading attitudes of young learners, pleasure reading would be very beneficial for this cohort, and every effort should be made to encourage positive reading attitudes and healthy, self-driven, extensive reading habits during their teacher training.

Section 4.4 focused on the Likert-scale survey items and looked specifically at the averages of responses to each item, as shown in Table 20. The 'Cognitive' items all had the highest averages; participants also largely agreed that they want to read English if the content is interesting, and they do not avoid reading in English. This aligns with existing research; participants believe in the importance and potential benefits of reading (Applegate *et al.,* 2014; Rimensberger, 2014). Averages for items in the 'Self-assessment' subscale indicated that participants largely have confidence in their reading abilities, even though they do not necessarily find reading English easy.

However, items in the 'Conative' subscale averaged lower than those in the 'Cognitive' subscale, which shows that participants do not have very strong reading habits, despite their positive beliefs concerning reading and its benefits. The lowest averages were for items in the 'Anxiety' subscale. The cohort is particularly uncomfortable with academic reading, which does not bode well for their engagement with the learning content which they sorely need to master to become good teachers. The low averages in the 'Conative subscale, along with concerningly high averages for items in the 'Anxiety' subscale, paint a sobering picture of the

reality of the cohorts' reading culture, which they may soon be imparting to their future learners.

Finally, section 4.5 showed the total reading scores calculated for each participant. The average reading attitude score was 112/150, which is not particularly low, but could be much higher in a cohort of the teachers of tomorrow. Some participants scored as low as 72, possibly demonstrating deferent reading attitudes (Smith, 2012). Since this study only required participants to complete the survey anonymously, little more can be learned from the data, other than the fact that there are a number of pre-service teachers in this cohort who do have negative attitudes towards reading, which may be passed on to their future learners. Future research could include further probing into the reading attitudes of such participants.

This chapter has focused on descriptive and summary statistics obtained from the ERAS data. When responses to the 30 Likert-scale items are cross-tabulated with responses to the eight contextual ERAS questions, some statistically significant relationships emerge. These correlations and possible implications are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Investigating relationships between variables

5.1 Introduction

Investigating relationships between survey items may yield some deeper insights into participants' reading attitudes and what may contribute significantly to them. The following section reports and analyses the results of a number of statistical correlations carried out using R. The first part reports the results of Pearson correlations that were used to determine the strength and direction of relationships. The second part provides nominal summaries of the survey questions and cross-tabulations with survey items using Chi-square tests.

5.2 Correlations between subscales

Figure 14 indicates correlations between subscales using colour coding; the darker the blue, the greater the Pearson product-moment correlation, as evident in the sliding scale on the right.

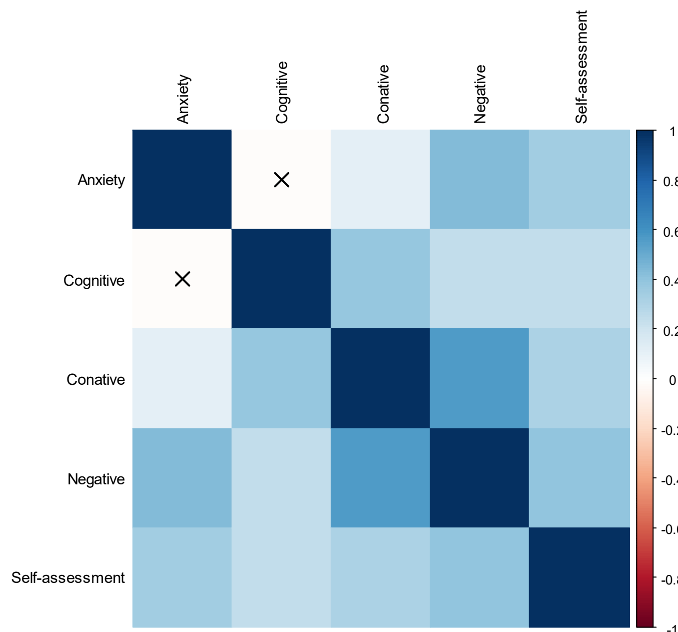


Figure 14: Correlations between subscales

None of the subscales showed a negative correlation. Interestingly, the Pearson correlation showed no relationship between reading attitudes in the cognitive category and reading attitudes in the anxiety category. Thus, reading anxiety can affect strong and weak students, irrespective of how important they regard reading. Figure 14 also shows a Pearson correlation of approximately 0.7 between the 'Conative' and 'Negative' subscales, meaning that conative reading attitudes appear to be quite strongly related to negative reading attitudes. This implies that participants who do not like reading are not likely to have healthy reading habits.

The next section examines correlations between scaled survey items and the first eight contextual questions of the ERAS.

5.3 Correlation of scaled items and contextual questions using Pearson

This section examines the relationship between the responses provided to the scaled survey items and the information provided through the contextual questions covering language and educational background in the first part of the survey. The results of the Pearson correlation are provided in Figure 15. It should be noted that survey questions 2, 5 and 6 were unsuitable for this part of the correlation analysis since they provide nominal information.

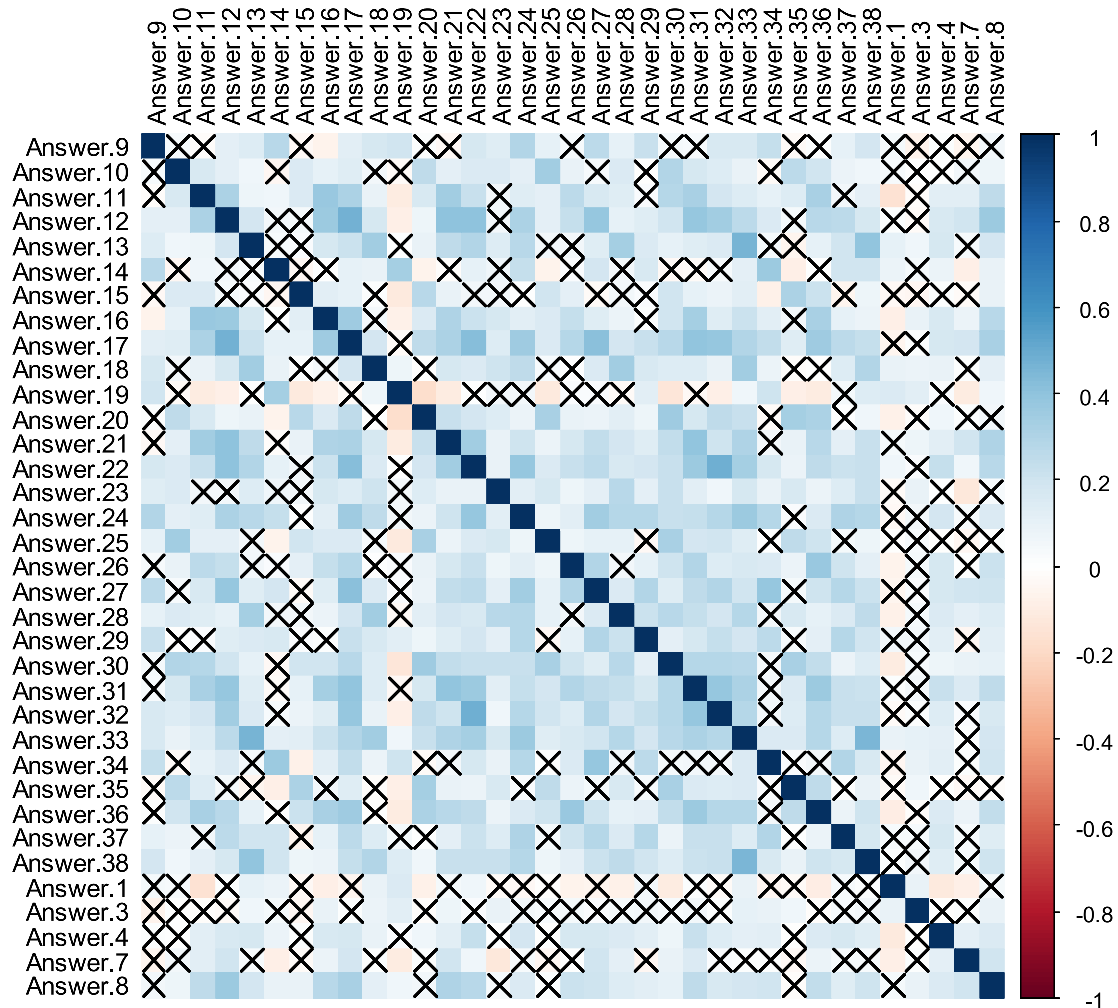


Figure 15: Pearson correlation coefficients of survey items

Pearson is used to indicate whether there is a linear relationship between two variables and to gauge the "direction and strength" of the relationship (Pallant, 2010: 123). Pearson correlation coefficients can vary from -1 to +1, as evident in the colour bar provided to the right of Figure 15. In the instance of positive correlations, if one variable increases, the other does too. However, with negative correlations, as one variable increases, the second variable decreases (Pallant, 2020: 128). The darker the blue shade in the figure provided, the higher the positive correlation between the two variables. Similarly, the deeper the red shade, the higher the negative correlation between the two variables. A cross (X) indicates no correlation at all.

From the information provided in Figure 15, we can also extract a number of survey items that appear to be strongly and positively correlated. They are summarised for clarity in Table 27.

Table 27: Strongly correlating items

Item	Statement	Item	Correlating statement
17	Reading English is boring.	12	I would rather do nothing than read a book.
32	I do not want to read in English, even if the content is interesting.	22	I avoid reading in English as much as possible.
38	Reading English is easy.	33	I feel confident when I am reading in English.
		13	I am good at reading in English.
33	I feel confident when I am reading in English.	13	I am good at reading in English.

It is not difficult to see the connections between the correlating items shown in Table 27. Participants who find reading in English to be boring may choose to do nothing rather than expend mental energy on reading. Also, if participants do not want to read English even if the content is interesting, they would most likely want to avoid reading in English in general. Lastly, if the participants find reading in English easy, they are very likely to feel confident when reading in English and to consider themselves good at reading. The relationships between scaled survey items and contextual questions were investigated more closely using cross-

tabulation and Chi-square procedures. The results of this more advanced statistical analysis are provided in the section that follows.

5.4 Nominal summaries and relationships with key questions using Chi-square tests

In this part of the statistical analysis, the analyst created summary tables for each survey statement as if it was purely categorical, then cross-tabulated the responses with the responses to each of the contextual and demographic questions (1 to 8 of the ERAS). The analyst then performed Chi-square tests. The assumption was that the expected number of responses in every category (*Agree*, *Disagree*, etc.) was not affected by the demographic or contextual factors. The analyst then calculated the probability of seeing differences in the categories as large or larger than what can be observed under the assumption. If this probability was small, it could be concluded that there is evidence of grouping and dependence.

As part of the procedure, the p-value is set. This is used to accept or reject the null hypothesis, which states that "the results are due to chance and are not significant in terms of supporting the idea being investigated" (McLeod, 2023: n.p.). The null hypothesis assumes that there is no relationship between the variables under investigation. The alternative hypothesis is to be accepted if the results "are significant in terms of supporting the theory being investigated" (i.e., not due to chance) (McLeod, 2023: n.p.). Originally, the analyst set the p-value at 0.05. This means that correlation results are only deemed statistically significant when the p-value is less than 0.05; other results could be ascribed to chance. However, since there was a lot of testing involved, the analyst predicted that the multiple comparisons problem may arise, which would require the analyst to adjust the p-value to a more conservative number. This did occur,

and the Holm-Bonferroni method was used on each class of tests separately with an adjusted p-value of 0.001.

Because of the large number of cross-tabulations carried out, only those items found to be dependent, or significantly correlated with each other, are presented below. Again, for each of the following pairs of survey items and questions the test of independence gave a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating a statistically significant correlation between the two items. Interestingly, reading for pleasure correlated with many items. For ease of reading, items that show statistically significant correlations with pleasure reading have been reported first. These items cover preferred mode of reading, conative reading attitudes related to the desire or intention to read, and negative reading attitudes. The last correlations discussed are between enjoyment of literature classes (Question 4) and negative reading attitude (Items 17 and 22).

5.4.1 The relationship between pleasure reading and mode of reading

Table 28 shows responses to Question 6, which pertains to participants' preferred mode of reading (digital, print, or audio) and Item 8, which concerns participants' pleasure reading habits. The responses show that reading for pleasure is dependent on or connected to the mode of reading or engaging with text; those who read *nearly every day* or *every day* by far prefer reading from printed texts. As was discussed in section 2.7.6, digital reading is not always conducive to the kind of deep, abstract thinking required to engage with literature, and may not be the best tool to cultivate robust reading habits, especially reading longer texts like novels. Reading on a screen for long periods of time can cause eyestrain, and it lacks the 'feel' of a printed book. The results presented in Table 28 perhaps provide more evidence in support of using printed books in classrooms, as opposed to digitising the classroom.

Table 28: Correlation of preferred mode of reading with how often participant reads for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
Preferred mode	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
I like listening to audio recordings more than reading.	20	15	6	4	1
I prefer reading from printed texts and books rather than digital devices.	48	142	86	39	12
Reading on a digital device is my favourite way to read.	6	26	23	9	5

Of the participants who read for pleasure regularly (*nearly every day/every day*) or over weekends (185 students), 74% (137 students) prefer printed texts to digital texts. This does not however, necessarily indicate an extreme aversion to digital reading. Even those with more negative reading attitudes prefer printed texts over digital ones, as evident in the correlation between reading aversion (Item 12) and preferred reading mode (Question 6) in Table 29.

Table 29: Correlating reading aversion and preferred reading modes (p-value <0.001)

I would rather do nothing than read a book (Negative)	**I like listening to audio recordings more than reading.**	**I prefer reading from printed texts and books rather than digital devices.**	**Reading on a digital device is my favourite way to read.**
Strongly Disagree	1	60	16
Disagree	14	143	37
Neither Agree nor Disagree	15	76	9
Agree	11	39	6
Strongly Agree	5	9	1

The analysis shows that both those who disagreed with Item 12 and those who agreed far preferred printed text over digital reading or audiobooks. This indicates a strong preference for print, regardless of reading habits and attitudes, and perhaps further supports the use of print books in the classroom.

In the next table, we can see how participants' online reading habits (Item 26) correlated with the frequency of pleasure reading (Question 8). The majority of those who reported reading for pleasure *every day* or *nearly every day* agreed that they often visited English websites to read. This could be attributed to the fact that online reading is often more convenient, even if not preferred over print reading. Moreover, participants who read for pleasure are more likely to have the skills and access to use digital devices on a very regular basis.

Table 30: Correlation of online/digital reading and frequency of reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
I often visit English websites and read on the internet (Conative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	12	11	0	1	1
Disagree	33	61	30	13	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9	32	23	8	3
Agree	15	63	53	23	5
Strongly Agree	5	15	8	6	4

A total of 45% of the cohort (177 respondents) indicated that they often visit English websites to read (they chose *agree* or *strongly agree*). Of these, only a few read for pleasure *nearly every day* or *every day* (38 students), and many indicated they read for pleasure *over weekends* (61) and *during holidays* (78). Notably, most of the students who hardly ever read for pleasure (those who selected *never/during holidays* or were neutral in their response), indicated they did not often visit English websites for reading purposes.

Responses to the two statements focused on digital reading (visiting websites to read and anxiety related to reading on a digital device) indicate that participants are not averse to digital reading. However, the kind of reading that is necessary in the literature classroom is perhaps not conducive to digital reading. Also, the positive reading attitudes that teachers of literature strive to cultivate seem more correlated with print reading.

5.4.2 The relationship between pleasure reading and conative reading habits

The following section provides a detailed analysis of correlations between self-reported pleasure reading habits and statements about participants' desire or intention to read, i.e., conative reading attitudes, such as whether or not they would like to read a book during their vacation, or whether they try to find time to read in English.

The table below shows a correlation between participants' likelihood to read a book recommended to them by a friend (Item 11), and their pleasure reading habits. Participants who agree or strongly agree with Item 11 (57%) are most likely to read *during the holidays* or *over weekends*. This could indicate that a book recommendation from a friend may be a very strong incentive to read a book, even if one is not a very avid reader. Perhaps this result points towards theory describing reading as a social and not just a solitary activity; teachers may do well to include social activities in the literature classroom, such as discussion circles, book clubs, etc. Learners who can encourage each other to read books based on the good reviews of their peers may be at an advantage when it comes to developing positive reading attitudes and habits.

Table 31: Correlating book recommendations and pleasure reading (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
If someone tells me that they like an English book very much, I will read it too. (Conative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	6	3	0	1	0
Disagree	20	22	10	8	1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	30	50	20	12	3
Agree	11	81	61	18	8
Strongly Agree	7	27	24	13	6

There was a significant correlation between participants' desire to read during their vacation and their pleasure reading habits. The data shows that 62% (273 out of 442) of the respondents agreed (*Agree* or *Strongly agree*) that they desired to read an English book during their vacation. Most participants who read every day or nearly every day for pleasure would like to read at least one book when on vacation. We also see quite a large group of respondents who generally read over weekends and during holidays indicating the same desire. Those who disagreed were more likely to never read for pleasure or postpone reading until the holidays. This data perhaps shows a clearer connection between participants' desire to read and their existing reading habits.

Table 32: Correlating vacation English book reading and pleasure reading (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
During my vacation I want to read at least one English book (Conative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	7	3	0	1	0
Disagree	29	25	17	7	1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21	33	12	11	2
Agree	14	84	65	23	8
Strongly Agree	3	38	21	10	7

The next significant correlation was between participants' reported attempts to find time for reading in English and their pleasure reading habits. Participants who read for pleasure *every day* or *nearly every day* were most likely to find time for reading in English, again indicating that pleasure reading correlates with their reading behaviour.

Table 33: Correlating finding time for reading in English) and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure?				
I try to find time for reading in English (Conative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	0	1	1	0	0
Disagree	21	17	3	3	0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	38	4	8	2
Agree	28	99	81	29	8
Strongly Agree	6	26	25	11	8

A large majority of 73% (321 respondents) stated that they did try to find time to read in English. Interestingly, of these students, 11% (34) never read for pleasure and 39% (125) only read for pleasure during the holidays. This result may look somewhat contradictory. Participants who reported that they tried to find time for reading in English did not necessarily spend much time reading for pleasure. It is possible that they only take the time to read in English for Cognitive purposes: to improve their vocabulary or complete academic tasks. This kind of reading may be a priority for them, even if they do not find it pleasurable. Only 10% (46 students) indicated they did not try to find time for reading in English.

Table 34 shows the correlation between participants' desire to read many books in the future and their pleasure reading habits. As in the case of the correlation of vacation and pleasure reading, this item pertains to an intention that may be of a concrete or vague nature, which may be easy to agree to, while participants' actual reading habits could be very different.

Table 34: Correlating desire to read English books in future with reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
I want to read many English books in the future. (Conative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	2	2	0	0	0
Disagree	8	3	4	1	0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	25	5	7	1
Agree	27	98	54	18	6
Strongly Agree	19	54	50	25	10

As many as 83% (361 of the 437 respondents) indicated an intention to read many books in future. As expected, of the 68 participants who read for pleasure *every day* or *nearly every day*, 59 participants (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to read more books in future. However, the majority of participants who never read for pleasure also agreed that they would like to read many books in future. Thus, their reading habits do not align with their desire to read many books. They may be convinced of the utility of reading and want to build a robust personal reading culture, but they perhaps do not have the access, skills, or attitudes to maintain strong and regular English book-reading habits.

Item 31 probed participants' attitudes towards using libraries by asking whether participants would take out an English book if they had access to a library. As shown in Table 35, this item was found to have statistical significance when correlated with Question 8. Interestingly, participants who never read for pleasure expressed conflicting opinions and were equally likely to *disagree* or *strongly agree* with the statement (15 responses each). This may indicate that participants' desire to take out a library book, or perhaps their intentions to read in English, are not completely compatible with their actual reading habits. They may believe that, given the chance, they would borrow an English library book, but still never read for pleasure or only during holidays. Perhaps it can be considered encouraging that 78% (340) of the students indicated an intention to take out English library books. Few South Africans have the

opportunity to access a library; it may very well be possible that they would make use of one if they could.

Table 35: Correlating attitudes towards library use and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
If I could go to a library, I would definitely take out English books to read. (Conative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	3	0	0	0	0
Disagree	15	17	3	2	0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	19	11	9	2
Agree	23	85	55	20	5
Strongly Agree	15	61	45	20	11

The previous four correlations were between pleasure reading and items indicating an intention or desire to read. There was only one statistically significant correlation between pleasure reading and actual reading habits: participants who read for pleasure were much more likely to report that they often read longer texts. Texts longer than 20 pages would most likely exclude texts such as Facebook posts or online blogs and include novels or academic articles.

As shown in Table 36, only 15% of the respondents indicated they read texts longer than 20 pages *every day* or *nearly every day*. At university, students are expected to read longer texts largely on their own and formulate their responses based on their research to share in class or submit in their assignments. If participants are reading longer texts often, it could indicate that they are at least trying to read through their coursework, or perhaps that they are engaging in their own independent reading. This would be a very good step towards building the stamina and other reading skills they need to thrive at university, and even beyond.

Table 36: Correlating how often participant reads a text longer than 20 pages and how often participant reads for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read a text that is longer than 20 pages?				
How often do you read for pleasure?	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Less than once a week	36	55	23	14	1
About once a week	24	70	44	20	3
Nearly every day	7	41	28	16	13
Every day	7	16	20	2	1

From Table 36 we can see that the vast majority of participants (67% or 296 out of the 441 respondents) only read texts longer than 20 pages during holidays (182 respondents) or over weekends (114 respondents). Many students who read for pleasure nearly every day or every day only seem to be able to read longer texts during holidays or over weekends. Of those who read longer texts *nearly every day*, most do not read for pleasure more than once a week. This again could indicate that they are reading longer texts out of obligation, for academic purposes, and not because they enjoy it. It cannot be discerned from responses to this item alone whether participants are referring to obligatory academic reading or pleasure reading. However, as was mentioned in section 4.3, 41% of participants reported that they only read for pleasure during the holidays. Thus, those who read longer texts every day or very often probably do so for academic purposes.

5.4.3 The relationship between pleasure reading and negative reading attitudes

The analyst found statistically significant correlations between four ‘Negative’ items and participants’ pleasure reading habits. However, it should be kept in mind that ‘Negative’ items were reverse coded for the calculation of a total reading attitude score. In other words, what the following tables show is that positive reading attitudes correlate with pleasure reading, whereas negative reading attitudes correlate with the absence of reading for pleasure. Table 37

shows correlations between pleasure reading and Item 12 ("I would rather do nothing than read a book").

Table 37: The correlation of attitudes towards book reading and how often participants read for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
I would rather do nothing than read a book (Negative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	5	21	23	19	9
Disagree	13	91	68	19	3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	53	16	8	5
Agree	27	17	6	5	1
Strongly Agree	11	1	2	1	0

As shown in the table, most participants who *never* read for pleasure would rather do nothing than read a book (38 respondents, highlighted in red). This correlation is hardly surprising. It is perhaps discouraging to see that almost 40% (171 participants) of the cohort, the teachers of tomorrow, would rather do nothing than read a book (they chose *strongly agree* or *agree*, or were neutral). The strange responses of students who do read for pleasure but would rather do nothing than read a book may indicate that they do not like reading long texts in book format, rather than a general aversion to reading. These participants could also feel a kind of apathy towards reading. For example, they may dislike reading in general but are willing to read if they believe it will really benefit them, or if a good friend recommended a book highly enough.

Table 38 shows responses to Question 8 and Item 17 ("Reading English is boring"). Again, those who read for pleasure every day were most likely to *strongly disagree* with Item 17, and those who find reading English boring are likely to *never* read for pleasure.

Table 38: Correlating frequency of pleasure reading and finding reading English boring (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)?				
Reading English is boring. (Negative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	13	52	42	24	11
Disagree	26	96	68	25	6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	26	30	4	2	1
Agree	7	3	1	1	0
Strongly Agree	2	2	0	0	0

It is positive to see that only 18% of the cohort found reading English boring. The responses differ from those in Table 37, which shows a total of 39% of participants would potentially rather do nothing than read a book (chose *agree* or *strongly agree* or were neutral). The fact that there is an aversion to reading an English book amongst about 39% of the students, but that by far the majority of students do not find reading English boring (82%), suggests the aversion may be related to other factors such as difficulty comprehending English texts, or the length or amount of reading involved. Responses to the first open-ended question at the end of the survey indicate that struggles with vocabulary may be a significant factor, as well as reading comprehension issues. These are discussed in Chapter 6.

The next statistically significant correlation covers reading for pleasure and Item 22, “I avoid reading in English as much as possible”. The responses here closely resemble those in Table 38. Only 4% agreed they avoid reading in English, and 9% were neutral; thus, 13% in total are not enthusiastic about reading in English.

Table 39: Correlating attitudes towards reading English and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure?				
I avoid reading in English as much as possible. (Negative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	15	76	46	24	13
Disagree	29	87	60	25	4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19	11	8	1	1
Agree	10	7	0	1	0
Strongly Agree	1	1	0	0	0

A large majority (87%) of participants indicated they did not avoid reading in English, but this does not necessarily constitute an enthusiasm for reading for pleasure in English. Unsurprisingly, those who avoid reading in English were most likely to never read for pleasure or only read during holidays.

In addition to survey statements from the 'Negative' subscale, one item from the 'Anxiety' subscale was found to correlate significantly with pleasure reading. Table 40 shows correlations between responses to Items 8 and 27, which concerned academic reading fatigue, a phenomenon that can be caused by many factors including anxiety. Just under half of the respondents (45%) indicated that they did to some extent feel tired just thinking about academic reading. This could be related to participants' academic reading competence; a significant percentage mentioned struggles with vocabulary and reading comprehension in their responses to the open-ended questions (reported in Chapter 6). Such struggles could make academic reading particularly stressful and difficult, causing fatigue and anxiety, even in the case of students who do read for pleasure.

Table 40: Correlating academic reading fatigue/anxiety and reading for pleasure (p-value <0.001)

	How often do you read for pleasure?				
Just thinking about academic reading makes me tired (Negative)	Never	During holidays	Over weekends	Nearly every day	Every day
Strongly Disagree	8	14	19	8	4
Disagree	18	81	62	24	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17	54	23	10	7
Agree	24	29	6	8	1
Strongly Agree	7	4	4	1	1

From the data provided in Table 40, we can see that participants who read for pleasure *every day* or *nearly every day* tended to disagree with Item 27 (41 students), 17 were undecided and only 11 indicated they did associate academic reading with fatigue. It seems that those who read for pleasure may have more stamina or may be less overwhelmed by academic reading.

There were also significant correlations between the frequency of reading longer texts and aversion to book reading, and between reading frequency and participants' likelihood to find time to read English. However, they are not reported separately here as there is a logical relationship between these aspects. Instead, the researcher wished to focus on statistically significant correlations related to reading for pleasure and how extensive pleasurable reading is related to healthy reading habits. In the last two statistically significant Chi-square correlations, we examine the relationship between the enjoyment of literature classes and reading in English.

5.4.4 The relationship between enjoyment of literature classes and English reading attitudes

Participants who enjoyed their literature classes were more likely to find reading in English interesting (Table 41), or at least they did not find it boring, and were unlikely to avoid reading in English (Table 42).

Table 41: Correlating enjoyment of literature classes and finding reading English boring (p-value <0.001)

	Did you enjoy your high school English literature classes?	
Reading English is boring. (Negative)	No	Yes
Strongly Disagree	10	132
Disagree	22	199
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	50
Agree	6	6
Strongly Agree	0	4

Table 41 shows that of the 391 participants who enjoyed their high school literature classes (88% of the survey cohort), 331 did not find reading English boring (Item 9). A small percentage agreed that reading English is boring (only 16 respondents, which is under 4%). It could be that they are referring to the reading they do at university as boring. Perhaps their academic reading at university is not as exciting or engaging as their high school reading was.

The last table for this chapter shows that participants who enjoyed their high school literature classes were far less likely to avoid reading in English.

Table 42: Correlating avoiding reading English and enjoyment of high school English literature classes (p-value <0.001)

	Enjoyed English literature classes?	
I avoid reading in English as much as possible (Negative)	No	Yes
Strongly Disagree	7	167
Disagree	27	178
Neither Agree nor Disagree	11	29
Agree	6	12
Strongly Agree	0	2

This could also indicate that participants who were engaged and interested in their high school literature classes are more likely to read in English, since their literature classes gave them a foundation on which to build a positive reading attitude and more robust reading habits.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has thoroughly discussed statistically significant correlations between ERAS subscales, as well as correlations between responses to key survey questions and Likert-scale items. No subscales were negatively correlated, but there were positive correlations between the 'Conative' and 'Negative' subscales (around 0.7) which suggests that participants who do not enjoy reading are unlikely to have healthy reading habits. Also, curiously, there was no correlation found between the 'Cognitive' and 'Anxiety' subscales, indicating that reading anxiety may affect students regardless of their reading proficiency or their reading attitudes. Individual correlations between questions and items revealed the following insights.

Pearson correlations showed that participants who find reading English boring may choose to do nothing rather than read; also, participants who prefer not to read English even if the content is interesting are likely to avoid reading English at all. It seems that participants who do not find English very engaging to read are likely to have unhealthier reading habits. On the other hand, those who find English reading easy are more likely to have confidence when reading and to consider themselves good at reading. If engaged readers are more likely to develop healthy reading habits, then teachers should be taking steps to make their reading lessons as engaging and relevant to learners as possible. It is very important for pre-service teachers to be trained to use effective methodologies that reach their learners and enable them to connect with texts, literary and otherwise.

The cross-tabulation of nominal summaries with key survey questions using Chi-square tests showed that reading for pleasure is intricately connected to a number of factors. Importantly, the mode of reading showed a statistically significant correlation to participants' desire or intention to read. The analysis of data indicated a strong preference for reading printed texts as

opposed to digital ones, which perhaps supports the use of printed texts in the classroom. There was also a statistically significant correlation between reading for pleasure and the following aspects that reflect positive reading attitudes: reading a book recommended by a friend, intention to read a book on vacation, reading many more books in future, finding time for reading in English, and the intention to take out a library book if given access to a library. It seems that pleasure reading and positive attitudes towards reading may be an important factor to consider in education, since it is so correlated with a multitude of factors. Perhaps literature and language teachers should be taking stock of their learners' reading attitudes wherever possible, and designing lessons and activities that encourage healthy reading attitudes. Learners who have not had many fun or engaging reading experiences before high school, or even university, may yet be given the opportunity to develop more positive attitudes at any stage of their education if teachers are equipped to encourage them. Positive reading attitudes should be a focus in school literature classes, and perhaps even more so in training programs for language teachers, who will soon be setting an example for their learners.

Survey statements from the 'Negative' subscale showed a statistically significant correlation to pleasure reading as well. The following negative aspects were found to be correlated to the amount of pleasure reading: doing nothing rather than reading a book, finding reading in English boring, and avoiding reading in English. One item from the 'Anxiety' subscale was also found to have a statistically significant correlation with the frequency of pleasure reading: feeling tired just thinking about academic reading. This could contribute to a negative attitude towards reading in general, especially if students are not well equipped to read academic text. Pre-service teachers who displayed these negative reading attitudes were less likely to read for pleasure. It is particularly discouraging to see how many pre-service teachers hold negative attitudes towards reading – for example, almost 40% did not disagree that they would rather

do absolutely nothing than read (Item 12). It seems that there is a need to make reading interesting and enjoyable for learners at school if we are to successfully cultivate healthy and robust reading habits in them. Lastly, those pre-service teachers who enjoyed their literature classes in high school were less likely to find reading in English boring or to avoid reading in English, possibly because their literature classes gave them a foundation on which to build positive reading attitudes and healthy reading habits.

The next chapter provides an analysis of qualitative data gained from responses to the two open-ended questions added to the end of the ERAS.

Chapter 6: Thematic analysis of responses to open-ended survey items

6.1 Introduction

To complement the quantitative data provided by the Likert-scale survey statements, two open-ended questions were added at the end of the ERAS to give participants an opportunity to share their own ideas, opinions, or experiences concerning reading and the teaching of literature. The researcher was a facilitator of the module ENGE1608, and so she saw first-hand the pre-service teachers' struggles to understand different kinds of texts, including basic examples of poetry and short stories. There was very little knowledge of literary elements, and many students did not show an appreciation for literature. This prompted her to think about a possible connection between literature study at school and attitudes to reading. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions provides further insights and can assist in explaining and analysing the quantitative data. The researcher wished to triangulate the findings of the closed and open-ended survey questions with her own knowledge and observations based on informal discussions with students concerning their reading problems and struggles with English literature. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this research is exploratory with a view to conducting more focused research related to reading and literature teaching in separate studies in future.

The researcher added only two open-ended questions to avoid over-burdening participants. Also, time restraints prevented the researcher from analysing more data. Responses were coded manually based on commonly used phrases and clauses. These were organised into prominent themes, revealing several interesting trends. The researcher used inductive thematic analysis; in other words, no predetermined codes were generated. It should be noted that this process of analysis is inevitably influenced by the researcher herself; a different researcher may disagree

with her opinions or interpretations of the data. Nevertheless, some interesting insights can be gained from an analysis of the qualitative data.

6.2 Analysis of responses to first open-ended question

The first open-ended question asked participants to mention anything about reading that worries them. One overarching issue that became apparent during the categorisation process of both open-ended questions' responses was participants' clear struggles with writing in English. Spelling mistakes, incomplete sentences and confusing phrases were very common. Also, some responses seemed unrelated to the question, implying that the question was misunderstood. Given that reading ability is closely related to language and writing ability, participants' writing struggles could be seen as an indication of reading comprehension struggles as well. Because the survey was completed online, it is possible that students lacked computer skills, particularly typing skills, as well as a command of grammar.

Categorisation of responses to the first open-ended question revealed three concerns which were by far the most common: participants' struggles with reading comprehension (they often cannot understand what they have read), struggles with difficult vocabulary, and issues related to pronunciation, a surprising finding that needs further probing. Other issues mentioned were spelling, reading long texts or the length of texts, reading aloud in front of others, the amount of university reading, and reading speed. All of the concerns identified can be connected to the themes of fundamental language and literacy problems, possibly resulting from ineffective schooling, text-poor environments or lack of resources, and challenges related to reading or learning to read in a language which is not students' home language and finding suitable pedagogies for multilingual learners. The three major concerns are discussed below.

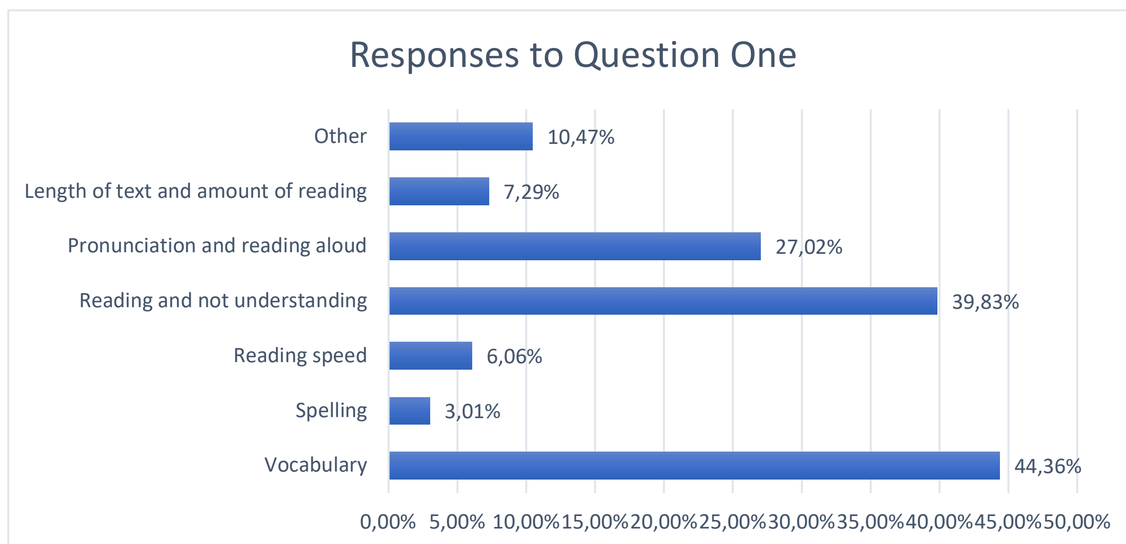


Figure 16: Reading concerns of survey participants

As evident in Figure 16, the most prominent issues identified in responses to question one are vocabulary, reading and not understanding, and reading aloud. The three less prominent concerns are length of text and amount of reading participants must do, reading speed, and spelling. 'Other' refers to any responses that were irrelevant or insignificant and includes responses that were unintelligible or missing. The response rate for this question was high; 429 (96%) participants responded.

The percentage (40%) of participants who are worried about reading comprehension is concerning. For example, one participant mentioned that he/she worries that "I won't understand what I am reading at all". Another stated that he/she worries "When I do not understand a word or the content of what I am reading". Not only might their reading comprehension issues cause anxiety and stress in their academic lives, but not understanding texts also compromises the quality of the education they are receiving at university. Pre-service teachers need to develop their knowledge and skills as much as possible during their training, to become effective and inspirational teachers who can impart positive reading attitudes and

empower learners in their future classrooms. If they themselves cannot read with full comprehension, they run the risk of losing out on much of their courses' content. Their experiences with reading may also be difficult and stressful, which does not adequately support the development of positive reading attitudes, and those attitudes could be passed on to their future learners.

A significant percentage (44%) of participants mentioned that difficult vocabulary or vocabulary issues worry them. Academic language proficiency is necessary for students to access academic content, and students' responses indicate that the academic vocabulary used in participants' lectures and texts is challenging for them to master. Strangely common was the mention of "bombastic words" – 6.5% of the cohort mentioned the phrase. Examples include: "Reading a story or text that has bombastic words which I don't understand and struggle to pronounce", and "Things that worry me when I am reading is I might not understand the text because of bombastic words on it". It is possible that the word 'bombastic' was used by their schoolteachers or in their lectures; this would explain why so many members of this cohort mentioned the specific phrase. If participants understood the word's meaning correctly, it may indicate that they feel the academic language standards at university are unnecessary or pretentious – inflated simply to sound more 'academic'. This has sometimes been a topic of conversation in the researchers' ENGE1608 classes; students feel that they are expected to understand, speak, and write in 'high' English, which sometimes makes them feel belittled. They can understand the concepts taught in class explained to them in simple terms, but the academic words used are confusing and, from their perspective, unnecessary.

The strong theme of vocabulary struggles suggests that vocabulary instruction at school was inadequate (possibly due to a lack of extensive reading, as well as ineffective instructional

practices). One participant expressed that "when there are a lot of words that I do not understand so much that I have to go google every now and then for word meaning", perhaps indicating added stress caused by the extra work he/she must do due to limited vocabulary knowledge. Another participant indicated a similar worry: "The text consisting of unfailiar [sic][5] words or that I am limited to time without fully understanding what I read. Accuracy ana fluency go hand in hand, time can limit these and me anxious". Pre-service teachers feel overwhelmed with the kind of vocabulary they are expected to understand and use at university. This can impact their ability to understand and engage with the learning content and could contribute to the development of more negative reading attitudes. As Nagy, Townsend, Lesaux and Schmitt (2015: 91) emphasise, words are tools, and academic language is taught and used "as [a] means for communicating and thinking about disciplinary content". It seems that educators need to pay more attention to the kinds of vocabulary they teach, and the way in which they teach it. Teachers and learners may confuse conversational proficiency in English with general or academic proficiency, leading them to neglect the development of their academic vocabulary. Based on the responses from the research cohort, learners are not equipped at school with the necessary vocabulary to engage precisely with challenging disciplinary content, or to thrive in an academic environment.

The third-most prominent concern was problems with pronunciation or reading aloud – 27% of participants mentioned pronunciation or reading aloud as something that worries them about reading. This could be connected to feelings of anxiety or embarrassment when reading aloud. For example, one participant wrote, "I often get anxious when I have to read English out aloud because I am scared that I am not pronouncing the words correctly." Participants' anxiety may also be related to the fact that most of them do not speak English as their first language. They

[5] Spelling and grammar errors in student responses have been quoted verbatim.

may feel unsure of their proficiency in English, which could contribute to feelings of anxiety when reading, especially when reading aloud. Such feelings may be especially acute when reading aloud because the student may expose literacy and language struggles to classmates and educators. It is possible that participants' attitudes towards reading in English would be very negatively affected by feelings of indignity or embarrassment, as well as anxiety, which are exacerbated when reading aloud. The survey statements in the 'Anxiety' subscale were amongst the items that had the lowest means, indicating considerable variation of responses. A substantial number of students (81%) agreed that reading made them anxious. This may explain why so many participants mentioned reading aloud and pronunciation as something which worries them about reading.

6.3 Analysis of responses to second open-ended question

The second open-ended question asked participants to mention anything about the teaching of literature in schools that they think is important. This question proved to be much more open to interpretation than the first open-ended question; participants interpreted the question in different ways, producing a wide variety of responses. It was informative to see what participants had to say, but these responses were much more difficult to categorise. As was the case with the first question, many responses were unintelligible (due to grammar problems or difficulty typing responses), vague, irrelevant, or incomplete. These responses were included in the 'other' category, along with missing responses. The response rate for this question was high as well; 410 participants (91%) responded. Several main ideas were prominent throughout. The following graph (Figure 17) illustrates the main topics mentioned.

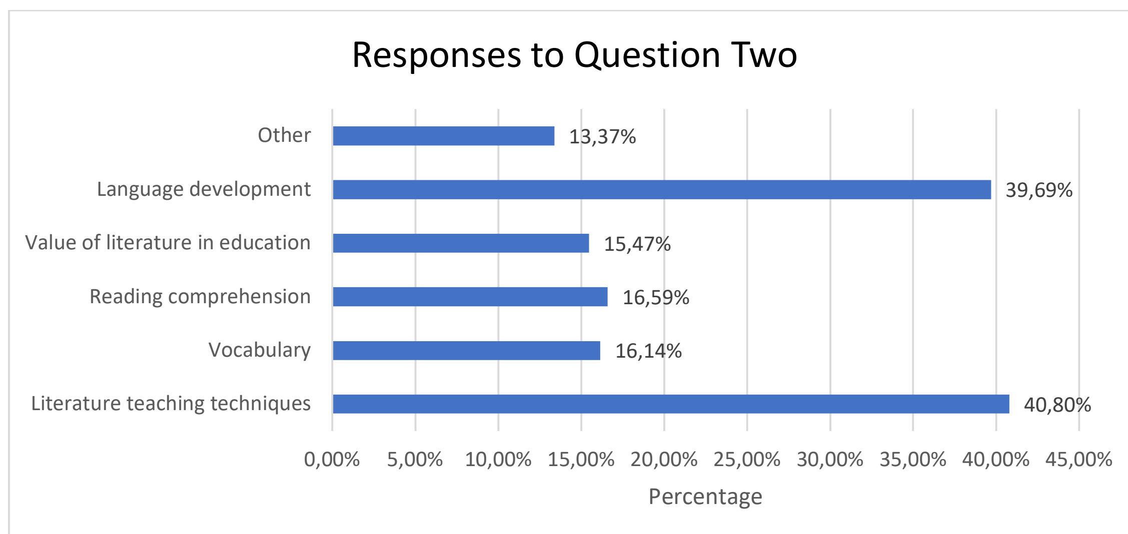


Figure 17: School-level literature instruction topics

As shown in Figure 17, five major topics emerged from participants' responses to question two: language development, the value of literature in education (in preparation for later life), reading comprehension, vocabulary, and literature teaching techniques. Two topics could have been merged – 'vocabulary' could have fallen under "language development" – but since 'vocabulary' was such a prominent concern in question one's responses, the researcher decided, for comparison purposes, to show separately the total responses to question two that mention vocabulary.

Vocabulary is clearly a concerning issue for this cohort; 16% of participants mentioned it in response to Question two, and 44% in response to Question 1. In Question 2's responses, participants stated either that vocabulary is an essential part of engaging with literature – simply stating 'vocabulary' or "English vocabulary" – or that literature is a useful tool with which to teach vocabulary – "the teaching of literature helps us understand the different phrases used in text and the writing styles and that helps to improve our English skills and enhancing our vocabulary". Many also stressed that teachers should explain vocabulary to learners to help

them understand what they are reading, such as the following response: “Learners must be taught everything about what they are reading. The teacher must make sure he or she explain words that learners find difficult so that they can understand what they are reading and what they are being taught. The teacher must try to summarise the literature before they can read it as a whole class”. This example also illustrates the two identified themes of fundamental language and literacy problems and complications of reading in an additional language without having developed the necessary skills, possibly as a result of ineffective pedagogical approaches. Participants’ focus on vocabulary is understandable, given the myriad language development hurdles that South African learners must clear during their schooling. These include a lack of educational resources, such as textbooks and libraries, ineffective teaching methods used in schools, and the fact that many are learning in a second language that they have not yet mastered (English). One hopes that the cohort’s expressed awareness of the importance of vocabulary may encourage them to make an extra effort to expand their own vocabulary and assist their future learners to expand theirs as much as possible. A love of reading, leading to an extensive reading habit, could help them to do so (Nation, 1997; West, 2017). However, participants may need support and encouragement to read extensively during their time as pre-service teachers. Those educators involved with their development as pre-service teachers may do well to focus on extensive reading and nurturing a love of reading in teacher-training programs.

Apart from the responses mentioning vocabulary, almost 40% of participants mentioned ideas connected to language development as important factors in the literature classroom. These included the development of reading skills and English language proficiency – “Students will learn new words and the meaning of the words. Studennts will also develop their writing and reading skills”. Other examples include, “It helps us expand our language awareness”, “I think

it is important to read English books (especially when you struggle with the language) to improve your vocabulary and grammar", and "Students then get used to English, they understand the language better if you teach them literature". Participants value literature for its ability to help develop language skills. This aligns with the high scores for the 'Cognitive' subscale in the Likert scale section; participants believe that literature is useful because it can help develop reading and writing skills in English. However, as has been established by research (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Rimensberger, 2014), a belief that reading is useful does not necessarily translate into a robust reading habit. Nonetheless, this belief may be a good foundation on which educators can begin to build reading habits.

Reading comprehension was also a recurring theme for Questions 1 and 2. Participants stressed that reading comprehension – understanding what one has read – is very important when engaging with literature, on the part of both learners and teachers. The prevalence of reading comprehension as a strong theme in the responses (40% mentioned it in response to Question 1 and 16% to Question 2) seems to cement the idea that many members of this cohort struggle with reading comprehension. Literature study may be a good tool with which to impart reading skills and strategies, which could help learners (and pre-service teachers) learn how to read with deeper understanding of the text.

Another prominent theme which emerged from the responses to question two was the role of literature study in the personal and professional development of students, as well as increasing their general and cultural knowledge. A substantial number of respondents agreed that literature is an important part of learners' education and personal development; 15% mentioned ideas that connect to the value of literature in the development of learners. Many mentioned that literature has broad, cultural value in education – that literature can teach general knowledge

and life lessons, open learners' minds, and inspire creativity. According to many respondents, studying literature can help learners to examine and develop their own value systems, develop critical thinking skills, and learn about people from different cultures. Others said it can help develop employable skills (such as clear focus) and prepare learners for university (by practising good note-taking skills and study methods). These skills are important for all learners, not just those destined to become teachers, but they are especially important for this cohort, since they may one day be responsible for imparting these skills to their learners. In this light, it is disheartening to see that only 15% commented on the inherent value of literature as part of learners' schooling. However, the question was phrased in such a way that the teaching of literature was foregrounded not necessarily the literature itself.

A large percentage of respondents (40%) commented on teaching methods that they think would be important for literature teachers to utilise. Most implored that teachers should move slowly through the content, offering learners ample support, leaving no learner behind, and checking that each learner understands the text as often as possible; "Always make sure your learners understand you and try to find out what are they really struggling with if they do not understand you, and you have to teach your learners everything step by step and make them feel free to ask any questions". Some seemed to feel that teachers should make it easy for learners by providing notes, summaries, and deep explanations of texts; "A teacher explaining and handing out notes on what the texts are about to give clarity to the students". This aligns with the undesirable rote-recitation teaching method used in some South African schools. In response to Question 5 (how they were taught literature at school), the majority of respondents (57%) answered that teachers read the text to them, explained what it was about, and then provided notes for learners to study for tests or exams. This approach pacifies the learner, and it seems that members of this cohort expect literature teachers to 'spoon-feed' as much content

as is necessary for learners to pass a specific test or examination. Perhaps this is to be expected, since most participants were taught this way (shown in responses to Question 5 of the demographic survey section, discussed in section 4.3). However, an approach which centres the voice of the learners and allows them to play a more active role may be better for developing critical thinking, engaging with the text, and relating to or enjoying the text more. It is possible that these participants will ‘spoon-feed’ their learners, perpetuating the cycle, but there is still the opportunity to equip them with effective teaching strategies during their training at university. A fourth theme can be identified from this section; the need for effective teaching strategies in the literature classroom.

Some participants did encourage a focus on the voice of the learner and mentioned techniques, such as “Having discussion with your group about text you’ve read” and allowing learners to first read for themselves, after which the teacher provides a thought-provoking explanation. A few mentioned the enjoyment of reading and literature, and the role of the teacher in igniting a love for literature in students through the passion and vibrancy of the teaching. One respondent stated, “I think it is important to teach literature in a way that interests the learners. That way, they get to see that reading can be a fun and enjoyable activity to do as well”. Only a handful mentioned teachers’ own reading habits – that teachers should read and have a love for reading themselves.

6.4 Conclusion

In summary, the responses to the open-ended questions suggest that participants are mainly concerned about their language abilities and reading comprehension skills, even though they indicated in the self-assessment scaled survey responses to Item 28 that their reading

comprehension grades at school were good. This may be causing anxiety and eroding students' confidence; especially given the amount and nature of the reading they do at university; the workload may be overwhelming. Participants value literature in the 'cognitive' sense, as shown in their responses to both the open-ended questions and Likert-scale items. However, very few show strong and healthy reading habit themselves, and they seem to expect a lot of help from educators. Cultivating autonomous reading habits and confidence in their language abilities may be very beneficial to participants.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

Through the exploration of pre-service teachers' reading attitudes and habits, this study has attempted to understand more deeply South Africa's reading literacy problems and the role of language educators in addressing literacy challenges. Language issues seem to be a significant factor in learners and students' literacy struggles; most South Africans do not speak English as their first language, but the dominant language of learning and teaching is English. Many learners and teachers are not adequately proficient to use English in educational settings, which limits academic progress from the outset (Taylor, 2014: 7). Specifically, learners' reading comprehension is hampered when they encounter too much unfamiliar vocabulary, or if they are not sufficiently prepared by their teachers to use effective reading comprehension strategies. These issues sorely need to be addressed, since reading ability has a great impact on academic performance, as well as learners' opportunities later in life. Ideally, the education system should be a powerful tool to interrupt poverty cycles, as posited by the Humanist and Social-Reformist curricular philosophies (Maley, 2012: 301) on which this study is premised. Sadly, South Africa's school education system is complicit in depriving citizens of literacy that can lead to gainful employment and opportunities for self-development.

The ability to read well is key to overcoming learning difficulties and disrupting the poverty cycle. If learners and students are to build and maintain healthy reading habits to support them in their lifelong learning journeys, they will also need a love and appreciation for reading. More investigation is needed to find ways to nurture an intrinsic love for reading. However, if teachers themselves manifest a love for reading and are better equipped to teach learners to

read well and enjoy reading, thereby cultivating in them strong reading attitudes and habits, there could be significant gains.

This investigation of reading attitudes and habits focused specifically on pre-service teachers because they represent a potentially ideal place to initiate change in the education cycle: former learners who are undergoing training as teachers who are expected to benefit future learners. The pre-service teachers' reading attitudes could be studied as a product of the current school system. In this way, useful insights could be gained on how schools are shaping reading attitudes and habits, with a view to determining how best to support robust reading attitudes and habits as part of formal teacher training. Though education issues are in sore need of solutions, it can be a mistake to design such solutions quickly without critically analysing specific problems endemic to this country. For this reason, the study was conducted within the pragmatic paradigm and used multiple approaches to probe more deeply the issue of reading attitudes and habits before attempting to make a number of recommendations. Based on the findings from this study, as well as insights gained from previous research, the following sections provide answers to the study's three main research questions.

7.2 Pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading English

As explained in Chapter 2, reading attitudes refer to the feelings that readers have toward reading, which cause them to respond to reading "in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner" (Mckenna *et al.,* 2012: 285).There is a contradiction between pre-service teachers' reading attitudes (many have positive attitudes towards reading and believe that it is beneficial) and their actual reading habits (many have not reported engaging in robust reading habits). It is clear from the survey responses that the participants in the study agreed on the academic and

pragmatic benefits of reading, but that their actual reading habits do not reflect their beliefs and they do not spend much time (if any) reading for pleasure.

The findings of this study indicate that the cohort's reading habits are much more efferent than aesthetic. The cohort seems not to focus on a love for reading and a regular reading habit for its own sake; rather, many of the pre-service teachers think of reading as a necessary obstacle that must be overcome to complete assignments and get their degrees. Although many mentioned the value of literature in education to acquire knowledge and develop language proficiency, very few participants mentioned the need for teachers to read often or have a love for reading. This is disturbing since literacy or literature teachers benefit from an aesthetic stance towards reading (Applegate *et al.,* 2014), along with an efferent attitude, and from regular pleasure reading habits (McKool & Gespass, 2009). Teachers who have strong pleasure reading habits are more likely to use "best practices" in the literature classroom (McKool & Gespass, 2009; Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Applegate *et al.,* 2014), and may be in a better position to encourage positive reading attitudes and enthusiasm in their learners (Nathanson *et al.*, 2008: 319). It is discouraging to find that so few participants in this study see reading as valuable for its own sake or maintain strong pleasure reading habits.

Of the respondents, 13% (55 participants) scored below 100 out of a possible 150 for their total reading attitude scores. These participants are likely to be deferent readers who do not like to read and avoid reading as much as possible, due to past negative reading experiences or possibly reading anxiety. They may numb themselves to the task and find it very unpleasant (Smith, 2012). Some participants' total reading attitude scores (discussed in section 4.5 of Chapter 4) were as low as 73; such low reading attitude scores indicate that these participants do not believe that reading is beneficial or enjoyable, nor do they engage in pleasure reading.

Negative reading attitudes are particularly concerning, since the pre-service teachers will soon be responsible for the development of young learners' reading attitudes in school classrooms. Though only a few had very low reading attitude scores, the mean response in the 'Anxiety' subscale was perhaps higher than desired for a cohort of future teachers (the total average for the 'Anxiety' subscale was 2,8 on a scale of 1 to 5). Again, to see such negative attitudes towards reading and a high prevalence of reading anxiety amongst this cohort is troubling and may indicate that efforts to improve reading attitudes at school level and in teacher training programs are necessary.

7.3 Kinds of reading in which pre-service teachers engage

Many participants in the study indicated positive intentions to engage in more reading as evident in the high average response rates of the scaled survey items. For example, they indicated a desire to read many English books in future, find time to read in English, read in the holidays, and an intention to take out English library books if given the chance. However, their desire to read does not necessarily mirror their reading habits. It seems that the cohort engages mainly in compulsory reading: most participants rarely read for pleasure (17% never read for pleasure, and 67% only during holidays or on weekends). Many respondents (71%) indicated that they read long texts quite often. However, since the majority indicated that they only read for pleasure during holidays or on weekends, we can assume that these long texts are related to their academic responsibilities and do not include pleasure reading texts. Almost 20% of participants indicated that they never read for pleasure, which is disturbingly high for a cohort that will soon be responsible for nurturing reading habits and attitudes in young learners. This lack of pleasure reading may have far-reaching consequences: reading for pleasure

correlated in a statistically significant way with many survey items whose focus ranged from reading habits to high school experiences in the literature classroom.

Interestingly, many participants (57%) indicated that book recommendations may be very good instigators for choosing to read a book, even if the reader does not have particularly strong reading habits. Perhaps this points to the idea that reading is both a solitary and social activity, and that bringing social aspects into the reading classroom may help build positive reading attitudes and deeper engagement with the text. Teachers should consider including more social reading activities, like book clubs and literature circles, in their language classrooms.

7.4 Underlying reasons for pre-service teachers' attitudes towards reading

The analysis of survey responses shows that although pre-service teachers expressed positive attitudes towards English reading, mainly because of its cognitive and academic benefits, they do not seem to find reading very interesting, and they have trouble relating to what they read. Their language abilities are perhaps not strong enough to maintain steady reading habits. In addition, participants' school experiences of English literature study seem to mirror the kind of rote learning described by Van der Walt and Evans (2019); the text is read to learners who are subsequently given specific notes and answers to study and reproduce in tests and exams. Few of the pre-service teachers were given the opportunity to express themselves and share their own views in their literature classes. Unfortunately, despite their belief that reading is important, it seems that the education system has not produced learners who have strong reading habits, good reading comprehension abilities, or a love for reading and literature.

An interesting finding of the study is that mode of reading influences reading attitudes and habits. According to the ERAS responses, and in alignment with other research (Jabr, 2013; Merga, 2014), participants do not necessarily prefer to use digital devices over printed ones, despite the convenience of digital technology. Many of the pre-service teachers (74%) still prefer the feel of printed books and seem to find it easier to navigate printed pages. It is possible that the amount of digital reading required of students at university causes more stress than we realize, which may impact their attitudes towards reading. When engaging with their digital learning content, students must overcome the extra layer of difficulty involved when navigating complex learning platforms, such as Blackboard and Google Scholar (with which first-year students may not be very familiar), as well as getting access to devices like smartphones or computers, and/or a stable internet connection. Teachers and the education community may jump at the chance to integrate modern techniques and technology into their lessons because they seem "intuitively appealing" (Merga, 2014: 27). However, responsible design principles in applied linguistics remind us that the efficacy of the solution is more important than its trendiness. If we wish to rebuild reading attitudes, it seems that digital reading may not be as effective as print reading. Also, it is possible that digital reading is not necessarily the best tool to facilitate the kind of abstract, complex thinking that is required for sophisticated literature study.

Apart from considerations of ideal modes of reading, we need to find innovative ways to cover the language curriculum while devoting time to literature. It is possible that students struggle with vocabulary and reading comprehension because the literature component of the language curriculum is not being covered adequately or appropriately. Effective methods of teaching literature include centring the voices of learners and including them in very practical activities that leave no learner behind and allow the teacher to become aware of any struggles before

learners fall too far behind. Such practical methods as the *RtL* (Rose, 2005; 2010) could help alleviate some of the anxiety students are experiencing. A focus on reading enjoyment may also be beneficial; participants who remembered enjoying their high school literature classes were much less likely to avoid reading in English. Reading for pleasure correlated in a statistically significant way with many other survey items, including the intention to read books on vacation or in the future, borrowing a library book if given the opportunity, reading a book recommended by a friend, and finding time to read English. Also, participants who read for pleasure were more likely to read longer texts often, which indicates that pleasure reading correlates with favourable reading behaviour. Thus, the data from the study show that pleasure reading and positive reading attitudes are potentially very important considerations in education, since they correlated with many factors.

Anxiety emerged as a factor that requires more exploration in reading research. Survey responses showed that anxiety influenced participants' attitudes towards reading; the total average for the 'Anxiety' subscale (the subscale has a mean of 2.834, as shown in Figure 10 in chapter 4) is higher than ideal for this particular cohort who will soon be impacting the reading attitudes of young learners. Participants' struggles with academic language may be a prominent cause of anxiety. Many reported vocabulary (44%) and reading comprehension (39%) as elements that worried them, and 81% of participants agreed that their academic reading makes them feel anxious. Furthermore, less than 20% of the cohort found reading in English to be boring, but almost 40% indicated an aversion to reading an English book. This suggests that their aversion is not due to boredom, but perhaps to factors such as poor reading comprehension. It seems that students are not comfortable using English in educational settings; this could cause them to feel overwhelmed and lost concerning the learning content of their modules, and it may cause them to avoid reading in English. As mentioned earlier, the

matter of multilingual pedagogies and incorporating other languages in classroom settings falls beyond the scope of this study. English remains a compulsory subject for all students in the BEd programs for Foundation and Intermediate Phase teaching at the UFS, where the study was conducted.

Reading anxiety may be an important focus area in future rounds of the ERAS. The findings of this study indicate that reading anxiety correlates with negative reading attitudes and that it can affect strong and weak readers. Learning more about anxiety could be beneficial to educators and students alike. Recommendations based on the core findings of the study are provided below.

7.5 Recommendations

The ERAS proved to be a useful tool to gauge the reading attitudes of participants and to learn about their reading habits. Some refinement of the ERAS can be done in future studies. There is a need to design separate reading attitude surveys for academic or educational reading, and extensive or pleasure reading. In addition, future rounds of the ERAS should include questions on parental or family influences on participants' reading habits, as well as more direct questions on reading habits. For example, participants could be asked whether they visit their local or university library, and whether they have borrowed a book to read for pleasure.

The results of this study, in the researcher's opinion, indicate that a focus on enjoyment of reading in the literature classroom may help learners to build positive reading attitudes and habits. This has implications for teacher training programs, since pre-service teachers will soon have the opportunity to either replicate or interrupt the vicious cycle resulting in the "Peter

Effect" (Applegate & Applegate, 2004). In schools and at universities, learner-centred teaching approaches such as Maley's (2012) appropriation model, the *RtL* method (Rose, 2005; 2010), and principles suggested by Van der Walt and Evans (2019) can be useful tools for educators who want to involve learners personally in the texts they read. This can encourage knowledge generation rather than knowledge replication through rote learning. Students would be able to engage deeply with a text and make it their own, centring their voices and relating narratives to their personal lives, making reading more relevant personally. Consideration should therefore be given to foregrounding the role of literature in school language education. This would help to establish healthy reading attitudes and habits and provide a basis for developing all four language skills in an integrated manner. Not only would this facilitate greater coverage of the language curriculum, but reading literacy would be firmly supported. This kind of teaching approach could be highly beneficial, but it may be difficult to implement for inexperienced or under-trained teachers.

Currently, literacy teachers in South Africa are not fully equipped with the theoretical and methodological knowledge to teach reading comprehension strategies to their learners (Mudzielwana, Joubert, Phatudi & Hartell, 2012; Taylor, 2014; Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016). Pre-service teachers also need to be afforded the opportunity to engage with literature themselves during their training, to learn how literature can be taught effectively and to build their own reading skills, and encourage positive reading attitudes and habits that can then be passed on to their students. Designers of teacher-training modules need to pay attention to the development of their students' reading skills, attitudes, and habits, and should incorporate the study of pedagogical approaches that equip pre-service teachers with the necessary theory and techniques that they can use to teach literacy and literature effectively.

Lastly, current teachers should be aware that their reading attitudes have an impact on those of their learners, and they would do well to keep their learners' reading attitudes in mind when structuring lessons and activities. Teachers should take cognisance of their own reading habits and, wherever possible, share their experiences and book recommendations with their students. They could also consider using social reading activities in the classroom, such as literature circles and book clubs, as mentioned previously. This could be the key to igniting an interest in reading. Schools that wish to centre reading engagement and learner motivation in their classes would do well to consider the reading habits and attitudes of prospective teachers as part of their selection process. Teachers can use surveys like the ERAS to learn more about the existing reading attitudes of their learners, opening a dialogue between learners and teachers and further engaging learners in their reading lessons.

7.6 Closing remarks

Applegate *et al.* (2014: 199) suggest that "the need for a national vision for what it means to be a literate citizen has never been more acute". As was mentioned in Chapter 1, it is largely the responsibility of the Department of Basic Education to define such a vision and implement the necessary policy to create an education system that produces literate citizens. This will take time, especially since the current education system is not successfully achieving this goal. Sadly, due to a lack of resources, ill-equipped teachers, and a myriad of other factors, many South African learners are left behind early in their school careers without having learned the basic skills necessary to achieve their academic goals. If we want to disrupt the "intergenerational cycle of poverty" (Spaull, 2015: 34), we need a language and literature curriculum that will benefit learners with strong literacy, communication, and critical thinking skills. Teachers need to be equipped with tools and techniques to teach literature in decolonial,

inclusive, and engaging ways. This kind of literature study can help develop reading, research, and critical thinking skills that open new opportunities for learners and students. To facilitate such learning, the literacy education community must strive to develop not only basic reading skills in our learners and students, but also a love for reading which can form the foundation for robust, long-term reading habits.

The failures of the education system as it stands may seem insurmountable. However, methods like the *RtL* prove that a significant impact can be made in a relatively short amount of time if teachers are adequately equipped, and learners are willing. In the researchers' own experience, despite the challenges they face, pre-service teachers want nothing more than to better their world and make a positive impact in the lives of their future learners. They understand their responsibility and if given the tools and the confidence, they will go on to reach greater heights than many of us thought possible, and empower their learners to do the same.

Bibliography

Ahmad, I., Al-Shboul, M., Nordin, M., Rahman, Z., Burhan, M. & Madarsha, K. (2013). The potential sources of foreign language reading anxiety in a Jordanian EFL context: a theoretical framework, *English Language Teaching*, 6(11): 89-110. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p89 [Accessed: 01 June 2022]

Akbari, H., Ghonsooly, B., Ghazanfari, M. & Shahriari, H. (2017). Attitude toward reading: L1 or L2 or both. *SAGE Open*, 7(3): 3-8. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017717303 [Accessed: 22 May 2023]

Anderson, C., Sangster, P., Foley, Y. & Crichton, H. (2016). *How are we training our mainstream teachers to meet the needs of EAL learners? The case of two University Schools of Education in Scotland.* EAL Nexus, British Council. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311510262 [Accessed: 10 December 2022]

Anderson, R. C., Wilson, P. T., & Fielding, L. G. (1988). Growth in reading and how children spend their time outside of school. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23(3): 285–303. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/748043 [Accessed: 15 January 2023]

Applegate, A., Applegate, M., Mercantini, M., McGeehan, C., Cobb, J., DeBoy, J., Modla, V. & Lewinski, K. (2014). The Peter Effect revisited: reading habits and attitudes of college students, *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 53(3): 188-204. DOI: 10.1080/19388071.2014.898719 [Accessed: 17 November 2022]

Applegate, A.J. & Applegate, M.D. (2004). The Peter Effect: reading habits and attitudes of pre-service teachers, *The Reading Teacher,* 57(6): 554–563. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290841345 [Accessed: 13 June 2022]

Baruthram, S. (2012). Making a case for the teaching of reading across the curriculum in higher education. *South African Journal of Education,* 32(2): 205-214. DOI: 10.15700/saje.v32n2a557 [Accessed: 18 July 2022]

Benevides, T. & Peterson, S. (2010). Literacy attitudes, habits and achievements of future teachers, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 36(3): 291-302. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232938695 [Accessed: 24 July 2022]

Bhattacherjee, A. (2019). Social science research: Principles, methods and practices. Revised edition. Queensland: University of Southern Queensland.

Box, G. E., & Watson, G. S. (1962). Robustness to non-normality of regression tests, *Biometrika*, 49(1-2): 93-106. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2333470 [Accessed: 20 February 2023]

Braithwaite, J. (1999). Does it matter what I think? An exploration of teachers' constructions of literacy and their classroom practices. Paper presented at the European

Conference on Educational Research, Lahti, Finland, September 22–25. Available at: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED458603 [Accessed 19 July 2022]

Brown, J. D. (2001). *Using surveys in language programs.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burns, A. & Richards, J. (2012). *Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Chaplin, M. (1982). Rosenblatt revisited: the transaction between reader and text. *International Literacy Association and Wiley*. 26(2): 150-154. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40029246 [Accessed: 10 September 2023]

Chow, B. W. Y., McBride-Chang, C., & Cheung, H. (2010). Parent–child reading in English as a second language: Effects on language and literacy development of Chinese kindergarteners. *Journal of Research in Reading*. 33(3): 284-301. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2009.01414.x [Accessed: 27 July 2022]

Cimmiyotti, C. B. (2013). *Impact of reading ability on academic performance at the primary level* (Master's theses and Capstone projects. Paper 127). Dominican University, River Forest, IL. Available at: https://scholar.dominican.edu/masters-theses/127/ [Accessed: 30 July 2022]

Clark, C. (2010). Linking school libraries and literacy: Young people's reading habits and attitudes to their school library, and an exploration of the relationship between school library use and school attainment. *National Literacy Trust*. Available at: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED513438 [Accessed: 24 June 2022]

Clark, L.A. & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological Assessment*, 7(3): 309-319. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1037/1040-3590.7.3.309 [Accessed: 09 August 2022]

Coiro, J. (2003). Reading comprehension on the Internet: Expanding our understanding of reading comprehension to encompass new literacies. *The Reading Teacher*, 56(5): 458-464. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279558304 [Accessed: 05 January 2023]

Coté, N., Goldman, S. R., & Saul, F. U. (1998). Students making sense of informational text: Relations between processing and representation. *Discourse Processes*. 25(1): 1-53. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01638539809545019 [Accessed: 28 August 2022]

Creswell, J.W. & Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Cullinan, B. E. (2000). Independent reading and school achievement. *Research Journal of the American Association of School Librarians*, 3: 1-24. Available at: https://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol3/SLMR_IndependentReading_V3.pdf [Accessed: 29 August 2022]

Cummins, J. (1979). Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research*, 49(2): 222–251. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1169960 [Accessed: 24 October 2022]

Cummins, J. (1980). Psychological assessment of immigrant children: Logic or intuition? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1: 97-111. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.1980.9994005 [Accessed 27 May 2023]

Cummins, J. (1989). Language and literacy acquisition in bilingual contexts. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 10:17-31. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.1989.9994360 [Accessed 11 April 2023]

Cummins, J. (2005). Teaching for cross-language transfer in dual language education: Possibilities and pitfalls. Paper presented at the TESOL, Universidad BogaziciTurquía, Estambul, 23rd September 2005. Pp. 1–18

De Reuck, C. (2014). *UFS Postgraduate PULP*. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State. Available at: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider40/all-documents/pulp-november-2015-1440-eng.pdf?sfvrsn=0 [Accessed: 14 April 2023]

Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) & the National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS) (2014). The Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter. 7th edition. Available at: http://www.dac.gov.za/sites/default/files/Final%20draft_%20LIS%20Transformation%20Charter.pdf [Accessed: 24 January 2023]

Department of Basic Education (2011a). *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Grades 10-12 English First additional language*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education. Available at: https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/National%20Curriculum%20Statements%20and%20Vocational/CAPS%20FET%20_%20FAL%20_%20ENGLISH%20GR%2010-12%20_%20WEB_65DC.pdf?ver=2015-01-27-155227-827 [Accessed: 12 January 2023]

Department of Basic Education (2011b). *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Grades 10-12 English Home Language.* Pretoria: Department of Basic Education. Available at: https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/caps-grades-10-12-english-home-language [Accessed: 12 January 2023]

Department of Basic Education (2021). *National Education Infrastructure Management System Report as at 12 April 2021.* [Online]. Available at:

https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/NEIMS%20STANDARD%20REPORT%202021.pdf [Accessed 21 November 2022].

DoE (Department of Education). (1997). Language-in-education policy 14 July 1997. Published in terms of section 3(4)(m) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996). Government Gazette, 18546: 19 December 1997

Dörnyei, Z. and Csizer, K. (1998). Ten commandments for motivating language learners: Results of an empirical study. *Language Teaching Research* 2(3): 203-229. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249870250 [Accessed: 24 November 2021]

Du Plessis, C. L. (2012). Facing up to literacy: Perceptions and performance in a test of academic literacy for postgraduate students. *Journal for Language Teaching= Ijenali Yekufundzisa Lulwimi= Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, *46*(2): 123-139. Available at: https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jlt/article/view/90161 [Accessed: 25 October 2022]

Du Plessis, C. L. (2017). *Developing a theoretical rationale for the attainment of greater equivalence of standard in the Grade 12 Home Language exit-level examinations*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State. Available at: https://scholar.ufs.ac.za/handle/11660/6421 [Accessed: 29 October 2022]

Gajdusek, L. (1988). Toward wider use of literature in ESL: Why and how. *TESOL Quarterly.* 22(2): 227-257. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/3586935 [Accessed: 14 September 2022]

Grabe, W. (2010). 'Applied linguistics: a twenty-first-century discipline', in Robert B. Kaplan (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics*, 2nd edn, Oxford Handbooks (online edn, Oxford Academic, published 18 Sept. 2012). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195384253.013.0002 [Accessed: 27 October 2022]

Graddol, D. (2006). *English next*. London: British Council.

Greaney, V. (1980). Factors related to amount and type of leisure reading. *Reading Research Quarterly* 15: 337–57. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/747419 [Accessed: 17 September 2022]

Greene, J. P. (1997). A meta-analysis of the Rossell and Baker review of bilingual education research. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 21(2/3). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.1997.10668656 [Accessed: 23 March 2022]

Grussendorf, S., Booyse, C & Burroughs, E. (2014) *What's in the CAPS package? A comparative study of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS): FET Phase.* Umalusi: Pretoria. Available at: https://www.umalusi.org.za/docs/reports/2014/overview_comparitive_analysis.pdf [Accessed: 18 January 2023]

Guttman, L. (1945). A basis for analyzing test-retest reliability. *Psychometrika*, 10 (4): 255–282. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF02288892 [Accessed: 27 May 2023]

Hall, C.J., Smith, P.H. & Wicaksono, R. (2011). *Mapping applied linguistics: A guide for students and practitioners*. New York: Routledge.

Howie, S., Van Staden, S., Tshele, M., Dowse, C. & Zimmerman, L. (2012). *PIRLS 2011: South African children's reading literacy achievement*. Centre for Evaluation and Pretoria: Assessment. Available at: https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/65996 [Accessed: 19 June 2023]

Howie, S.J., Combrinck, C., Roux, K., Tshele, M., Mokoena, G.M. & McLeod Palane, N. (2017a). *PIRLS Literacy 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2016: South African children's reading literacy achievement*. Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332727267 [Accessed: 27 March 2023]

Howie, S.J., Combrinck, C., Roux, K., Tshele, M., Mokoena, G.M., & McLeod Palane, N. (2017b). *PIRLS LITERACY 2016: South African Highlights Report*. Pretoria: Centre for Evaluation and Assessment. Available at: https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/66185 [Accessed: 27 March 2023]

Hugo, A. & Nieman, M. (2010). Using English as a second language as the language of instruction: Concerns and needs of primary school teachers in South Africa. *Journal for Language Teaching/Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig,* 44(1): 59-69. Available at: https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jlt/article/view/71781/0 [Accessed: 24 May 2023]

Icen, M. (2020). A study of reliability and validity for citizenship knowledge and skill scale. *International Journal of Assessment Tools in Education*, 7(4): 715-734. Available at: https://doi.org/10.21449/ijate.747745 [Accessed: 22 November 2022]

IEA TIMSS & PIRLS. (2023). *PIRLS 2021 International Results in Reading.* Available at: https://pirls2021.org/results/achievement/overall [Accessed: 17 May 2023]

Izaks, J. (2015). *A Study of the effects of an undergraduate vocabulary programme on vocabulary development and academic literacy.* University of South Africa (Unisa), Pretoria, South Africa. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10500/19204 [Accessed: 27 May 2023]

Jabr, F. (2013) Why the brain prefers paper. *Scientific American*, 309(5): 48-53. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26018148 [Accessed: 14 April 2022]

Kachru, B. (1992). The other tongue: English across cultures. University of Illinois Press: Urbana and Chicago.

Kaufman, G. & Flanagan, M. (2016). High-low split: Divergent cognitive construal levels triggered by digital and non-digital platforms. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.* Association for Computing Machinery: New York, pp. 2773-2777. Available at: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/2858036.2858550 [Accessed: 23 September 2022]

Kaushik, V. & Walsh, C. (2019). Pragmatism as a research Paradigm and its implications for social work research. *Social Sciences*. 8(9):255. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8090255 [Accessed: 10 September 2023]

Kent State University Libraries. (2023). *SPSS tutorials: Descriptive stats for one numeric variable.* Available at: https://libguides.library.kent.edu/SPSS/Explore [Accessed: 13 April 2023]

Kintsch, W. (1998). *Comprehension: A paradigm for cognition*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Kintsch, W. (2018). 'Revisiting the construction—integration model of text comprehension and its implications for instruction'. In Alvermann, D. E., Unrau, N. J., Sailors, M. & Ruddel, R. B. (eds). *Theoretical Models and Processes of Literacy.* 7: 178-203 Routledge. Available at: https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315110592-12 [Accessed: 27 May 2023]

Kramsch, C. (1993). Context and culture in language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kutu, A., Nzimande, N. & Grace, N. (2020). Availability of educational resources and student academic performances in South Africa. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*. 8: 3768-3781. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343452455 [Accessed: 25 September 2022]

Law, J., Charlton, J., McKean, C., Beyer, F., Fernandez-Garcia, C., Mashayekhi, A. & Rush, R. (2018). *Parent-child reading to improve language development and school readiness: A systematic review and meta-analysis.* England: Newcastle University. Available at: https://test-eresearch.qmu.ac.uk/handle/20.500.12289/9062 [Accessed: 27 June 2022]

Lee, J. & Schallert, D. (2014). Literate actions, reading attitudes, and reading achievement: Interconnections across languages for adolescent learners of English in Korea. *The Modern Language Journal*, 98(2): 553-573 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262418150 [Accessed: 06 July 2022]

Lewis, C.S. (1961). *An experiment in criticism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lumley, T., Diehr, P., Emerson, S., & Chen, L. (2002). The importance of the normality assumption in large public health data sets. *Annual review of public health*, 23(1): 151-169. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11454445 [Accessed: 24 February 2023]

Maley, A. (2012). Literature in language teaching. In Alsagoff, L., McKay, S. L., Hu, G. & Renandya, W.A. (eds) *Principles and practices for teaching English as an international language*. New York: Routledge. Pp. 305-323.

Mancini, A. L., Monfardini, C., & Pasqua, S. (2017). Is a good example the best sermon? Children's imitation of parental reading. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 15(3): 965-993. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-015-9287-8 [Accessed: 16 July 2022]

Mataka, T. W., Mukurunge, T., & Bhila, T. (2020). Investigating the role of reading to learn pedagogy to improve reading for comprehension in a senior phase class through scaffolding: a literacy acceleration action research case study in a grade 8 English first additional language (FAL) class in rural South Africa. *International Journal of All Research Writings*. 1(12): 84-92. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343987598 [Accessed: 21 January 2021

Mataka, T.W. (2017). *Language and literacy development for a Grade 10 English first additional language classroom: A Reading to Learn case study.* Unpublished MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/10962/249 [Accessed: 21 January 2021]

Mathewson, G. C. (1994). 'Model of attitude influence upon reading and learning to read.' In R. B. Ruddel, M. R. Ruddel, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association. pp. 1131-1161

Mckenna, M. C, Conradi, K., Lawrence, C., Jang, B. G. K Meyer, J. P. (2012). Reading attitudes of middle school students: results of a U.S. Survey. *Reading Research Quarterly,* 47(3): 283-306. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/43497521 [Accessed: 29 May 2023]

McKirdy, P. (2021). Do primary school libraries affect teenagers' attitudes towards leisure reading? *IFLA Journal*, 47(4): 520–530. DOI: 10.1177/0340035220983359 [Accessed: 02 May 2023]

McKool, S. & Gespass, S. (2009). Does Johnny's reading teacher love to read? How teachers' personal reading habits affect instructional practices. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48(3): 264-276. DOI: 10.1080/19388070802443700 [Accessed: 13 May 2022]

McLeod, S. (2023). 'Research hypothesis: Definition, types, & examples.' *Simply Psychology.* March 6. Available at: https://simplypsychology.org/what-is-a-hypotheses.html [Accessed: 03 April 2023]

McRae, J. (1991). *Literature with a small 'l'*. London: Macmillan.

Meiklejohn, C., Westaway, L., Westaway, A. & Long, K. (2021). A review of South African primary school literacy interventions from 2005 to 2020. *South African Journal of Childhood Education.* 11(1): No page numbers. Available at: http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2223-76822021000100028 [Accessed: 04 January 2023]

Merga, M. K. (2014). Are teenagers really keen digital readers?: adolescent engagement in eBook reading and the relevance of paper books today. *English in Australia*, 49(1): 27-37. Available at: https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/aeipt.203262 [Accessed: 23 March 2023]

Merisuo-Storm, T. (2006). Girls and boys like to read and write different texts. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*. 50(2): 111-125 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228344227 [Accessed: 12 March 2022]

Mishra P., Pandey C.M., Singh U., Gupta A., Sahu C & Keshri A. (2019). Descriptive statistics and normality tests for statistical data. *Ann Card Anaesth*. 22(1): 67-72. Available at: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30648682/ [Accessed: 07 May 2023]

Morrison, T. G., Jacobs, J., & Swinyard, W. R. (1999). Do teachers who read personally use recommended practices in their classrooms? *Reading Research and Instruction*, 38: 81–100. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19388079909558280 [Accessed: 03 June 2022]

Mudzielwana, N. P., Joubert, I., Phatudi N. C. & Hartell, C. G. (2012). Teaching reading comprehension to Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners. *Journal of Educational Studies.* 11(1): 67-84. Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC159890 [Accessed: 23 June 2022]

Mullan, K. (2010). Families that read: A time-diary analysis of young people's and parents' reading. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 33(4): 414-430. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230345841 [Accessed: 26 July 2022]

Nagy, W., Townsend, D., Lesaux, N. & Schmitt, N. (2012). Words as tools: Learning academic vocabulary as language acquisition, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 47(1): 91–108. Available at: https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/RRQ.011 [Accessed: 10 August 2022]

Nathanson, S., Pruslow, J. & Levitt, R. (2008). The reading habits and literacy attitudes of in-service and prospective teachers: Results of a questionnaire survey, *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol 59(4): 313-321. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487108321685 [Accessed: 08 January 2022]

Nation, P. (1997). The language learning benefits of extensive reading. *The Language Teacher.* 21(5): 13-16 Available at: https://openaccess.wgtn.ac.nz/articles/journal_contribution/The_language_learning_benefits_of_extensive_reading/12560378/1 [Accessed: 05 August 2022]

National Centre for Education Statistics (2023). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study.* Available at: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/ [Accessed 14 January 2023]

Nelson, L.R. (2021). Computing alpha and omega reliability estimates. Working paper. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348928307 [Accessed: 07 February 2023]

Nguyen, T. (2019). Selection of research paradigms in English language teaching: Personal reflections and future directions, *KnE Social Sciences*, 1–19. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334846589 [Accessed: 19 March 2022]

Nortje, M. J. (2017). The effect of poverty on education. *Educor Multidisciplinary Journal*. 1: 47-62. Available at: https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC-d872bb67d [Accessed: 04 September 2022]

Nyarko, K., Kugbey, N., Kofi, C. C., Cole, Y. A., & Adentwi, K. I. (2018). English reading proficiency and academic performance among lower primary school children in Ghana. *SAGE Open*, 8(3): no page numbers. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018797019 [Accessed: 12 July 2022]

Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS Survival Manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS.* 4th edition. Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill.

Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS Survival Manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS* (7th ed.). Routledge: London.

Paltridge, B. & Phakiti, A. (2010). *Companion to Research Methods in Applied Linguistics.* Continuum: London

Pardede, P. (2019). Print vs digital reading comprehension in EFL. *Journal of English Teaching*, 5(2): 77-90. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.33541/jet.v5i2.1059 [Accessed: 14 January 2023]

Pearson, P. D., & Cervetti, G. N. (2013). 'The psychology and pedagogy of reading processes'. In W. Reynolds, & G. Miller, (Eds.), *Educational Psychology*, V.VII, of *Handbook of Psychology* (2nd Ed) New York: John Wiley & Sons. Pp. 507-554.

Peters, G. (2014). The alpha and the omega of scale reliability and validity: Why and how to abandon Cronbach's alpha and the route towards more comprehensive assessment of scale quality. *The European Health Psychologist*, 16 (2): 54–67. Available at: https://www.ehps.net/ehp/index.php/contents/article/view/ehp.v16.i2.p56 [Accessed: 06 February 2023]

Pretorius E.J. (2002). Reading ability and academic performance in South Africa: Are we fiddling while Rome is burning? *Language Matters*, 33(1): 179-208. Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC59668 [Accessed: 10 July 2022]

Pretorius, E. J. & Klapwijk, N. M. (2016). Reading comprehension in South African schools: Are teachers getting it, and getting it right? *Per Linguam.* 32(1): 1-20. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5785/32-1-627 [Accessed: 15 July 2022]

Pretorius, E. J. & Mampuru, D. M. (2007). Playing football without a ball: language, reading and academic performance in a high-poverty school. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 30(1): 38-58. Available at: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1467-9817.2006.00333.x?casa_token=zNP2OGud8L8AAAAA%3AvIoqbmMiXf0ioVpU0Z93ieMvFcflfke5rQzXWRKzPCPCP7k95KxojaY0fOK8_3jAbRsufHtF_6v_YCxCrQ [Accessed: 12 July 2022]

Pretorius, E. J. (2019). Getting it right from the start: early reading instruction in African languages. In Spaull, N. & Comings, J. (eds.) (2019). *Improving Early Literacy Outcomes*. (pp. 63-80). Brill. Available at: https://brill.com/display/book/edcoll/9789004402379/front-4.xml [Accessed: 06 July 2022]

Pretorius, E. J., & Currin, S. (2010). Do the rich get richer and the poor poorer?: The effects of an intervention programme on reading in the home and school language in a high poverty multilingual context. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30(1): 67-76. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.06.001 [Accessed: 09 January 2022]

Pretorius, E. J., & Spaull, N. (2016). Exploring relationships between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension amongst English second language readers in South Africa. *Reading and Writing*, 29(7): 1449-1471. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-016-9645-9 [Accessed: 05 August 2022]

Pretorius, E., Jackson, M.J., McKay, V., Murray, S. and Spaull, N. (2016). Teaching reading (and writing) in the foundation phase: A concept note. Stellenbosch: Research on Socio-Economic Policy, University of Stellenbosch and Zenex Foundation. Available at: https://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/RESEPp_Zenex-Teaching-ReadingWriting_Email.pdf [Accessed: 25 September 2022]

R Core Team (2022). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. Available at: https://www.R-project.org/. [Accessed: 16 March 2023]

Ramsey, J. (2002). Hell's Bibliophiles: The fifth way of looking at an aliterate. *Change*. 34 (1): 50–56. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00091380209601835 [Accessed: 23 April 2022]

Renandya, W. A. (2007). The power of extensive reading. *RELC Journal*, 38(2): 133–149. https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688207079578 [Accessed: 05 August 2022]

Revelle, W. & Zinbarg, R.E. (2009). Coefficients alpha, beta, omega, and the GLB: Comments on Sijtsma. *Psychometrika*, 74(1): 145-154. Available at: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11336-008-9102-z [Accessed: 12 March 2023]

Revelle, W. (2023). Using R and the *psych* package to find *ω*. Northwestern University: Department of Psychology. Available at: https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/psychTools/vignettes/omega.pdf] [Accessed: 14 August 2023]

Rimensberger, N. (2014). Reading is very important, but…: Taking stock of South African student teachers' reading habits, *Reading & Writing,* 5(1): 1-9. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307845228 [Accessed: 11 January 2023]

Robertson, S. A. & Graven, M. (2020). A mathematics teacher's response to a dilemma: 'I'm supposed to teach them in English but they don't understand'. *South African Journal of Childhood Education,* 10(1): 1-11. Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1f97833534 [Accessed 01 June 2023]

Rose, D. (2005). Democratising the classroom: A literacy pedagogy for the new generation. *Journal of Education.* 37(1): 131-167. Available at: https://hdl.handle.net/10520/AJA0259479X_158 [Accessed: 26 May 2022]

Rose, D. (2010). 'Beating educational inequality with an integrated reading pedagogy'. In F. Christie and A. Simpson (eds.) *Literacy and Social Responsibility: Multiple Perspectives*. London: Equinox. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323549957 [Accessed: 26 May 2022]

Rosenblatt, L. (1985). Viewpoints: Transaction versus interaction - a terminological rescue operation. *Research in the Teaching of English,* 19(1): 96-107. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40171006 [Accessed: 27 May 2023]

Rosenblatt, L. (1986). The aesthetic transaction. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education,* 20(4): 122-128. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3332615 [Accessed: 28 May 2023]

Rule, P. & Land, S. (2017). Finding the plot in South African reading education, *Reading & Writing* 8(1): 1-8. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319323408 [Accessed: 17 February 2022]

Sealey, A. & Carter, B. (2004). *Applied linguistics as social science.* New York: Continuum.

Singer Trakhman, L. M. & Alexander, P. A. (2017). Reading across mediums: Effects of reading digital and print texts on comprehension and calibration, *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 85(1): 155-172. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297716778 [Accessed: 30 October 2022]

Slavin, R. E., & Cheung, A. (2004). How do English language learners learn to read? *Educational leadership: journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, N.E.A.* 61(6): 52-57. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/246389232 [Accessed: 05 June 2022]

Smith, C. H. (2012). Interrogating texts: From Deferent to efferent and aesthetic reading. *Journal of Basic Writing.* 31(1): 59-79. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279567895 [Accessed: 27 September 2022]

Sparks R. L., Patton J., Ganschow L., Humbach N. & Javorsky J. (2008). Early first-language reading and spelling skills predict later second-language reading and spelling skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(1): 162-174. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232452250 [Accessed: 15 July 2022]

Spaull, N. & Pretorius, E. (2019). 'Still falling at the first hurdle: Early grade reading outcomes in South Africa'. In Spaull, N. & Jansen, J. (eds): *South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequality: A study of the present situation and future possibilities*. Switzerland: Springer. (pp. 147-168). Available at: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-18811-5 [Accessed: 23 June 2022]

Spaull, N. (2015). 'Schooling in South Africa: How low-quality education becomes a poverty trap.' In A. de Lannoy, S. Swartz., L. Lake, & C. Smith (Eds.), *The South African Child Gauge* (pp. 34-41). University of Cape Town: Children's Institute. Available at: https://ci.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/content_migration/health_uct_ac_za/533/files/Child_Gauge_2015-Schooling.pdf [Accessed: 20 April 2023]

Spaull, N. (2019). 'Equity: A price too high to pay?' in N. Spaull, N. & Jansen J. D. (eds.) *South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequality: a study of the present situation and future possibilities* 10, Switzerland: Springer. pp. 1-24. Available at: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-18811-5 [Accessed: 28 May 2023]

Spaull, N., Pretorius, E. & Mohohlwane, N., (2020). Investigating the comprehension iceberg: Developing empirical benchmarks for early-grade reading in agglutinating African languages, *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 10(1): 1-14 Available at: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1251176 [Accessed: 21 August 2022]

Taylor, N. (2014). *Initial teacher education research project: An examination of aspects of initial teacher education curricula at five higher education institutions. Summary report.* Johannesburg: JET Education Services. Available at: https://www.jet.org.za/resources/taylor-iterp-summary-report-on-component-1-feb15web.pdf [Accessed: 02 September 2022]

Taylor, N. (2019). Inequalities in teacher knowledge in South Africa. In Spaull, N. & Jansen, J. (eds) *South African Schooling: The Enigma of Inequality: a study of the present situation and future possibilities*. Switzerland: Springer. Pp. 263-282 Available at: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-18811-5 [Accessed: 25 May 2023]

Tercanlioglu, L. (2001). Pre-service teachers as readers and future teachers of EFL reading. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language.* Available at: https://tesl-ej.org/wordpress/issues/volume5/ej19/ej19a2/ [Accessed: 15 July 2022]

Thompson, A. (1997). Political pragmatism and educational inquiry. In *Philosophy of Education*. Edited by Frank Margonis. Urbana: Philosophy of Education Society, pp. 425–34.

Tran, T. (2012). A review of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's theory of foreign language anxiety and the challenges to the theory. *English Language Teaching*, 5(1): 69-75. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269851526 [Accessed: 22 July 2022]

Van der Walt, C. & Evans, R. (2019). *Learn 2 Teach: English language in a multilingual context.* 5th Edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Van Dijk, T.A. & Kintsch, W. (1983). *Strategies of discourse comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.

Van Staden, A. (2011). Put reading first: Positive effects of direct instruction and scaffolding for ESL learners struggling with reading. *Perspectives in Education.* 29(4): 10-21. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286169561 [Accessed: 09 March 2022]

Wästlund, H., Reinikka, H., Norlander, T. & Archer, T. (2005). Effects of VDT and paper presentation on consumption and production of information: Psychological and physiological factors, *Computers in Human Behavior* 21(2): 377-394. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563204000202 [Accessed: 12 January 2023]

Weideman, A. (2017). *Responsible design in applied linguistics: Theory and practice*. Springer Publishing International. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308033365 [Accessed: 24 June 2022]

West, J. (2017). Incidental vocabulary acquisition as student performance determinant in undergraduate research modules. *Journal of Education and Training Studies.* 5(10): 177-187. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319907829 [Accessed: 17 August 2022]

Whitten, S., Labby, S., & Sullivan, S. (2016) The impact of pleasure reading on academic success. *The Journal of Multidisciplinary Graduate Research* 2(4): 48-64. Available at: https://www.shsu.edu/academics/education/journal-of-multidisciplinary-graduate-research/documents/2016/WhittenJournalFinal.pdf [Accessed: 13 September 2023]

Wigfield, A., & Guthrie, J.T. (1997). Relations of children's motivation for reading to the amount and breadth of their reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89(3): 420-432. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232540100 [Accessed: 22 October 2022]

Willig, A. C. (1985). A meta-analysis of selected studies on the effectiveness of bilingual education. *Review of Educational Research*, 55(3): 269–317. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/1170389 [Accessed: 05 September 2022]

Yamashita, J. (2004). Reading attitudes in L1 and L2, and their influence on L2 extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language.* 16(1): 1-19. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/239934894 [Accessed: 24 April 2022]

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (2005). *Best practice: Today's standards for teaching & learning in America's schools*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Zimbarg, R., Yovel, I., Revelle, W. & McDonald, R. (2006). Estimating generalizability to a latent variable common to all of a scale's indicators: A comparison of estimators for ωh. *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 30(2): 121-144. DOI: 10.1177/0146621605278814.

Annexure A: L2 Reading attitude survey (Akbari *et al.*, 2017: 3-5)

For each item the students indicated the extent to which they agreed with the statement (1=not at all true of me; 5=completely true of me).

Anxiety
I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read.
I feel anxious if I don't know all the words in reading passages.
I feel overwhelmed whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.
Cognitive
I can acquire English vocabulary if I read English.
Reading English is useful to get a good job in the future.
I can acquire broad knowledge if I read English.
I can develop my English writing ability if I read English.
Reading English is useful to get a good grade in class.
I can improve my sensitivity to the English language if I read English.
I can become more knowledgeable if I read English.
I can develop my English reading ability if I read English.
I get to know different values if I read English.
Conative
If someone tells me that he or she likes an English book very much, I am going to read it too.
During my vacation I want to read at least one English book.
I like to read English books in my spare time.
I try to find time for reading in English.
I sometimes visit English websites and read them on the Internet.
I want to read many English books in the future.
I go to a library to borrow or read English books.
Negative
If I do not understand content in reading, I skip the part.
Reading English is dull.
I want to avoid reading in English as much as possible.
I feel tired if I read English.
I do not want to read in English even if the content is interesting.
Reading English is troublesome
When I read in English, I find it difficult to concentrate.
I don't mind even if I cannot understand the book content entirely.
Self-assessment
I am good at reading in English.
My grades for English reading tests at middle school are very good.
I feel confident when I am reading in English.

Annexure B: The English Reading Attitude Survey

Section A: Language Background and Contextual Information	
Question 1	At what level did you learn English at school? • First additional language • Home Language
Question 2	Which of the following kinds of English texts did you study in Grade 12? (Enter all that apply.) • Novels • Short Stories • Plays • Poems
Question 3	Did you have access to a school library with books to read? • No • Yes
Question 4	Did you enjoy your high school English literature classes? • No • Yes
Question 5	Select the statement that best describes how you were taught literature in class in high school. • My teacher asked us to read the literature after school on our own, but we had class discussions based on the texts. • My teacher introduced the text and concepts, then let us work in groups, gave us a literature passage to read and questions that we had to answer on our own. • My teacher read the texts to us in class, taught us what the texts were about, and then gave us notes that we had to learn for tests and exams. • My teacher used a workbook with notes on the stories that we had to study and exercises that we had to do. We used the workbook in class. • None of the above.
Question 6	Select the statement that applies most of all to you. • I like listening to audio recordings more than reading. • I prefer reading from printed texts and books rather than digital devices. • Reading on a digital device is my favourite way to read.
Question 7	How often do you read a text that is longer than 20 pages? • Less than once a week • About once a week • Nearly every day • Every day
Question 8	How often do you read for pleasure (just for fun)? • Never • During holidays • Over weekends • Nearly every day • Every day

Section B: Likert-scale statements						
Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Statement 9	I get nervous when I have to read academic texts on a digital device.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 10	I can learn more English vocabulary if I read English.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 11	If someone tells me that they like an English book very much, I will read it too.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 12	I would rather do nothing than read a book.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 13	I am good at reading in English.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 14	I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read in my coursework.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 15	Reading English is useful to get a good job in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 16	During my vacation I want to read at least one English book.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 17	Reading English is boring.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 18	I am comfortable with my reading speed.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 19	I feel anxious if I don't know all the words in reading passages.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 20	I can increase my knowledge if I read English.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 21	I try to find time for reading in English.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 22	I avoid reading in English as much as possible.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 23	I can figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words by reading the rest of the sentence or paragraph.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 24	When I read in English, I find it difficult to concentrate.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 25	I can improve my English writing ability if I do English reading.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 26	I often visit English websites and read on the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 27	Just thinking about academic reading makes me tired.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 28	My grades for English reading comprehension at school were good.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 29	I feel overwhelmed whenever I see a whole page of English in front of me.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 30	Reading helps me to learn different points of view on matters.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 31	If I could go to a library, I would definitely take out English books to read.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 32	I do not want to read in English, even if the content is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 33	I feel confident when I am reading in English.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 34	I feel anxious about the amount of academic reading I have to do at university.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 35	Reading English is useful to get a good grade in class.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 36	I want to read many English books in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 37	I like to skip sections that I do not understand when reading English.	1	2	3	4	5
Statement 38	Reading English is easy.	1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Open-ended questions	
Question 39	Mention anything about reading that worries you.
Question 40	Mention anything about the teaching of literature at school that you think is important.

Annexure C: Consent form (POPIA ACT)

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

DATE

1 April 2022

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Exploring reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers responsible for early literacy development

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Elani Boshoff *2013045170* *0826612222*

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Humanities Faculty
English Department

STUDY LEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Dr. Colleen Du Plessis
051 401 3286

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of the study is to learn about the reading attitudes and habits of first-year pre-service teachers enrolled in the BEd Foundation and Intermediate Phase degree programmes at the UFS. The study also seeks to uncover possible underlying causes of negative and unhealthy reading attitudes and to explore relationships between variables.

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

The researcher, Elani Boshoff, is employed as a Learning Facilitator at the University of the Free State. She is doing this research as part of her Master's degree.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2021/1715/22

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Rylaan, Park West/Parkwes, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid-Afrika
P.O. Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid-Afrika, T: +27(0)51 401 9111, www.ufs.ac.za

The study includes students enrolled in the ENGE1608 module at the UFS (a language module taken by all students registered in the BEd programme for Foundation and Intermediate Phase teaching). The module covers both mastery of English language skills and principles of teaching young learners to read, which makes this cohort particularly relevant for the purposes of this study. Results will be used for research purposes only, and will have no impact on your studies. The researcher hopes that 500 participants will complete the survey.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

Participants will complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to explore the reading attitudes of the participants, and what kinds of factors may have influenced their attitudes towards reading. The questionnaire should not take more than 30 minutes to complete.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation. Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. You will not be asked to provide any personal or identifiable information. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. However, once you have submitted your questionnaire, it will not be possible to withdraw the questionnaire.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

This research benefits all stakeholders involved in education, particularly those interested or involved in literacy education. The body of research surrounding teachers' reading habits and attitudes, as well as their impact on teachers' and students' success in the reading classroom, is limited. Thus, this contribution to the body of knowledge is very valuable. Pre-service teachers benefit from this research by being made more aware of the impact their personal reading attitudes and habits have on their success in the literacy classroom.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

As mentioned previously, the questionnaire will take some time to complete (about 30 minutes). Participants will not be asked to provide any identifying information, and so the risk that may come from others identifying the person's participation in the research is extremely low. While completing the questionnaire, some questions could possibly elicit an emotional reaction or cause some discomfort. If necessary, please contact UFS counselling services at +27 51 401 2853 or email them at scd@ufs.ac.za.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All responses will remain confidential; your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research

reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your data will be used for research purposes only, and the researchers who have access to the data (Elani Boshoff and Dr. Du Plessis) will not share any of your personal or identifiable information with anyone. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the external researchers assisting with data processing (statistics or Mathematics Department), and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, e.g. research report, journal articles, conference presentation, etc. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. There is no penalty for refusing to take part in the study, and you can stop filling in the questionnaire and exit the page at any time. However, the questionnaire cannot be withdrawn once you have submitted it.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

The researcher does not expect to print hard copies of questionnaires. If hard copies do need to be printed, they will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in the English Department for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. If necessary, the information will be destroyed by a shredder or burned; electronic copies will be deleted.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICPATING IN THIS STUDY?

Participants will not receive any payment or incentives for participating in this study, apart from the opportunity to contribute to an important body of research.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Elani Boshoff at elani.boshoff94@gmail.com. The findings will be accessible from January 2024. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please feel free to do so using the aforementioned email address. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact her supervisor; Dr C. Du Plessis at duplessiscl@ufs.ac.za or 051 401 3286. Some questions could possibly elicit an emotional reaction or cause some discomfort. If necessary, please contact UFS counselling services at +27 51 401 2853 or email them at scd@ufs.ac.za.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Annexure D: Ethics approval

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

29-Mar-2022

Dear Miss Elani Boshoff

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Exploring reading attitudes and habits of pre-service teachers responsible for early literacy development.

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2021/1715/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Adri du Plessis
Digitally signed by Dr Adri du Plessis
Date: 2022.03.29 16:16:36 +02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401 9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za