EVALUATION OF A STRUCTURED PHONICS PROGRAMME TO ASSIST WITH READING ACQUISITION IN GRADE 1 ENGLISH SUBMERSION CLASSROOMS

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

In the subject

CURRICULUM STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my husband, Gerhard, and our two children. Thank you for supporting me throughout this journey. Gerhard, thank you for always supporting me in my studies in any way you could. Your support and selflessness are the reason that I could complete it to the end. To my children, it feels like you have grown up too fast in the time it took me to complete this study. You had to give up a lot of quality time with me. Please know that it was for a good cause. Thank you for always understanding when Mommy had to work and for all the hugs that you gave me and the coffee that you made me. You are my world, and I will love you forever.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Riaan and Betsie. Thank you for always supporting me, not only in academic matters, but in all areas of life. Mom, you taught me to read and fostered a love for reading in me before I even went to school. The passion that I have for reading and teaching reading is because of the countless stories you read to me as a child and the numerous trips we made to the library. You made reading exciting for me.

Thanks, Mom and Dad for all the words of encouragement and for being genuinely interested in my study. You always told me that I am strong and raised me to confidently pursue any areas of interest that I might have. I am forever grateful for the privilege to call you my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my thesis promotor. Prof. Anne-Mari Dicker and co-promotor Dr. Julie Shantone Rubbi Nunan for their unstinted support in the completion of this study. Thank you for all your guidance, support, patience, and motivation throughout this study.

I would also like to thank the experts who were involved in this research project. Thanks to all the teachers who dedicated their time and effort to participate in the study. Thanks to each and every Grade 1 learner who participated in the study. It was a privilege to meet each one of you.

Finally, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my family for providing me with abundant support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them.

DECLARATION

Student number: 352 88 66 3

I, Annalize Gouws, hereby declare that this thesis *Evaluation of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms* is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I have committed myself to avoid plagiarism on every level of my research and have fully cited every source that I used, including books, articles, internet sources, and images.

29 August 2023

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SIGNATURE **DATE**

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics intervention programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms. The intervention programme included a teacher's guide as well as a phonetic reading book to assist learners in English on Grade 1 level. These learners have a different mother tongue than English and are referred to as English language learners (ELLs). The research further investigated teacher perspectives on the effectiveness of the CAPS for English Home Language in relation to reading acquisition.
The study adopted an intervention mixed method research approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected in three phases: Data gathering methods included interviews, a quasi-experiment, and a questionnaire. A total of 219 participants were involved in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for the interviews and questionnaires while cluster sampling was used to identify the participants for the quasi-experiment to provide data. The participants were selected from three schools situated in different socio-economic areas in Mpumalanga, South Africa. The conceptual framework of the study expounded the concept of English submersion classrooms and evaluated the current curriculum followed by ELLs in regard to reading acquisition.

Three theories also underpinned the study: The social cognitive theory guided the psychological perspective, the complex dynamic systems theory guided the linguistic perspective while the componential model of reading guided the educational perspective of the study. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data while a software programme called SAS JMP (version 16) was used to analyse the quantitative data of the study.

The findings of the study indicate that a structured phonics programme may be beneficial to assist ELLs with reading. The programme may also assist Grade 1 teachers in teaching Grade 1 learners how to read in English submersion classrooms. The research contributes a suggested phonics programme to be used in English submersion classrooms. This study is significant in that it contributes a model to consider when revising the curriculum to accommodate ELLs. The strucutured phonics programme is

highly relevant for policy makers and curriculum designers to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

Keywords: curriculum and assessment policy statement, English submersion classrooms, Grade 1, phonics, reading acquisition, second language learning, structured phonics programme

ABSTRACT IN AFRIKAANS

Die doel van die navorsing was om die effektiwiteit van ’n gestruktureerde fonetiese intervensie leesprogram in Graad 1 klasse met slegs Engels as voertaal te ondersoek. Die intervensieprogram het ’n onderwysersgids en ’n fonetiese leesboek ingesluit om leerders wat vanaf Graad 1 in Engels skoolgaan, te ondersteun. Hierdie leerders het ’n ander moedertaal as Engels en word deur die loop van die studie na verwys as Engelse taalleerders.

Die navorser het verder die onderwysers se perspektief ten opsigte van die effektiwiteit van die Engels-huistaal kurrikulum en assesseringsbeleid ondersoek, aangesien dit die kurrikulum is wat deur Engelse taalleerders gevolg word. Die studie het ’n gemengde intervensiemetode gebruik om kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe data te versamel. Data is in drie fases versamel, naamlik by wyse van onderhoude, ’n kwasi-eksperiment en ’n vraelys. Die studie het ’n totaal van 219 deelnemers betrek. Die navorser het gebruikgemaak van doelgerigte steekproefneming vir die onderhoude en die vraelys, terwyl sy van bondel-steekproefneming gebruikgemaak het vir die kwasi-eksperiment. Die deelnemers is gekies uit drie skole van verskillende sosio-ekonomiese gebiede in Mpumalanga. Die konseptuele basis van die studie bevat ’n bespreking oor klaskamers met slegs Engels as voertaal, asook ’n evaluasie van die huidige kurrikulum wat die leerders volg.

Die drie teorieë wat in die studie gebruik is, is die sosiale kognitiewe teorie wat die sielkundige perspektief van die studie gevorm het, die kompleks-dinamiese sisteemteorie wat die taalkundige perspektief gevorm het en die “komponent model tot lees” wat die opvoedkundige perspektief beskryf het. Temas is gebruik om die kwalitatiewe data te analiseer en ’n sagtewareprogram (SAS JMP – weergawe 16) is gebruik om die kwantitatiewe data te analiseer.

Die bevindinge van die studie toon aan dat ’n gestruktureerde fonetiese leesprogram wel Engelse taalleerders kan help om die taal beter te lees. Die program kan ook Graad 1 onderwysers help met die onderrig van lees in die klaskamer waar slegs Engels as voertaal gebruik word. Die navorsing lewer ’n bydrae deur ’n gestruktureerde fonetiese leesprogram voor te stel wat deur Engelse taalleerders in Graad 1 gebruik kan word, wat in lyn is met die huidige kurrikulum wat gevolg word deur die leerders.

Die studie se relevansie lê daarin dat dit ’n model voorstel wat deur kurrikulum-ontwerpers benut kan word met die oog op Engelse taalleerders in Graad 1. Die gestruktureerde fonetiese leesprogram is uiters relevant vir kurrikulumontwerpers, aangesien dit Engelse taalleerders kan help om Engels te begin lees in Graad 1.

Sleutelwoorde: Engelse klaskamers, tweedetaal leerders, Graad 1, aanvangslees, gestruktureerde fonetiese program, kurrikulum- en assesseringsbeleidverklaring, fonetika

ABSTRACT IN ISIZULU

Inhloso yocwaningo bekuwukuhlola ukusebenza kahle kohlelo lokungenelela lwemisindo oluhlelekile ukusiza ngokutholakala kokufunda egumbini lokufundela lokuhlalisa isiNgisi ebangeni lokuqala (1). Uhlelo lokungenelela lubandakanya umhlahlandlela kathisha kanye nencwadi yokufunda imisindo ukusiza abafundi abafunda ngesiNgisi kusukela ebangeni lokuqala (1). Laba bafundi banolimi lokuzalwa oluhlukile kunesiNgisi futhi babizwa ngokuthi ngabafundi bolimi lwesiNgisi (ELLs). Uhlelo lokungenelela lwethulwe umncwaningi ngemuva kokuthola ukuthi izinsiza ezikhona ezinikezwa othisha azanele ukufundisa ama-ELL ukufunda. Umncwaningi uphinde waphenya ngemibono yothisha ngokusebenza ngempumelelo kwe-CAPS yolimi lwasekhaya lwesiNgisi maqondana nokutholakala kokufunda, njengoba lolu wuhlelo lwezifundo olulandelwayo ezindlini zokufundela zesiNgisi. Ucwaningo lwamukele indlela yokungenelela yocwaningo lwezindlela ezixubile ukuze kuqoqwe ulwazi olusezingeni kanye nenani. Ulwazi luqoqwe ngezigaba ezintathu. Izindlela zokuqoqa ulwazi zazihlanganisa izingxoxo, i-quasi-experiment, kanye nohlu lwemibuzo. Bangu-219 sebebonke ababambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo. Kwasetshenziswa isampula elihlosiwe ukuze kukhethwe ababambiqhaza benhlolokhono kanye nohlu lwemibuzo, kube sekusetshenziswa ukusampula kweqoqo ukuhlonza abazobambabiqhaza ukuze kuhlinzekwe ulwazi lwe-quasi-experiment. Abahlanganyeli bakhethwe ezikoleni ezintathu ezisezindaweni ezihlukene zenhlalo-mnotho esifundazweni saseMpumalanga, eNingizimu Afrika. Uhlaka lomqondo wocwaningo luchaze umqondo wamagumbi okufundisa isiNgisi kwabafundi okungelona ulimi lwebele, futhi lwahlola nenqubo yezemfundo yamanje elandelwa ngabafundi bolimi lwesiNgisi mayelana nekhono lokufunda ukufunda ulimi. Lezindlela zemicabango ezintathu nazo zisekela ucwaningo. Izindlela zemicabango yokuqonda komphakathi iqondise umbono ngokwengqondo, imicabango yezinhlelo eziguqukayo eyinkimbinkimbi yaqondisa umbono wolimi kanye nemodeli yengxenye yokufunda (CMR) yaqondisa umbono wocwaningo lwezemfundo. Ukuhlaziywa kwethematic kusetshenziswe ukuhlaziya ulwazi lwezinga kanye nohlelo lwesofthiwe (software) olubizwa nge-(SAS- JMP) lwasetshenziswa ukuhlaziya ulwazi lobuningi locwaningo. Okutholwe ocwaningweni kubonisa ukuthi uhlelo ehlelekile lokufundisa imisindo lungaba usizo ukusiza ama-ELLs ngokufunda. Lolu hlelo lungasiza nothisha beBanga lokuqala ekufundiseni abafundi ukufunda. Ucwaningo lunikela isiphakamiso sokuthi

uhlelo lwemisindo oluhambisana nekharikhulamu elandelwa abenza i-ELL, okuwuhlelo lokufunda nokufundisa lolwlimi lwasekhaya lwesiNgisi. Ocwaningweni olwethuliwe kuyabonakala ukuthi ayikho imiyalelo ekhethekile noma imihlahlandlela okumele ilandelwe kuCAPS yolimi lwasekhaya lwesiNgisi lapho kufundiswa ama-ELLs. Lolu cwaningo lubalulekile ngoba lunikela ngemodeli okufanele icatshangelwe lapho kubuyekezwa uhlelo lokufunda nokufundisa ukuze kuhambisane nabafundi bolimi lwesiNgisi phecelezi ama-ELLs. Uhlelo lwemisindo ehlelekile luhambisana kakhulu nabenzi bezinqubomgomo nabaklami bohlelo lwezifundo ukuze basize ekutholeni ukufunda emagumbini okufundela esiNgisi ebanga lokuqala. Izifundo ezengeziwe kufanele zibheke ukufaneleka kwezinto zokufunda ezinikezwe kwamanye amabanga esigabeni eyisesekelo.

Amagama ayisihluthulelo: CAPS, ebangeni lokuqala (1), kokufunda, imisindo

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CDST	Complex Dynamic Systems Theory
CMR	Componential Model of Reading
CT	Complex theory
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DST	Dynamic system theory
EA	Educator's Assistant
ELL	English Language Learner
LiEP	Language in Education Policy
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
SCT	Social Cognitive Learning Theory
SLL	Second Language Learning
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
WPM	Words per Minute

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Reading is a necessary skill in today's information driven society (Kim, 2020). It is an important skill for success in school as well as later in life (Rohde, 2015). The term "language" can be described as the tool learners use to help them organise experiences and thoughts (DBE, 2010). Being able to communicate in English as a language can be beneficial to learners to gain access to education, to get better chances of employment and to promote social functioning (Enever & Lindgren, 2017; Taylor & Coetzee, 2013).

Up to the end of 2023, formal learning has started in Grade 1 in South Africa (DBE, 2011). From 2024 formal learning will start in Grade R (Parliament, 2023). At the beginning of each year, Grade 1 learners are enrolled at schools all over South Africa to start their journey with education. Since formal learning starts in Grade 1, this is also the year that reading acquisition takes place. It is a particularly important year for these learners as foundational skills in reading in the early years are essential for later schooling. It was found that if certain foundational skills in literacy are not acquired early on, they might not be acquired at all (Hwa, Kaffenberger, & Silberstein, 2020).

Reading may appear to be a skill that comes naturally to learners, but it is in most cases a complex task. Learning to read does not occur naturally for all children as mostly in the case of the spoken word (Grabe & Stoller, 2020; Tønnessen & Uppstad, 2015). Most children learn to speak without many complications, but reading is a more complex process that can be a challenge for some (Little & Akin-Little, 2014; Rastle, 2018).

A country's educational system is often judged by how well learners can read and comprehend what they read (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016). South Africa's participation in cross-national assessments was found to be the weakest among the middle- and low-income African countries (Spaull, 2013). Reports on South Africa's reading achieve-

ment in the Progress in International Reading Literacy study (PIRLS) documented results in the reading skills of our country's learners: The results of the 2016 assessment indicated that 78% of Grade 4 learners in South Africa have reading skills that are below the benchmark when given a standardised text (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Hooper, 2017; Pretorius & Spaull, 2016; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). The PIRLS assessment was conducted in the Grade 4 year of the learners and in all the South African languages.

In comparison to other countries, 78% of South African Grade 4 learners cannot read with comprehension compared to Iran (35%), Chile (13%), and the United Kingdom (3%) (Mullis *et al*., 2017). In South Africa, reading is poor in African languages, Afrikaans, and English (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016). Since reading is often an indicator of the quality of a country's educational system, the abovementioned data reveal that South Africa has much room for improvement (Biesman-Simons, Dixon, Pretorius, & Reed, 2020; Mullis *et al*., 2017; Pretorius & Spaull, 2016;).

In 2021 the PIRLS indicated that 81% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning in any language. This means that recent statistics show that South Africa's reading performance decreased in comparison to 78% of learners who could not read for meaning in 2016. Only 19% of Grade 4 learners in South African schools could read for meaning in any language in 2021 (Mullis, von Davier, Foy, Fishbein, Reynolds & Wry, 2023).

Most schools in South Africa offer mother-tongue instruction in the first three grades of school and then a transition to the second language (English) as the language of learning and teaching in the fourth grade (*early exit* model). In the *late exit* transition models, the transition occurs after about six to eight years of schooling (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013). In contrast, some schools use the learners' second language (English) as the language of learning and teaching from the first grade (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013).

In South Africa, there are English medium schools that teach by using English as the only language of instruction from Grade R onward (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013). Young learners are enrolled in these English medium schools by their parents (Manten, Le Roux, Geertsema, & Graham, 2020). Parents often insist that schools offer English as the only medium of instruction from as early as Grade 1 (Hoadley, 2016). English is

regarded as a global language that creates opportunities for learners (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Hinkel, 2016). This is a fairly accurate notion as Taylor and Coetzee (2013:2) narrate: “Using a traditional earnings function methodology controlling for an individual’s amount of education, they find a significant wage premium for black South Africans associated with being able to read and write English fluently”.

These English medium schools follow the model of an English submersion approach which means that learners are educated in English only with no exposure to their respective mother tongues (Hall, 2016; Taylor & Coetzee, 2013). Many of the learners attending these English medium schools have a different mother tongue than English and can be referred to as English language learners (ELLs) (Garcia, 2012; Zacarian & Hayne, 2012).

Although there has been a lot of support for, and research done in South Africa on learners learning to read in their home language in the first three years of schooling (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022; Taylor, Cilliers, Prinsloo, Fleisch, & Reddy, 2017), there is limited support for learners learning to read in a second language (like English) in the Foundation Phase (Govender & Hugo, 2018).

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English Home Language is the current curriculum implemented by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for learners who are only learning through the medium of English (DBE, 2016). Not all schools teach in the mother tongue of the learners that are enrolled in the school, but rather have one or more languages offered on the home language level (DBE, 2016).

This means that the term “home language” does not necessarily refer to a language that a learner speaks at home but more to a certain level of proficiency as is clear from the following statement: “The labels Home Language and First Additional Language refer to the proficiency levels at which the language is offered and not the mother tongue like (Home) or acquired (as in the additional languages) language” (DBE, 2016: 12). This means that many ELLs in South Africa follow a curriculum that is on a home language level of proficiency, although the learners have an African language as a mother tongue.

Since the teachers that are teaching ELLs have to follow the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) curriculum it can be argued that it needs to be comprehensive as well as offer support to teachers on how to teach reading to ELLs. The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) does not discuss the issue of learners enrolled in English submersion classes (Govender & Hugo, 2018). Language forms the foundation for listening and speaking, reading, and writing and is important for curriculum planners to make provision for these issues (Govender & Hugo, 2018).

The DBE developed workbooks that are in line with the CAPS document for home language (DBE, 2011) in an attempt to equip teachers better with the necessary resources to teach reading and other foundational skills (DBE, 2012). The workbooks form part of the Department of Education's strategy to improve learner performance and energise both the schools and the public to focus on core foundational skills (DBE, 2012).

The English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019) was written according to the requirements of the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) and meets a great need in schools, being a resource for learning (DBE, 2012; DBE, 2017).

Research done on early reading intervention shows significance if a structured programme is used in accordance with cooperative learning and phonics-focused professional development (Biggart, Kerr, O'Hare, & Connolly, 2013; Rohde, 2015). Research in reading acquisition indicates that explicit, systematic instruction in spelling and pronunciation has a positive influence on reading achievement (Chapman, Arrow, Braid, Greaney, & Tunmer, 2018). The importance of systematic phonics cannot be emphasised enough for the Foundation Phase (Chapman *et al*., 2018).

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The poor performance in reading by the South African learners in the PIRLS assessment indicates a need for more research into teaching reading in the Foundation Phase. According to Spaull (2019), more resources and attention need to be supplied to primary schools and specifically to the Foundation Phase regarding basic literacy.

Reading and literacy skills in South Africa leave much room for improvement (Biesman-Simons *et al*., 2020; De Lange, Winberg, & Dippenaar, 2020; Mullis *et al*., 2017; Pretorius & Spaull, 2016). Although international reading research is important, there is a shortage of research focusing on emergent reading skills in South African primary schools (Biesman-Simons *et al*., 2020; Pretorius & Spaull, 2016). Reading research is important to fill the gaps in the South African educational system.

Recently reading has been a topic that appears to be under a magnifying glass in South Africa, with many scholars looking into best practices and interventions to improve reading in the current educational system (DBE, 2010; Pretorius, 2017; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). Having perused the theories and research related to reading in South Africa, which are really useful, there is still a shortage of research that includes the different linguistic contexts which South African learners find themselves in (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). One reason is that most of the reading research that has been done in South Africa has focused on learners being schooled in their home language in the Foundation Phase (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022; Taylor *et al*., 2017). There is therefore very limited research available on learners learning to read in a second language, though it is done on a home language level in the Foundation Phase in South Africa (Govender & Hugo, 2018).

ELLs learn through the medium of English at home language level (DBE, 2016) and therefore it can be argued that the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) should include support and instructions on how to best teach reading to ELLs. There seems to be a gap in the curriculum in addressing the specific context of English submersion classrooms in South Africa (Govender & Hugo, 2018). Because these learners are doing English as a second language, but on the home language level, it may be beneficial for teachers and learners if they have access to a structured phonics programme that could reinforce phonics learned in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). A structured phonics programme may also give structure to teachers' daily teaching of reading.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In South Africa, there are many learners who are enrolled in schools with English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) from Grade R. These learners have a

different mother tongue but are expected to follow the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) (DBE, 2016). The level of support provided by the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) to guide teachers on how to teach ELLs to read and the available resources to equip learners with this new skill, called reading, are of utmost importance (Hinkel, 2016).

Reading resources are not sufficient in South African classrooms (Rubbi Nunan, 2022; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). The main reading resource available to Grade 1 learners is the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019), but this workbook seems to lack phonetic reading pieces. Researchers have observed certain potential problems with the English Home Language workbook (Gouws, 2017; Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017; Govender & Hugo, 2018). The workbooks are not designed to structure a teacher's day-to-day instructional practices and do not provide a structured teaching programme (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017). According to previous research done by the researcher, teachers have the point of view that phonetic reading is needed in addition to the workbook (Gouws, 2017). The researcher has therefore observed a need for a structured phonics intervention programme to help teachers in instructing learners in English submersion classrooms as well as to support ELLs by providing them with enough reading opportunities.

The CAPS document for Home Language (DBE, 2011) does refer to phonetic teaching in the Foundation Phase as well as to the use of a phonics programme. The document states that a school can use any structured phonics programme as long as it is consistent from Grade 1 to 3 curriculum (DBE, 2011).

The problem the researcher observed with the phonics programmes that can be purchased is that they tend to be expensive. Not all schools have the financial resources to purchase extra reading material like a phonics programme. Another problem that may arise is that the purchased phonics programmes are not designed to follow the same sequence as that of the English Home Language workbooks provided by the department of education (DBE, 2019). If teachers follow a phonics programme that has a different sequence to that which they are teaching in the class, it could confuse the learners. The researcher observed a need for a phonics programme that is not only CAPS aligned but also aligns with the English Home Language workbook (DBE,

2019) so that the phonics learned in the book corresponds with the phonics programme implemented in the class.

The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) instructs teachers to do shared reading for 15 minutes per day for three days per week (DBE, 2011). The researcher observed a gap in phonetically aligned reading pieces (to practise shared reading) available to Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms as well as a need for a teacher's guide to assist teachers in teaching reading to ELLs. This research has therefore set out to investigate the effectiveness of implementing a structured phonics reading intervention in Grade 1 submersion classrooms.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As the research questions act as the frame of reference for the study, they help to guide and focus the study (Swain, 2016). The main research question will serve as the prime focus of the study.

Main Question

How does a structured phonics programme impact the reading acquisition of Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms?

A research hypothesis outlines an assumption which the research is designed to test (Roni, Merga, & Morris, 2020). Question 1 is the main research question of the study and can be formulated into the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis of the Study

A structured phonics programme will assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

Sub-Questions

The sub-questions are as follows:

Sub-Question 1

How does the home and class environment of Grade 1 ELLs in English submersion schools look and how does it influence their reading acquisition?

Sub-Question 2

What role does language play in reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms?

Sub-Question 3

What are teachers' beliefs about the suitability of the requirements for the English Home Language curriculum in terms of reading acquisition for Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

1.5.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are

- To see if a structured phonics programme will assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms;
- to investigate how the home and class environment of Grade 1 ELLs in submersion schools look and how it influences their reading acquisition;
- to investigate the strategies that Grade 1 teachers use to teach English as a language in the class and socially;
- to investigate how suitable the requirements for the English Home Language curriculum are in terms of a reading acquisition for Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to make an in-depth study of the field of both national and international literature on reading in order to get a perspective into the specific reading research at hand and how it relates to the latest research (Biesman-Simons *et al*., 2020).

Learning how to read and more specifically learning how to read in English can be a life transforming phenomenon for a learner. Reading in English helps an individual to gain knowledge and prosper in the workplace (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018; Rastle, 2018). The teaching of English as a new language to young learners is a widely discussed topic in both global and local research (Hinkel, 2016; Taylor & Coetzee, 2013).

Reading individually became possible for more people in Europe and all over the world in the last 500 years while this skill intensified over the last 100 years in light of the expectancy of what reading material learners should be able to read fluently and with comprehension (Allington, McCuiston, & Billen, 2015; Grabe & Stoller, 2020).

The importance of reading from an early age is globally recognised. It is interesting to note that 85% of individuals in the juvenile court system in the USA are functionally illiterate (Kilpatrick, Joshi, & Wagner, 2019). What is even more profound is that when these juvenile delinquents are equipped with literacy skills, only 16% of them return to the prison system, as opposed to 70% returning to prison if not equipped with literacy skills (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019). Furthermore, 50% of people on government sponsored welfare in the USA, as well as people with substance abuse problems have difficulty with reading. These facts have led the National Institution of Health in the USA to declare literacy a public health issue (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019). Similarly, South Africa is facing inadequacies in reading education (Rule & Land, 2017).

It can be assumed that poor reading results are only present in dysfunctional schools in South Africa where there are high absentee rates of staff and learners, or the school has an inadequate infrastructure. In South Africa, some schools with a good infrastructure also indicate low literacy results which is a reason for concern (Mather & Land, 2014). Teaching learners to read in a language that is different from their home language remains a challenge, even in schools with a good infrastructure.

The president of South Africa, Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa, named five goals that he has set for the country over the next 10 years in his third State of the Nation Address on 20 June 2019. Goal number four is: The schools of South Africa will have better educational outcomes and every 10-year-old should be able to read for meaning (Ardington, Wills, Pretorius, Deghaye, Menendez, Mohohlwane, Mtsatse, & Van der Berg, 2020).

Spaull (2015) suggests a reading campaign to address the poor reading outcomes in South Africa – a reading campaign where reading is promoted, and learners are provided with books.

The trend is to regress the age at which learners should start learning English and reading in English, although research is not clear-cut on the best time for introducing a new language to a learner (Hinkel, 2016). The use of learners' home language as the LoLT has benefits and improves reading (DBE, 2010). Unfortunately, this is not applied in all schools in South Africa.

Viewpoints on the best strategies to teach reading form part of a long debated topic. The debate mainly deals with the difference between taking a purely phonetic approach to teaching reading and the whole language approach to reading (McLachlan, Nicholson, Fielding-Barnsley, Mercer, & Ohi, 2012; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). The whole language approach holds the view that language should not be broken down into letters and words but that the focus should be on reading for meaning, regarding reading as a process that cannot be separated from the context of the text being read (Huang, 2014). Recent research has asserted that the whole language approach to reading has a weakness in the sense that it does not instruct learners on systematic phonics in the early phases of reading (Reid, 2016). Spaull and Pretorius (2022) state that the whole language conception of early reading cannot be reconciled with evidence based reading instruction.

A recent study from Stanford explains that initial readers who are focusing on phonics instead of trying to learn whole words, increase the activity in the area of the brain best wired for reading while the meta-analysis work shows a significant effect size of phonics instruction on learners' early reading growth (ILA, 2019).

Although much effort should be invested in comprehensive reading, the learning of basic phonics skills is essential for reading fluency in early reading acquisition stages (ILA, 2019). Synthetic phonics is the process where learners are educated to convert letters into sounds to form recognisable words from these conversions (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; Reid, 2016). Research has revealed merits when a synthetic phonics approach is taken toward reading acquisition in the early years of a learner (ILA, 2019;

Reid, 2016). According to Armstrong and Squires (2015), phonetic instruction should be explicit, rigorous, and systematic.

Recent studies indicate that the instruction of phonics in South African schools is often done in isolation with almost no evidence of a phonics programme that connects the learned phonics with what is read in the class (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). Teachers need resources like a wide range of basal readers and levelled text to support individual reading (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017). Such materials provide structure to children's emergent reading and provide support and structure to teachers in the early phases of teaching learners to read (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017). Teachers need a structured phonics programme to assist them to teach reading in English submersion classrooms. Learners should be provided with a phonics programme with which teachers can teach them new sounds (phonics), after which they get the opportunity to apply their newly learned skills to a text containing these new sounds (ILA, 2019).

The focus of this study will be on African mother-tongue speakers that are enrolled in English submersion (English only) schooling from Grade 1. The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms. The English Home Language curriculum and how it relates to the learners in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms will also be investigated.

1.7 CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

1.7.1 Conceptual Framework

It is of utmost importance to include the curriculum when investigating educational phenomena (Null, 2017). Learning in English is regarded as one of the biggest policy developmental areas currently in the world (Hinkel, 2016). This is because English plays an important role as a common language across the globe as well as in education (Rao, 2019). The concept in schools where English is used and taught as the only language of teaching from as early as Grade 1, is called English submersion schools (Hall, 2016). The conceptual framework focuses on the current curriculum used in South African classrooms and how it relates to learning and reading in English submersion classrooms. The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) (the current

curriculum used in English submersion classrooms) will be discussed by using the curriculum design diagram suggested by Macalister and Nation (2010).

1.7.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the research will be built on the componential model of reading (CMR) that is often used for investigating reading in a second language (Li, Koh, Geva, Joshi, & Chen, 2020). Additionally, this framework will be supported by both the social cognitive learning theory (SCT) and the complex dynamic system theory (CDST) of second language learning. These theories underpin the study and support each other by their combined focus on the importance of the role of language in learning to read. The influence of learners' socio-economic status on reading acquisition also plays a key role in these theories and forms part of the focus of this study. The theoretical structure of this study is significant because it describes reading acquisition as a complex, cognitive, and social learning activity.

Figure 1.1. Theoretical framework of the study

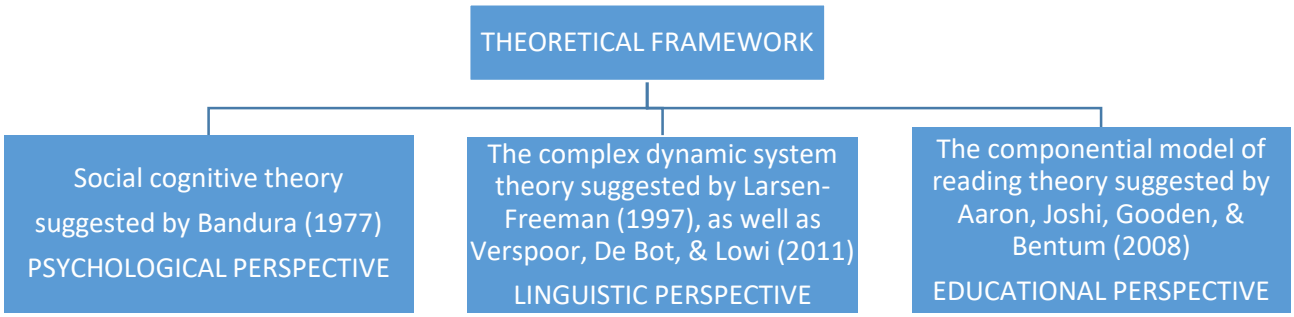


Figure 1.1 displays the theoretical framework of the study. The SCT was first suggested by Bandura in 1977 (Bandura, 1977). It will focus on the psychological perspective of the study. The CDST was suggested by Larsen-Freeman in 1997 and De Bot in 2011 (Verspoor *et al*., 2011) and will frame the linguistic perspective of the study. The CMR was first suggested by Aaron, Joshi, Gooden, and Bentum in 2008 (Aaron *et al*., 2008). It will guide the study from an educational perspective. The SCT will be discussed first.

1.7.2.1 Social Cognitive Learning Theory

Learning means to gain knowledge or skills that are not only based on maturation (Illeris, 2018; Pritchard, 2017). Learning theories supply important information that teachers can use to get background knowledge of the best practices to teach learners (Pritchard, 2017). The three main learning theories that developed over centuries are behaviourism, cognitivism, and constructivism. Behaviourism is built on one's observable and measurable behaviour and focuses on outside stimuli that change behaviour (Zhou & Brown, 2017). Cognitive theories focus on the internal cognitive structures of the brain (Illeris, 2018). Constructivism is built on the notion that learners learn new knowledge by building on what they already know. In recent literature on second language learning it is emphasised that learning should not only focus on the cognitive processes of learning a language but also on the social context in which it occurs (Mitchell, Myles, & Marsden, 2019).

Learning to read in English submersion classrooms is a complex process. Learners are expected to read and learn in a language that they may have not mastered yet. The social cognitive theory underpins this study in the sense that the researcher is interested in the cognitive processes involved in reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms and how the social and contextual factors present in these classrooms influence reading acquisition.

A second language learning theory that supports the SCT is the dynamic theory of second language learning (De Bot, Lowie, Thorne, & Verspoor, 2013; Han, 2019; VanPatten & Williams, 2014). The dynamic theory of second language learning will be discussed next.

1.7.2.2 The Complex Dynamic System Theory of Second Language Learning

The CDST is used as a metatheory in research. A metatheory is often connected to the philosophy of study and can assist a researcher with the methodology of research (Mattson & Haas, 2014).

Second language learning (SLL) from a CDST perspective is built on the principle that second language development includes a variety of dynamic systems (Verspoor *et al*., 2011). The terms "dynamic system theory" (DST) and "complexity theory" (CT) are

both used to describe second language learning. The DST for language learning was developed by the University of Groningen headed by Prof. Kees de Bot (Ortega & Han, 2017). At the same time, Diane Larsen-Freeman was busy with publications on CT as applied to second language learning (Ortega & Han, 2017). The researchers on the CT and the DST to language learning decided to combine their theories. The new theory is known as the CDST (Ortega & Han, 2017). These two theories are systematically the same in the sense that both of them focus on an adaptive, complex, and dynamic system (Han, 2019). The CDST forms an overall conceptual and theoretical framework for second language learning (Han, 2019). It describes the combination of the abovementioned theories and will therefore be used for the purpose of this study.

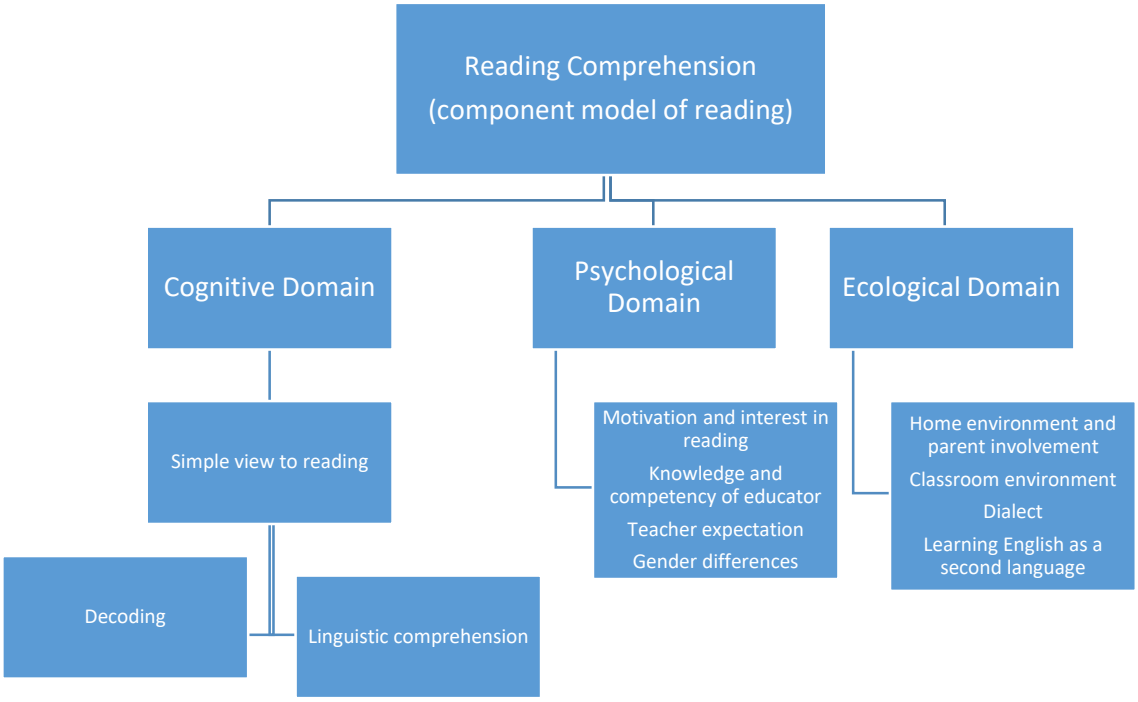
The CDST underpins the linguistic perspective of learning in a second language. The theory emphasises the complexity of learning in a second language and even more complex, the process of learning to read in a second language (Han, 2019). The researcher was interested in the different components (class, school, home, and Department of Education) that form part of the complex system in which ELLs have to learn (Larsen-Freeman, 2016). This concept of “nestedness” will be described in Chapter 3.

The CMR will be discussed next as the educational perspective of the study.

1.7.2.3 Componential Model of Reading

The CMR theory focuses on reading from an educational perspective – the study was built on this reading theory. The CMR divides reading performance into three main domains, namely the cognitive, the psychological, and the ecological domain (Aaron *et al*., 2008; Chapman & Tunmer, 2020; Chiu, McBride-Chang, & Line, 2012; Joshi & Aaron, 2012; Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2020; Reid, 2016; Yeung, Ho, Chan, & Chung, 2016). According to the CMR framework, these three areas will either directly or indirectly contribute towards reading achievement (Li *et al*., 2020).

Figure 1.2. Components of reading comprehension according to the component model of reading (adapted from Aaron *et al*., 2008)



1.7.2.3.1 The cognitive domain

The cognitive domain of the CMR is built on a reading theory called the simple view of reading (Reid, 2016). The cognitive domain of the simple view of reading has two components: Decoding and linguistic (listening) comprehension (Aaron *et al*., 2008; Chapman & Tunmer, 2020; Chiu *et al*., 2012; Joshi & Aaron, 2012; Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2020; Reid, 2016). This means that reading is the product of learners' knowledge of phonics as well as their knowledge of the language in which they have to read (Woore, 2022). The structured phonics intervention programme, developed by the researcher, focuses on developing phonics skills as well as oral comprehension skills.

1.7.2.3.2 The psychological domain

The psychological domain suggested by the CMR includes components such as motivation and interest in reading, knowledge and competency of the educator, teacher expectations, and gender differences (Aaron *et al*., 2008; Chapman & Tunmer, 2020; Chiu *et al*., 2012; Joshi & Aaron, 2012; Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2020; Reid, 2016). The researcher was interested in the level of motivation of the ELLs in English submersion classrooms and how this affects reading acquisition.

1.7.2.3.3 The ecological domain

The ecological domain refers to the learners' home and school environment as well as to factors like the socio-economic status of learners. According to Aaron *et al*. (2008: 69), "[t]he ecological domain includes the components of home environment and culture, parental involvement, classroom environment, dialect, and speaking English as a second language". The socio-economic status of learners has an influence on reading acquisition (Reid, 2016). The socio-economic status of English submersion schools and how this affects reading acquisition will form part of this research.

The CMR provides a framework for teachers, researchers, and psychologists to understand reading performance. Challenges in reading acquisition can be due to factors that influence learners in any one of the three domains suggested by the CMR (Aaron *et al*., 2008).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.8.1 Research Approach

Educational research involves the application of scientific methods to investigate questions and topics related to education (Mertler, 2019). This research focused on reading acquisition in the Grade 1 classroom in English submersion schools in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

A mixed method research (MMR) approach was used for the purpose of this study. MMR refers to research that is often used in social studies and it combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches into one study (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, & Walker, 2018; Bryman, 2016; Cres-well & Hirose, 2019; Farghaly, 2018; Morgan, 2013; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). MMR makes use of the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research to best answer the research questions at hand (Atieno, 2009; Caruth, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2015; Kahwati & Kane, 2020; Morgan, 2013).

The MMR design is an acceptable and needed form of inquiry when investigating complex systems such as reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms (Farghaly, 2018; Ortega & Han, 2017). It was necessary to make use of both quantitative and qualitative methods for this study to best answer the main hypothesis as well as the accompanying research questions. The hypothesis was investigated by making use

of an experimental design (quantitative data) while the accompanying research questions were answered by making use of interviews and questionnaires (qualitative data). Qualitative data were important to help prepare the research for the experimental phase of the study as well as to shed light on and to better understand the context in which the experiment was carried out. After the experimental phase, qualitative data helped to answer questions arising from the experiment.

MMR research was also used in this study for the following reasons (adapted from Hesse-Biber, 2010; McNabb, 2020; Ngulube, 2022):

- The triangulation of methods combined quantitative and qualitative methods to study the research questions presented in this study. The triangulation of sources means that the researcher made use of different sources (teachers, reading specialists, and learners) to obtain comprehensive data. The triangulation of results means that results were gathered and analysed in different ways (words and numbers).
- Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather complimentary data to get a better understanding of the research questions. It provided the researcher with a more comprehensive overview of the findings of the study.
- MMR assisted the researcher to understand the research problem better, as one method was able to assist the other method in developing the study further.

The MMR methodology that was used in the study was complemented by a specific research design which supported the researcher to investigate the hypothesis presented in the study as well as the accompanying research questions.

1.8.2 Research Design

Research design is part of the systemic process of well-planned research that was used by the researcher to investigate the hypotheses as well as the research questions presented in the study (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2017).

The specific MMR approach that was implemented in this study is a multi-phase mixed method design called the experimental or intervention mixed method design. For the purpose of this study, it will be referred to as “the intervention mixed method design”.

The intervention mixed method design is built on the design where quantitative and qualitative data are gathered throughout different stages of the study (Bryman, 2016; Caruth, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2015).

Phase 1 comprised gathering qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with reading experts in order to prepare the research for the second phase of the study. The interviews with the reading experts were utilised to gain insight into the practicality of the suggested structured phonics intervention programme and to point out any problematic areas which may appear in the structured phonics programme. This phase also included group training (per sampled school) on how to implement the structured phonics intervention programme in the class as well as discussions on the current strategies that teachers use in the English submersion classroom to teach ELLs to read.

Phase 2 of the study included gathering quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. The quantitative part of the study consisted of a quasi-experimental design to test a structured phonetic reading intervention. This phase of the study was combined with qualitative data collection by means of semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers to better understand the context of the learners that formed part of the experimental phase of the study.

Phase 3 rounded off the study by means of gathering qualitative data. This phase constituted semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers after the intervention to gain their perspectives on the intervention as well as to answer any remaining questions regarding the quantitative part of the study. The qualitative data also included an online survey to help complete data obtained in the quantitative part of the study.

1.8.3 Research Paradigm

Paradigms become the lenses through which research is conceived and completed (Leavy, 2017). It can also be described as a set of beliefs about how the world works (Rahi, 2017; Sefotho, 2015).

The research paradigm used by the researcher for the study was based on a pragmatic worldview. Pragmatism is based on the fact that because reality is complex, a

researcher must make use of different methodologies to investigate the complexity of the research at hand (Leavy, 2017). This is done by identifying the weakness in the one approach and strengthening it with aspects of the other approach (Rahi, 2017). The researcher intended for the different approaches (quantitative and qualitative) in the MMR to strengthen each other in an attempt to best answer the research questions presented in the study. The focus is not on the research methods, but on the research questions, by using more than one strategy to investigate the complexity of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

1.8.3.1 Metatheory

The CDST is a theory that is used for second language acquisition, but it can also be used as a metatheory that describes a certain worldview, perspectives, and values (Ortega & Han, 2017).

CDST is often used as a paradigm in MMR (Poth, 2018). The MMR method used to gather data is a dynamic and interactive process that involves complex domains and contexts (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). A complexity-based approach to SLL may be able to fill the gap between more comprehensive qualitative approaches and more detailed quantitative and experimental approaches to the study of SLL (De Bot *et al*., 2013).

Complexity in research includes components (the researcher, participants, environment) interacting in multiple non-linear fashion (Poth, 2018). The outcome of these interactions is impossible to predict. Although educational research can appear linear, it is often cyclic and evolving, since the process of researching often leads to new questions and different contexts (Mertler, 2019). Research about complex systems is integrated into the complex lives of learners and their learning (Koopmans & Stamovlasis, 2016).

The researcher adopted the views of the CDST to guide the research. The lens that the complex perspective provided to the study was that research is always done in a complex environment (Poth, 2018). The researcher approached the research with caution, keeping in mind the sensitivity and complexity of the system and environment

that formed part of the study. According to the CDST, research must be natural, contextual, interactional, dense, individually oriented, and longitudinal (Han, 2019).

1.8.4 Context of the Study

The context of this study involves public primary schools in rural as well as urban areas in South Africa that have English as their LoLT. The learners in these schools are ELLs which means that they are learning only in English from Grade 1, although they have a different mother tongue.

The specific context is the Grade 1 classroom. The study focused on the classroom environment, resources to help ELLs acquire reading skills, as well as the teachers' perceptions on teaching ELLs how to read.

1.8.5 Population and Sampling

A sample is a small proportion of the population that is selected by the researcher to gain insight into the research question. The first step in the sampling process is to clearly define the target population (Taherdoost, 2016). The target population of this study was different for each phase of the study. Most quantitative research calls for probability sampling while qualitative sampling is often purposive (Taylor & Francis, 2013). Probability sampling is sampling where sample elements have an equal chance of being selected while non-probability sampling (or purposive sampling) is where samples are selected on purpose by the researcher because of certain characteristics important to the research (Taylor & Francis, 2013).

The total population for the study comprised three schools which included 207 Grade 1 learners and nine Grade 1 teachers, as well as three reading experts that participated in the study. This totalled a number of 219 participants for the study. The different phases of the intervention MMR design called for different sampling methods that could assist the researcher in obtaining rich data.

1.8.5.1 Sample for Phase 1: Semi-Structured Interviews with Reading Experts

The sample group for phase 1 of the study was selected by making use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is when participants are selected on purpose because

of their valuable knowledge and insight into the research at hand (Bryman, 2016; Baran & Jones, 2016).

The researcher selected three individuals who were teaching reading to ELLs in Grade 1. These teachers or “reading experts” were selected because of their expertise in the field of teaching reading to ELLs. The criteria the researcher used for the selection of the three reading experts were that they should have a teaching degree as well as 10 years or more experience in teaching Grade 1 ELLs how to read. The reading experts were selected on purpose by the researcher by making use of the abovementioned criteria.

1.8.5.2 Sample for Phase 2: Quantitative and Qualitative Data Gathering

1.8.5.2.1 Phase 2: Quantitative sampling

The target population for the quantitative research was schools that had English as the LoLT. These schools offered English as a subject at the home language level from Grade 1. The learners in the sampled schools were ELLs since they had a different mother tongue than English.

The sampled schools were located in a certain district in Mpumalanga. The geographical area was further narrowed down to a 150 km radius from the researcher. All schools that qualified for these criteria were placed in a pool for random selection. Before random selection could take place, the schools were ordered into different strata. Stratified random sampling was used as a sampling technique to divide the population into subgroups (Baran & Jones, 2016). Each subgroup was given an equal chance to be selected (Rahi, 2017). This was done to enhance the external validity of the study.

Stratified sampling is often used where there is a lot of variation within a population (Taherdoost, 2016). The selected population was divided into different strata in order to make sure that the different socio-economic groups were presented for research purposes. The schools were divided into different quintiles according to their geographical location as well as the average income and unemployment rate in the area (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). Schools in quintiles 1-3 were classified as no-fee paying schools while quintiles 4 and 5 were classified as school fee paying schools (Van Dyk & White, 2019).

This means that the pool of suitable schools was divided into different categories and schools were selected randomly as follows:

- All schools which were classified as quintile 1: *Select one school with at least two Grade 1 classes*.
- All schools which were classified as quintile 2: *Select one school with at least two Grade 1 classes*.
- All schools which were classified as quintile 3: No available schools in this category.
- All schools which were classified as quintile 4 and 5: *Select one school with at least two Grade 1 classes*.

The sample constituted a number of three schools in total. The Grade 1 learners in the three randomly selected schools were the participants in the quasi-experiment. School 1 had two Grade 1 classes, school 2 had two Grade 1 classes and school 3 had five Grade 1 classes. The experiment included a total of nine classes and 207 participants (Grade 1 learners) that formed part of the quasi-experiment. The researcher confirmed with the schools regarding the Home language of the participants. All 207 participants were confirmed to be ELLs, which means that all of them had an indigenous home language but were schooled in English. These classes were randomly assigned to form part of the intervention and control groups for the quasi-experiment.

1.8.5.2.2 Phase 2: Qualitative data

Both probability and purposive sampling are often found in MMR (Taylor & Francis, 2013). The qualitative sampling will be nested in the quantitative sampling. This means that the schools that were randomly selected for the quantitative part of the study formed part of the qualitative part of the study for phase 2.

The researcher made use of purposive sampling methods for the qualitative part of the second phase of the study (Baran & Jones, 2016). The sample for the qualitative data included the Grade 1 teachers at the schools that were selected to participate in the quasi-experiment. These teachers formed the sample because of their experience in teaching Grade 1 ELLs to read, and because of their insight into the context of the ELLs. A total of nine Grade 1 teachers took part in the training on how to implement

the structured phonics programme in the class and seven out of the nine Grade 1 teachers agreed to be included in the semi-structured interviews in phase 2 of the study.

1.8.5.3 Sample for Phase 3: Semi-Structured Interviews and Questionnaires

For phase 3 of the study, the researcher made use of purposive sampling to gather qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Phase 3 took place after the intervention. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the same sampled teachers from phase 2 of the study. Only six out of the previous seven teachers participated in the post-interviews. All seven teachers from phase 2 answered the online questionnaire, designed by the researcher.

To summarise, the different stages of the intervention MMR design called for different sampling strategies. Different methods of data collection were also used throughout the different stages of the research design.

1.8.6 Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected by making use of quantitative as well as qualitative data gathering techniques. The intervention MMR design was divided into three phases. Each phase included different methods of data collection.

1.8.6.1 Phase 1

For phase 1 data were collected by means of interviews with reading experts. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted before the quantitative data were collected. The semi-structured interviews with reading experts were conducted to get their viewpoints on the programme and to gain some insight from them into changes (if any) that they wanted to suggest. This was done to prepare the researcher as well as the intervention programme for the quantitative part of the study (Creswell, 2014).

For phase 1 of the study, group sessions were also conducted with the nine Grade 1 teachers that are currently teaching at the schools that were randomly selected as part of the quasi-experiment that was carried out in phase 2 of the research. The training session was held to train them on how to implement the structured phonics programme

in the class. During these sessions, the teachers were also able to share their strategies on how they teach reading in their classes, and which resources they are currently utilising.

1.8.6.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 of the research comprised the gathering of quantitative and qualitative data which were collected concurrently (Baran & Jones, 2016). Quantitative data were gathered in the form of a quasi-experimental design and qualitative data were collected by conducting seven semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers. Quantitative data gathering will be discussed first.

1.8.6.2.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative data collection took place in phase 2 of the study by conducting a quasi-experiment in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms. For the purpose of answering the hypothesis of the study, the researcher made use of a quasi-experiment to investigate the effectiveness of a systematic phonics reading intervention programme in English Grade 1 submersion classrooms. The specific experimental design that was used can be referred to as a pre-test/post-test control group design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). A graphical explanation of the selected experimental research design is expounded in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3. Pre-test/post-test control group design (adapted from McMillan & Schumacher, 2014)

The quasi-experimental design differs from a true experimental design in the sense that participants were not randomly selected for the experimental and control groups (Creswell, 2014). Schools already have clustered groups (Grade 1 classes) and therefore the classes were randomly selected to form part of either the experimental or the

control group and not the participants individually as in a true experimental design. Group A (Figure 1.3) was thus a class or classes that were randomly assigned to form part of the experimental group of the study while group B was the classes that would be randomly assigned to form part of the control group.

Group A would be given a pre-test, receive the intervention, and then be given a post-test. Group B would also be given a pre-test, without an intervention, and again a post-test.

1.8.6.2.1.1 Pre-test

Before the implementation of the structured phonics intervention programme, a one minute reading test (pre-test) was administered to all the participants in the experimental as well as the control groups (groups A and B in Figure 1.3). The South African standardised one minute reading test (Appendix C) was developed by the Transvaal Department of Education in 1987. The one minute reading test was administered by the researcher and two field workers and the learners' reading speed was recorded. The reading speed was recorded as the amount of words that were read per minute (WPM).

1.8.6.2.1.2 The structured phonics intervention programme

Schools in South Africa that offer English as the only medium of instruction from Grade 1 formed the focus of the study. The learners in these schools are educated in English on the home language level, although they have a different mother tongue. The researcher observed a gap in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) regarding the instructions to teachers on teaching ELLs to read in Grade 1 as well as the need for additional phonetic resources available to the teachers for shared reading activities.

The researcher aimed to provide the teachers in the study with a structured phonics intervention programme to assist them in the Grade 1 English submersion classroom. The structured intervention phonics programme consists of a teacher's guide and a reading book. The teacher's guide corresponds with the English Home Language workbook and refers teachers to pages in the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019). The teacher's guide gives additional instruction on what the teacher

should do to help ELLs with reading acquisition besides the instructions already given in the workbook (DBE, 2019) as well as in addition to the instructions given in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). The purpose of the teacher's guide is to support teachers by giving detailed guidance on what is expected of them on each of the English Home Language workbook pages. The teacher's guide also refers the teacher to the book that was developed by the researcher with extra phonetic reading as well as stories that are phonetically decodable.

The reading in the extra reading book is designed in such a way that it only includes the phonics sounds that are already introduced to the learners by following the sequence and pace of the English Home Language workbook so that learners are able to easily read the texts and stories on their own (DBE, 2019).
Davidson (2013:3) claims that "when a child learning to read is given a short story with words comprised of the letters and sounds the child has learned, that child can actually read the story. This accomplishment can be quite thrilling".

The aim of the researcher was to provide the teachers with decodable texts and stories that learners could read at shared reading time that was built on the phonics taught in the English Home Language workbook. The instructions that had to be followed in the structured phonics intervention programme comprised a teacher's guide and an extra reading book. The specific instructions included in this programme will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4 of the research. The structured phonics intervention programme was implemented by trained Grade 1 teachers who applied the programme only in the experimental classes. The learners in the control classes (group B) did not receive the intervention (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The programme was implemented for a duration of four weeks in the experimental classes, for one hour a day.

1.8.6.2.1.3 Post-test

After the four-week intervention the researcher (assisted by two field workers) administered the same one minute reading test to all the participants (both groups A and B). Each participant's WPM was recorded again. The same intervention process was then followed by the classes that were in the control group, to ensure ethical surety for the study.

1.8.6.2.2 Qualitative data

During phase 2 of the research, the researcher collected qualitative data by doing semi-structured interviews with seven Grade 1 teachers at the sampled schools to find out what the context of the ELLs is in English submersion schools as well as to investigate the teacher's perception on the English Home Language curriculum in relation to ELLs. According to Atkins and Wallace (2012), interviews can be described as an insightful tool. Interviews are conversations between the researcher and a participant and are used to get the participant's perspective (Mertler, 2019). Interviews supply factual data as well as personal data (views and opinions of participants), making it a versatile research tool.

1.8.6.3 Phase 3

For the final phase of the study, qualitative data were gathered by doing semi-structured interviews with the same teachers that formed part of the data gathering process in phase 2 of the study. Only six of the seven teachers who participated in phase 2 of the study could continue to phase 3 of the study. After the experimental phase of the research was completed and data for this phase analysed, the researcher gathered data about how teachers experienced the reading intervention in the classroom.

The gathering of qualitative data was finalised with anonymous questionnaires that the Grade 1 teachers from phase 2 completed. All seven teachers completed the online questionnaire. This was done to enhance the data the researcher already had. A questionnaire is a collection of questions administered to participants (Ngulube, 2022). The anonymous questionnaire was a self-designed questionnaire that the researcher designed by making use of Microsoft Forms. The forms were sent to the Grade 1 teachers by e-mail. Distributing forms via e-mail help to minimise the cost of printing and travelling to the participants (Ngulube, 2022). The questionnaires formed part of the qualitative data gathering. These questionnaires contained open- and closed-ended questions. It would be answered by the same seven Grade 1 teachers that formed part of phase 2 of the study.

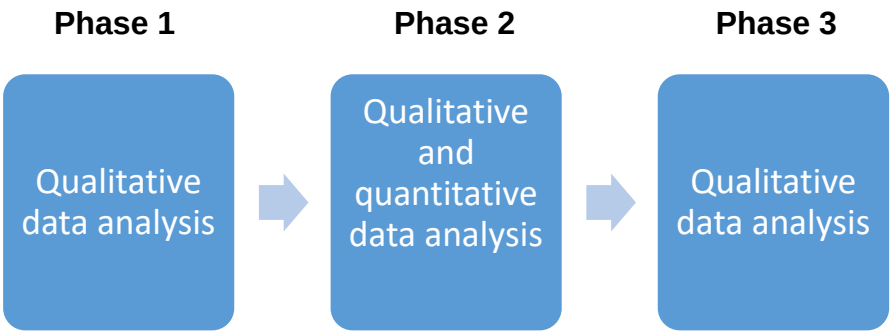
Phase 3 of the MMR design concluded the data gathering process of the study.

1.8.7 Data Analysis

According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Walker (2013), data analysis is a process in which researchers arrange their data to understand it and to present their conclusions to others. Analysing data can be a difficult task when conducting MMR (Ngulube, 2022). The MMR analysis was done by analysing the data from the different stages of the research independently and with different strategies and then integrating the findings (Ary *et al*., 2013).

Figure 1.4 indicates how the qualitative and quantitative data of the study were analysed throughout the different stages of the intervention MMR design.

Figure 1.4. Sequence in which quantitative and qualitative data will be analysed



Qualitative data gathered in phase 1 of the research were analysed, after which the quantitative and qualitative data of the study were analysed together in phase 2. The last phase of the research was done by analysing qualitative data from interviews with teachers as well as analysing the answers obtained from questionnaires. The specific methods used to analyse the quantitative as well as the qualitative data throughout the different phases of the research will now be discussed in more detail.

1.8.7.1 Phase 1

The data obtained from the interviews with reading experts were transcribed in full and analysed by making use of colour coded themes, document reviews, and personal observation notes (Ngulube, 2022). Analysed data were used to prepare the research for phase 2 of the study.

1.8.7.2 Phase 2

Quantitative data were gathered and analysed in phase 2 of the research. This included all the data that were gathered during the experimental phase of the research.

Quantitative data were displayed in the form of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to describe findings through numerical data to display trends and to describe the research context (Roni *et al*., 2020). The descriptive analysis of the quantitative data included in this study described summaries about the sample and the measures used in the study (Baran & Jones, 2016).

Inferential analysis was used to analyse data, in an effort to determine if the hypothesis presented in the study may be true (Recker, 2021). A statistical programme called SAS JMP (version 16) was used (with the help of a qualified statistician) to analyse the raw data that were obtained from the quasi-experimental design. More detail on the statistical techniques that were used to analyse data will be discussed in Chapter 4.

For the qualitative part of phase 2, interviews were the main method of data gathering. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in full. To analyse the qualitative data, the researcher organised and familiarised herself with the data by making use of re-reading and colours to identify themes. The researcher made use of coding and themes to interpret the data (Hartas, 2015). Identifying certain themes and categorising data accordingly was important to generate appropriate concepts about the data and to find relations between the codes (Hartas, 2015). According to Ary *et al*. (2013), the coding of qualitative data is an important aspect of analysing the data. When the researcher codes data it means that transcriptions are critically read and divided according to recurring themes. Data with similarities are grouped into themes. Colour coding would be used to identify themes.

1.8.7.3 Phase 3

Interviews in phase 3 of the research were audio recorded and transcribed in full. The researcher engaged with the transcripts critically and reduced data while identifying themes (Sreejesh & Mohapatra, 2014). The questionnaires were analysed by making

use of Google Forms software for closed-ended questions and thematic analyses and data reduction for the open-ended questions.

1.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

"Trustworthiness" is a global term used in qualitative research to describe the defensibility of a set of research, including many of the quantitative data issues of validity and reliability (Tashakkori, Johnson, & Teddlie, 2020). To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative studies, aspects like credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability need to be considered (Ngulube, 2022; Tashakkori *et al*., 2020). When doing MMR it is important to pay attention to internal validity, external validity, reliability, as well as objectivity (Recker, 2021).

Table 1.1. Comparing trustworthiness for quantitative and qualitative data gathering

Qualitative Data Gathering	Quantitative Data Gathering
Credibility	Internal validity
Transferability	External validity
Dependability	Reliability
Conformability	Objectivity

These aspects of qualitative and quantitative data gathering will be discussed separately and in more detail.

1.9.1 Credibility/Internal Validity

Credibility of *qualitative research* refers to the rate at which the results generated represent the available data. Sufficient evidence should be provided to prove that this is the case (Recker, 2021). Interviews were transcribed in full, and the researcher made use of direct quotations to add to the credibility of the study.

The validity of a study in *quantitative data* indicates the meaningfulness of the results and the overall value of the research (Hartas, 2015). Internal validity was enhanced by making use of triangulation when analysing the results. Multiple data sources (quantitative, qualitative, and literature) contributed to the triangulation that enhanced the internal validity of the research (Ngulube, 2022).

1.9.2 Transferability/External Validity

Transferability in *qualitative data gathering* is the extent to which data can be applied to other contexts (Recker, 2021). The qualitative sampling was nested within the random sampling process, which improved the study's external validity.

Quantitative research aims to get a sizeable scope of knowledge to generalise findings to the rest of the population (Leavy, 2017). External validity refers to this ability to generalise the results to the population outside of the sample included in the study (Baran & Jones, 2016; Subudhi & Mishra, 2019). By making use of non-probability sampling the researcher aided in the external validity of the research (Ngulube, 2022).

1.9.3 Dependability/Reliability

Dependability depicts the extent to which findings are stable and consistent in qualitative research. This indicates the extent to which other researchers will find the same results when repeating the research (Recker, 2021). Reliability in qualitative research is achieved when the data are coded and internally checked by members of the same research team, for example, supervisors and co-supervisors (Hartas, 2015).

Reliability in quantitative data gathering refers to the researcher being transparent about the research process and the process of data gathering and analysis (Creswell, 2014). It also refers to the accuracy with which the instrument used for testing a construct measure consistently over time (Recker, 2021). The one minute reading test used by the researcher (Appendix C) is a standardised South African reading test (Turner, 2001). The procedure for recording the reading score (WPM) was clearly set out by the researcher and explained to the field workers.

1.9.4 Conformability/Objectivity

Confirmability in *qualitative data* gathering displays the extent to which the research is independent of the researcher's biases and the degree to which findings can be challenged by outsiders (Recker, 2021). This can be obtained by using different sources of evidence.

Another important aspect to ensure trustworthiness is objectivity in quantitative research (Mertler, 2019). Objectivity is a process in which the researcher must take care

not to be influenced by their personal preferences, biases, and wishes (in all phases of the research). This means that all tests carried out and data gathered should be done as objectively as possible during the experimental phase of the research. This was the aim of the researcher.

1.10 RESEARCH ETHICS

When doing research in education it is of utmost importance that the researcher adheres to high ethical standards, especially since this type of research often involves minors i.e., learners under the age of 18 (Roni *et al*., 2020). The three main principles of ethical research are respect for individuals, a concern for the welfare of the participants, and a concern for justice (Poth, 2018). Justice implies that people should be treated fairly and equitably.

Ethical standards should also be maintained when obtaining permission for the study, protecting anonymity, and to communicate the purpose of the study (Caruth, 2013). Before any data were collected, ethical clearance was obtained from the ethics committee of UNISA (Appendix A). Permission for the study was also obtained from the Department of Education of Mpumalanga (Appendix B). Permission to conduct research in schools was then obtained from relevant principals (Appendix D) and teachers (Appendix E). In the case of minors, permission was obtained from their parents or legal guardians (Appendix F) as well as assent from the learners themselves (Appendix G). Participation in the study was strictly voluntary. Permission to record interviews was obtained from participants. All results were kept anonymous. The limitations and delimitations of the study will be described next.

1.11 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Limitations constitute the weaknesses of the study which are out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). One limitation of this study is that the standardised one minute reading test used for the experimental part of the study only measured how many words per minute the learners read and did not include other constructs of reading like single phonics-sound recognition or comprehension. The researcher did, however, make use of qualitative research to get a more comprehensive overview of the experimental part of the research and how it related to reading in the

English submersion classroom. Another limitation is the sample selected. The researcher wanted to include a second school in the quintile 4 category, but the randomly selected school declined the invitation to form part of the study after which another school was randomly selected. This time the researcher could not reach the selected school and thus decided to include only three schools. Although there was a total of nine teachers that formed part of the training, only seven agreed to participate in the interviews of which only six could participate in the interviews conducted in phase 3 of the study. The reason for the one teacher to decline the interviews is because she was close to retirement, she did not feel that she had the time to be part of the qualitative part of the study. The other teacher initially agreed, but postponed the interview, several times after which the researcher decided not to interview the teacher. The final limitation of the study is that the teachers implemented the structured phonics intervention programme in the classroom for only one hour per day over a short four-week intervention time period. This was due to teachers' availability and acknowledging that the programme had to be incorporated into a busy school day which was already planned beforehand and was full of other content that had to be covered. Although the researcher could not extend the intervention time frame, she had the opinion that the total number of hours (five) per week for a duration of four weeks (i.e., 20 hours of intervention) should be enough for the intended research.

Delimitations are the limits that the researcher sets to the study, and therefore decisions made by the researcher to decide the boundaries and the limits of the research (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). The delimitations for this study include the sample, which was not totally drawn randomly from the population, but was limited to a 150 kilometre radius of where the researcher lives, due to the time and cost constraints associated with travelling further. The schools within the radius were, however, sampled randomly from the population in that area.

1.12 KEY CONCEPTS

1.12.1 Reading Acquisition

To be able to comprehend what you read, there are some foundational skills and subskills that need to be mastered (Ardington *et al*., 2020). The learner needs knowledge of the codes of the language (decoding skills) (Ardington *et al*., 2020). Learners must also have knowledge of the language that they are about to read (Tompkins, Smith,

Campbell, & Green, 2015). In this definition, the process of reading starts when the learner has enough knowledge of the language that they have to read in. The learner needs to hear the spoken language and make an association with letters and their sounds to read words (Tompkins, 2013). A skilled reader can therefore be defined as one being able to decode familiar as well as unfamiliar words (Tønnessen & Uppstad, 2015). Reading in a second language refers to how written text in a certain language is processed in the brain by a reader and how that processing brings about an understanding of what is written (Bernhardt, 2011). This indicates that the language that reaches the brain will have to be processed along with the decoding skills of that specific language to understand what is read (Bernhardt, 2011).

Reading is a complex process involving perceptual, cognitive, and linguistic skills to determine how one's writing system works (Tompkins *et al*., 2015; Venezky, 2019). Reading is formally introduced in the Grade 1 year, according to the CAPS document for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). Grade 1 forms part of the first year of formal schooling for learners in South Africa (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 indicates that a learner must be admitted to Grade 1 when they turn seven during that calendar year (DBE, 1996).

1.12.2 Structured Phonics Programme

As learners learn how to read, they need to be able to decode each word to make sense of what they are reading. This "phonics" approach to reading has been criticised during the past 30 years, although new evidence and studies are again returning to the old-fashioned letter-sound instruction (Gough, Ehri, & Treiman, 2017). According to Biggart *et al.* (2013), research done on early reading intervention shows significance if a structured programme is used in accordance with cooperative learning and phonics-focused professional development.

A structured phonics approach to reading may assist in reading acquisition in the Grade 1 English submersion classroom (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). High-quality learning and teaching support materials are critical for reading instruction and reading development in South African schools (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). When learners are about to read in a new language, teachers should pay careful attention to suitable reading material for them (Nasri, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019; Nation & Macalister,

2020). It is important to provide learners with appropriate texts that can be read with at least 95% accuracy (Allington *et al*., 2015). Learners will not be able to read a simple text if they are not familiar with the phonetical sounds presented in the text. Decodable texts can be useful when phonically regular and at the learners' level and also when the texts correspond with what the learners are learning in the class (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

A good phonics programme focuses on the systematic teaching of phonetic sounds and also on comprehensive reading by providing texts related to the phonics sounds taught in the class (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). A structured phonics intervention programme should also incorporate the following five principles of reading, namely vocabulary building, phonological awareness, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension (Buckingham, 2020; DBE, 2011; Spaull & Taylor, 2022).

The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) gives some guidance to teachers on what is expected from learners in regard to reading in the Grade 1 classroom (DBE, 2011). The curriculum attempts to balance phonics and the whole language theory which might cause confusion if teachers are not familiar with the application of these reading theories (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

The structured phonics programme that is investigated in this study is focused on providing teachers and learners with structured reading instructions to aid Grade 1 learners in the process of learning to read a second language, although on a home language level. The intention is to aid the teacher where clear instructions are not provided in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) curriculum.

1.12.3 English Submersion Classrooms

Bilingual education can be divided into two broad categories: Additive bilingualism refers to strategies where the mother tongue of learners, as well as the new language, are taught in different contexts (Hall, 2016); subtractive bilingualism is where the learners' home language is not taught to assimilate them into the dominant language group (Hall, 2016). The "English submersion" model of language learning resorts within the category of monolingualism (Enever & Lindgren, 2017).

Submersion models are programmes where only one language is used, in our case, English. The learners are mostly speaking minority languages with a low status mother tongue (Enever & Lindgren, 2017; Hall, 2016; Heineke, 2016). The educational goal of submersion is assimilation while the language outcome goal is monolingualism (Hall, 2016). This implies that the new language learned is regarded as an important language for future usage.

In South Africa, many schools have a different language of learning and teaching than that of the learners' mother tongue (DBE, 2010; Manten *et al*., 2020). Therefore, although the learners are educated to read English from Grade 1 onward, their mother tongue is an indigenous language. Most learners in South Africa are isiZulu (25%), followed by isiXhosa (20%), Afrikaans (10%), and then English (7%): "Even though English is the home language of only 7% of the learners in South Africa the majority of learners in the school system learn through the mediums of English (65%) and Afrikaans (12%) respectively" (DBE, 2010:22). From the statistics most learners (more than 50%) that are taught in English in South Africa's school system are instructed in their second language (Anderssen, Kritzinger, & Pottas, 2019). Available statistics indicate that 21.8% of Grade 1 learners are educated in English (DBE, 2010). Although the number is 21.8%, only 8% of these learners start with English as the LoLT in Grade 1. However, statistics also indicate that 81.4% of learners finish their schooling in English medium in Grade 12 (DBE, 2010). In 2007, it was estimated that 25% of Foundation Phase learners were learning in another language than their home language (DBE, 2010).

There are different reasons and circumstances for the fact that so many learners are schooled in a language other than their mother tongue. In South Africa, one of the main reasons for enrolling learners in English medium schools is because a certain proficiency level and literacy form of English are regarded as the main markers of being educated (Christie & McKinney, 2018). The notion that English should commence as soon as possible in a learner's school career, and that the maintenance of the learners' mother tongue is unnecessary, is often the perception of the submersion approach (McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008).

According to research, it is also evident that learners benefit from starting to learn an additional language as soon as possible. The following statements are made by Hinkel (2016):

- Only children learning a new language will be able to pronounce these words as if they were their mother tongue, as compared to an adult learning a new language.
- Children who learn a new language may be more likely to develop a grammatical competence as if that language were their mother tongue, in comparison to adults that learn a new language.
- Children learning a new language are likely to reach higher levels of attainment in pronunciation than adults.

From the statements above it is clear that learning an additional language early on has many benefits. A few considerations need to be kept in mind when enrolling learners in English from Grade 1. The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) advises the use of home language as the LoLT, especially in the early years of learning (DBE, 2010). Studies on South African learning outcomes also encourage learners to study in their mother tongue, at least from Grade 1 to 3, and then switch to English as the medium of instruction in Grade 4 (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016).

The schools that formed part of this study offer English on home language level from Grade 1, although the learners have a different mother tongue. It is estimated that around 58% of learners in South Africa that are educated in English have a different mother tongue (DBE, 2010).

English submersion concludes the introduction terminology for the study. The chapter outline of the study will now be discussed.

1.13 CHAPTER OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 gives an introduction and background to the planned research. It describes the rationale for the study. The hypothesis that the researcher wishes to test as well as the research questions presented in the study are described. An introduction to the

current literature on the topic of reading in English submersion classrooms is given. Both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study are introduced.

Additionally, a short summary is given on the research methodology on which the research is based, which includes a multi-phased intervention MMR design, the sampling techniques, as well as the processes of data collection, and how data were analysed. The trustworthiness of the study as well as the ethical considerations for the study are discussed. The limitations and delimitations of the study are described. Finally, the key concepts of the study are explained.

Chapter 2 consists of a literature review of the study. The literature review includes a discussion on the different models or approaches to second language learning, namely English immersion, bilingualism, and English submersion models. The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) in the Foundation Phase is discussed as well as its relation to English submersion classrooms. The importance of teachers as part of the CAPS in the Grade 1 classroom is also described. Recent literature on reading instructions is discussed as well as five important reading concepts as described by the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011), namely vocabulary, phonological awareness, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. A critical discussion on the importance of a structured phonics programme in English submersion classrooms in light of recent literature concludes the chapter.

Both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study are discussed in Chapter 3. The conceptual framework of the study entails the English submersion model. The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) is evaluated in this Chapter, by making use of the curriculum design diagram suggested by Macalister and Nation (2010). The study's theoretical framework includes the social cognitive theory (psychological perspective), the complex dynamic system approach to second language learning (linguistic perspective), and the componential model of reading (educational perspective).

Chapter 4 describes the research process. The rationale for the study as well as the hypothesis and research questions of the study are presented. The philosophy on which the research was built, is also described. The chapter explains the MMR design as used by the researcher. The MMR design being used for the study is a multi-phased

intervention mixed method design. Data gathering techniques are described including the use of quantitative data gathering by means of a quasi-experiment and qualitative data gathering by making use of interviews. The sampling process is also explained in detail. Methods of data collection and data analysis are described elaborately. The trustworthiness and how it relates to both quantitative and qualitative data gathering throughout the study are described. Ethical considerations made in the study are also discussed.

In Chapter 5 the research findings are discussed in detail. The analysed data are described according to the different phases present in the multi-phased MMR design. Both the qualitative and quantitative data are analysed and the findings described in detail. The data of the study are analysed by comparing the findings of the study to its conceptual and theoretical framework. To conclude the findings, the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study are compared to integrate these findings.

In Chapter 6 the study is concluded and recommendations for further research are made.

1.14 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Reading is a sophisticated skill that needs to be mastered as early as possible within formal schooling. It is an essential skill for further learning. Learners that are educated in English on a home language level, but who have a different mother tongue (ELLs) need additional support in South African schools. The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms. This research will also aim to investigate the context of ELLs in English submersion classrooms. The effectiveness of the current English Home Language curriculum in relation to reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms will be a focus point of the study.

In Chapter 1 the reader was introduced to the planned research of the study. The background of the research was explained, and the research questions were presented. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guided the study were also introduced.

The planned research methodology, including the research design and sampling, was explained. Data collection and data analysis were also explained. The trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the study were briefly described. The limitations and de-limitations of the study were also described in full.

Chapter 2 will present a review of the existing literature related to reading in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms, internationally as well as in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher focused on the introduction and background to the study, the rationale for the study, the research problem, the research questions, and the structure of the thesis. This chapter presents a review of the relevant literature on the topic of second language learning (SLL) in South African classrooms as well as the process of learning to read in a second language. SLL in South African classrooms will be discussed by looking at the bilingual, immersion, and submersion models of SLL. This chapter will also include a discussion on the available literature regarding the current English Home Language curriculum for the Foundation Phase and specifically literature that relates to how the curriculum is structured to support learners in English submersion classrooms. Available literature on the role that the teacher plays in the English submersion classroom will be discussed as well as available literature on current approaches followed to instruct reading in Grade 1. The chapter will be concluded with available literature on structured phonics programmes to assist learners with reading in English submersion classrooms.

Reading remains a complex skill that involves complex processes (Kim, 2020). Reports indicate that 75% of the learners that drop out of school have reading difficulties (Wijekumar, Beerwinkle, Mckeown, Zhang, & Joshi, 2020). It is therefore important to investigate strategies to help learners to overcome reading difficulties and excel in the important process of learning to read.

Theoretically and empirically, learner reading comprehension outcomes are linked to learner factors like cognition, teaching practices, teacher knowledge, and numerous complex contextual factors such as the socio-economic status and language background of learners (Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Wijekumar *et al.,* 2020).

The context of children who are learning in a second language (mostly English) is not only a phenomenon in South Africa, but this occurs across the globe (August & Shanahan, 2010; Krenca, Gottardo, Geva, & Chen, 2019; Pearson, Kamil, Mosenthal, &

Barr, 2016). There are many challenges to be faced by both these learners and teachers. For some learners it is very important to learn a second language (mostly English) in order to get access to higher educational institutions as well as to gain access to the labour market (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016).

This study is aimed at investigating the impact of a structured phonics intervention programme in English submersion schools in South Africa. One of the main concerns of teachers teaching reading to ELLs is that the learners have to read in a language that they do not understand completely (Woore, 2022). This research will thus focus on the context that ELLs find themselves in – in South African schools – and will investigate how the curriculum accommodates these learners.

To fully understand the context in which learners acquire reading skills in Grade 1 in South African schools, it is important to understand the different language contexts in which schools operate. Schools follow different models of SLL.

2.2 MODELS IN SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Bilingual education is education (formal and informal) provided in at least two languages (Pokrivčáková, Babocká, Bereczky, Bodorík, Bozdoğan, Dombeva, Froldová, Gondová, Hanesová, Hurajová, Leung, Luprichová, Sepešiová, Straková, Šimonová, Trníková, Xerri, & Zavalar, 2015). Different models of bilingual education include immersion, submersion, and dual language (bilingual) models. The bilingual model is a model that forms part of bilingual education (Pokrivčáková *et al*., 2015). The bilingual model can be described as additive bilingualism because it incorporates the learners' mother tongue in classroom instruction as a basis for learning the new language (Cummins, 2017). Bilingual learning is when the learners' home language and the target language are included in the classroom, as teaching and learning occurs in both languages throughout the day (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016). The instruction in the second language therefore builds on the mother tongue of the learners and is not aimed at replacing the mother tongue (Cummins, 2017).

Another form of additive bilingual education is the immersion model to SLL, where the LoLT is English, although learners still get exposure to their mother tongue (Pokrivčáková *et al*., 2015). For example, in South Africa, an immersion classroom will have the

learners' mother tongue as part of the curriculum, but English will be the LoLT throughout the rest of the curriculum (Pokrivčáková *et al*., 2015).

Subtractive bilingualism is where the second language is learned at the cost of the learners' mother tongue and gradually replaces the mother tongue (Cummins, 2017). Subtractive bilingualism includes the submersion model to learning in a new language.

Submersion models only include the new (target) language in all areas of learning and teaching at the school without offering the learners' mother tongue as a subject in the school (Enever & Lindgren, 2017). English submersion classrooms offer English on a home language level and all other subjects are educated in English while these learners' actual mother tongue is an indigenous language (Mogashoa, 2015).

Bilingualism is also referred to as a dual language approach to SLL and will be discussed first.

2.2.1 Bilingualism

Bilingualism refers to an approach where the additional language is built on the learners' home language (García & Li, 2015; Umansky & Reardon, 2014). Taylor and Von Fintel (2016) discovered that statistically, South African learners may benefit from being educated in their home language, with gradual exposure to English in the Foundation Phase and then switching to English as a medium of instruction in Grade 4. These findings are consistent with research that indicates that it is best for learners to start their education with the language spoken at home (Pretorius, 2017; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016; Taylor *et al.,* 2017). Umansky and Reardon (2014) also argue that the bilingual approach can have better results for learners in the long run. Although some literature and most recent research in South Africa have proven that a bilingual approach can be beneficial to learners (Dixon, Zhao, Shin, Wu, Su, Burgess-Brigham, Gezer, & Snow, 2012; Pretorius, 2017; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016; Taylor *et al.,* 2017) some learners are not educated in their mother tongue in South African schools due to a variety of reasons (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). These reasons include that there are not enough available teachers that are competent in the learners' mother tongue (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016) as well as the status of English as a global language. Christie and McKinney (2018) suggest that the language policies and practices in

these schools need to be revised to support ELLs by giving learners the opportunity to practise their mother tongue while developing their English skills.

One of the benefits of bilingual education is that children get the chance to become functionally bilingual (Wise, D'Angelo, & Chen, 2016): "We find that three years of English instruction in the Foundation Phase (grades 1, 2 and 3) relative to three years of first language instruction is associated with a negative effect on English performance in grades 4, 5 and 6 (approximately 17% of a standard deviation in test scores)" (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016:77). These results indicate that dual-language teaching may be beneficial since "English only" instruction in Grades 1 to 3 has a negative effect on English performance in Grades 4, 5, and 6.

Some schools in South Africa follow a bilingual approach. A strategy that is often used in the bilingual classroom is called translanguaging. Translanguaging is a strategy that can be implemented in the bilingual class to enhance the learning of a new language. It indicates the process of using one language (the mother tongue) to reinforce the other language to be learned (second language) by integrating the languages (Conteh, 2018). This promotes a deeper understanding of content and can also lead to the development of the weaker language in relation to the dominant language (García & Li, 2015). Recent studies have revealed excellent benefits where translanguaging is used in the bilingual classroom (Conteh, 2018).

Teachers can play an important role in the classroom by recognising the importance of translanguaging in constructing relationships with their learners to nurture mutual empowerment (Conteh, 2018). It is important to remember that translanguaging is part of a bigger social structure as is often the case with the topic of language, especially with the notion of a "target language" (Canagarajah, 2011). Translanguaging can be beneficial in the acquiring of a new language, but should not be regarded outside the complexity of its social environment (Canagarajah, 2011). Another strategy of promoting bilingual learning is allowing learners to have conversations in a social context.

2.2.1.1 Conversation in a Social Context

Recent research suggests that conversations in the target language had a positive impact on the language processing parts of the brain (Romeo, Leonard, Robinson, West, Mackey, Rowe, & Gabrieli, 2018). The usage of the language in a social context is very important in the acquiring of a new language (Hall, 2019).

With all else being equal, the more routine a learner's social experiences become and the more frequent, predictable, and salient the components comprising these experiences are, the more likely these components will be stored as cognitive representations in the learner's mind (Hall, 2019). What individuals learn from the regular engagement in their social experiences is not an abstract system of grammar, but rather groupings of words, and fixed and semi-fixed expressions that learners can refer back to (Hall, 2019).

Translanguaging as well as conversation in a social context, are strategies that promote bilingual education and are often implemented in the classrooms where a bilingual approach is followed.

2.2.2 English Immersion

Worldwide there has been an increase in young learners that are learning in one or more language other than their mother tongue (Manten *et al.,* 2020). It is estimated that one fifth of the learners in the USA are instructed in English immersion classrooms (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016). The concept of second language immersion seems to work well in the USA where they invented programmes in which learners get instruction for all subjects in their second language (Manchón & Polio, 2022). The learners' second language is thus used as the medium of instruction for all the subjects.

In the case of these programmes learners learned in Spanish (for example) but their home language was English. This approach of second language immersion was successful in the countries where it was implemented (Fortune, 2012). Where learners were educated in their second language as the medium of instruction, their proficiency in this second language (reading, speaking, and dialect) was much higher than learners that were educated in their mother tongue and had the second language only as

a part of the curriculum (Fortune, 2012). Umansky and Reardon (2014) state that an English immersion approach often has better outcomes in the short term due to the high concentration of “English language only”.

Immersion programmes have gained popularity worldwide, for example, English speaking American learners that are enrolled in French immersion classrooms from Grade 1 to promote dual language (Manchón & Polio, 2022; Wise *et al*., 2016). French immersion is an educational programme in Canada that promotes the French language acquisition of non-French learners. French is the sole medium of classroom instruction in the early Grades, whereas the children’s mother tongue is either English or another language (Wise *et al.,* 2016). In South Africa there are schools that follow an immersion approach where English is the language of learning and teaching of the school, although the learners’ mother tongue still forms part of the curriculum (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016).

2.2.3 English Submersion

As described earlier, the submersion model of bilingual education assumes that learners need a significant exposure to the target language (Hall, 2016; Vaish, 2020). It is often referred to as the sink or swim approach (Pokrivčáková *et al*., 2015; Vaish, 2020). No instruction or education is done in the learners’ mother tongue (Pokrivčáková *et al*., 2015). The use of submersion models often occurs when the learners’ home language is a minority language or regarded as secondary to the target language (Hall, 2016). Submersion models contribute to a language “transfer” from the minority language to the dominant language (Hall, 2016).

One of the other main reasons for English submersion in South Africa is to gain proficiency in English because of the fact that English (sometimes Afrikaans is added as an additional language) is used as medium of instruction at university level (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). Other reasons for learners to be schooled in English as set out in DBE (2010) is that English is

- associated with economic growth;
- a global language;
- useful for future studies at universities; and
- a common language in the working environment.

Because of the abovementioned reasons, many schools opt to teach learners in English from Grade 1. This approach is referred to as English submersion (Cummins, 2017). In English submersion classes learners are instructed solely in English (Hall, 2016). The goal with this approach is to promote English proficiency and provide academic content that is accessible to ELLs. In South Africa teaching through the medium of English produces some results in context, but it can be a disadvantage to learners with a different mother tongue (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017).

English submersion classrooms in South Africa are a phenomenon that presents itself due to the language policies implemented in schools. The language policy of a school can be determined by the school governing body (SGB) as well as the parents (DBE, 2010; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). If there are more than 40 learners requesting to be educated in a certain LoLT, it is a reasonable request (DBE, 2010). Although parents and SGBs have the power to change languages presented in schools, it often stays unchanged due to varying reasons. This includes parents' preferences for learners to learn in English submersion classrooms because of the status of English as a global language (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). Other practical reasons may include logistical difficulties and the language abilities of the teachers that are teaching at a specific school (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016).

In South Africa it is difficult to compare schools that have adopted an English submersion approach with schools that transition from the child's home language to English in the fourth Grade (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). The comparison is difficult because these two groups of schools are very different from each other (Taylor & Coetzee, 2013). Factors that impact results in schools are historical disadvantages, the socio-economic status of the learners, and the quality of the teachers and school management (DBE, 2017; Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). Although mother-tongue education in the Foundation Phase may be beneficial, teaching learners to read in their mother tongue does not ensure proficiency in reading as well (Cilliers & Bloch, 2018).

2.2.4 Final Discussion on Second Language Models

Researchers conducting extensive literature studies about the optimal conditions for SLL conclude that there is no best way to educate second language learners (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Dixon *et al*., 2012).

The conclusion can be made that the language of instruction is not the main concern when teaching learners in the early Grades but rather the quality of instruction given by the school and the professionalism of the teachers (Cheung & Slavin, 2012; Hoadley, 2016). There is a positive correlation between school quality and English instruction, which leads to English performance (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). Educational goals, the design of programmes, and learner characteristics may also contribute to language acquisition and learning success rather than one specific language learning model (Dixon *et al.,* 2012).

With the above mentioned in mind, the focus of this study is English submersion classrooms in Mpumalanga. The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms. As one of the steps in the research process, the researcher investigated the current curriculum and how it supports teachers in teaching ELLs in English submersion classrooms.

As is clear from the discussion above, the submersion approach where learners are educated in English from a very young age may have benefits, but it also complicates learning and reading, especially in the Foundation Phase (Hinkel, 2016). Since submersion is a common occurrence in South Africa, the expectation may be that the curriculum provides teachers with the support they need to teach ELLs.

2.3 CURRICULUM

A curriculum is at the heart of the educational system because it combines thought, effort, and purpose into suitable content (Null, 2017). Decisions made about a curriculum is often social, cultural, and economical (McLachlan, Fleer, & Edwards, 2018). A holistic curriculum is framed around the cognitive and physical strengths and needs of the learners, as well as their social and cultural background (McLachlan *et al.,* 2018; Wood & Hedges, 2016). A curriculum can be described as difficult conversations and questions combined with dynamic working practices (Wood & Hedges, 2016). The curriculum needs to balance the teachers, the content, and the socio-economic status of the learners (Comber, 2016). All learners need to be supported to learn and benefit from a general curriculum (Comber, 2016).

The difference between “curriculum” and “syllabus” is that a curriculum is a wider area that includes the whole school strategy for learning while a syllabus is limited to specific content for a specific subject and Grade (Mahdi, Ehsan, & Javad, 2013). The focus of this study will be on both the curriculum and the syllabus for the English Home Language subject for Grade 1 (DBE, 2011).

Curriculum design can be divided into two broad categories being product and process orientated. A product focused curriculum is a curriculum where the emphasis is on the outcome of what is learned (Sheehan, 1986). The process-based curriculum – the design that will guide this study – focuses on the task at hand, procedures, negotiations, and proportions, and is content based (Rajaee, Abbaspour, & Zare, 2013).

Another distinction that needs to be made is between a synthetic syllabus and an analytic language syllabus. A synthetic syllabus is one where the different parts of a language is educated separately and gradually. These parts are taught and built to complete the language structure (Rajaee *et al*., 2013). In contrast, an analytic syllabus design is where the language is educated in the way that you would want to use it (all the structures together). The synthetic language design for curriculum design is structural, situational, and functional (Rajaee *et al*., 2013). Both approaches have merit. The multi-dimensional approach is where different approaches to syllabus development is combined and will be the approach of focus for this study (Rajaee *et al*., 2013).

Learners’ background and language proficiency will help to design the curriculum at the appropriate language level with the appropriate materials for specific learners (Hall, 2016). Curriculum practices must set the tone for learners’ historical and cultural needs. If not, the dominant curriculum practices become the “normal” of these classrooms (McLachlan *et al*., 2018). It is important to understand the learners’ history and environment when designing a curriculum (Comber, 2016; Wood & Hedges, 2016). This includes a ranked list of factors of the learners’ environment that will influence the process of curriculum design (Carilo, 2018; Nation & Macalister, 2020). It would be optimal if the learners’ cultural diversities were accommodated from early schooling by including time in the curriculum to develop intercultural practices and to train teachers in cultural diversity (Enever & Lindgren, 2017).

The principles on which the curriculum is built should outline the understanding of the language and the type of learners the curriculum is meant for (Hall, 2016). These principles should be derived from theories of language and research on language acquisition (Hall, 2016). Teachers need to be conscious of the principles set out in the curriculum and link them to classroom practice (Nation & Macalister, 2020).

It might encourage principle implementation if teachers get the opportunity to help design the curriculum to allow for place-conscious pedagogy and critical literacy (Comber, 2016). Curriculum principles must be understood by all stakeholders (including teachers) for the schooling system to improve (Null, 2017). Stating principles help to focus the goals and objectives of learning in context (Hall, 2016).

2.3.1 An Overview of the South African Curriculum

An overview of South Africa's curriculum development and transformation starts with outcome-based education (OBE) that replaced the Christian National Education curriculum in 1997 (Govender & Hugo, 2018; Ivala & Scott, 2019; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). A few years later OBE was replaced by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) which became policy in 2002 (Govender & Hugo, 2018; Ivala & Scott, 2019; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

Curriculum 2005 was introduced after RNCS. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) or better known as Curriculum 2005 (DBE, 2008) has not contributed to sound reading instruction in education. The role of the teacher was misunderstood. According to Curriculum 2005, teachers were merely facilitators of the reading process, and they did not have to instruct reading. This meant that learners had to teach themselves to read (DBE, 2008; Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017). The expectation was that teachers should develop their own teaching materials and reading programmes, but that worsened the situation (DBE, 2008).

Since Curriculum 2005 there were numerous attempts by the DBE to improve South Africa's reading performance, but our country is still far behind if we look at the report on South Africa's performance in the PIRLS study of 2016 (Mullis *et al*., 2017; cf. section 1.1 for a discussion on South Africa's results in the PIRLS).

The CAPS was introduced in 2012 and is still currently the curriculum that is followed by all schools in South Africa (DBE, 2017). The goals of the CAPS were to strengthen the curriculum, specify the knowledge and skills that learners have to acquire in each subject, and to make assessment clear and easier (DBE, 2017; Ivala & Scott, 2019). The set curriculum forms part of the teacher's classroom and the way they teach learners (Ivala & Scott, 2019). Although research indicates that teachers are positive about the CAPS, they also describe it as a curriculum that tells *what* to teach and not *how* to teach (Ivala & Scott, 2019). Specific instructions/guidelines in reading should be available to teachers so that learners reach sufficient benchmarks at every Grade level which is especially important in the Foundation Phase (Govender & Hugo, 2018).

The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) will be the focus of investigation in this study because it is an important resource in the education of reading in English in the Foundation Phase in English submersion classrooms.

2.3.2 Introduction to the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) in the Foundation Phase

The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) for the Foundation Phase is the curriculum that is used to teach reading in classes where English is the LoLT of the school (DBE, 2011). Limited research has focused on the impact of CAPS on reading and language acquisition in the Foundation Phase (Govender & Hugo, 2018).

The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) was compiled for learners that are educated in English from Grade 1. The term "English Home Language" refers more to a certain level of proficiency than the learners' "mother tongue" (DBE, 2016). The English Home Language curriculum is used where English is educated as the LoLT in the school or as the learners "first language".

In the statistics on languages of learners in South Africa (cf. section 1.12.3) it is estimated that 25% of Foundation Phase learners are schooled in English but have another mother tongue. In these cases, learners follow the English Home Language curriculum for the Foundation Phase, although they have an indigenous language as their mother tongue. The DBE (2016:10) explains the level of proficiency of the English Home Language curriculum as follows: "Home Language is the first language acquired

by learners. However, many South African schools do not offer the home languages of some or all the enrolled learners but rather have one or two languages offered at home language level".

This means that the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) refers to a certain proficiency level rather than the actual home language of the learners: "The Home Language level provides for language proficiency that reflects the basic interpersonal communication skills required in social situations and the cognitive academic skills essential for learning across the curriculum" (DBE, 2016:10).

Research on the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) has highlighted some problematic areas, specifically regarding reading. De Lange *et al*. (2020) assert that several studies have critiqued the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) because of the confusing nature of guidelines in the document on reading comprehension. Their findings were that the CAPS needs clear principles derived from research and theory, otherwise advice on reading comprehension will be random.

Recent studies in South Africa (Gouws, 2017; Govender & Hugo, 2018; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022) have investigated teachers' perspectives on the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) for the Foundation Phase. They have discovered that teachers are of the view that the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) in the Foundation Phase is not adequate because of a lack of instruction on reading acquisition as well as problems with pacing and assessment of reading. Teachers therefore need additional reading resources to assist them with knowledge and guidelines on how to teach learners to read.

According to Ramadiro and Porteus (2017:88), "[i]t appears that the CAPS attempts to cover a wide variety of literacy expectations but does not adequately assist teachers to structure the depth of skills, nor the instructional balance between skills, consistent with grade level expectation" (cf. Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). Matseliso and Phajane (2013) conclude that suitable approaches and methods to teaching reading should be included in the curriculum. They also suggest that there should be more collaboration between teachers and district officials when planning reading interventions and approaches (Matseliso & Phajane, 2013). Teachers and subject specialists need to keep

up with the latest research on reading and progress in language and literacy development to benefit from the best approaches (Matseliso & Phajane, 2013). A clear syllabus on teaching initial reading should be drawn up in all languages (Matseliso & Phajane, 2013).

The researcher was interested in how the needs of ELLs were met in the current English Home Language curriculum. A detailed discussion of what specific requirements and instructions the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) have in regard to reading will follow below. It is clear that the current CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) does not give any guidance regarding support, or any deviation plan concerning tempo or content when it comes to ELLs in English submersion classrooms in South Africa (Govender & Hugo, 2018).

2.3.3 Critical Discussion on the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011)

The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) will be the focus of the study. To understand the curriculum in relation to learning English as an oral language, as well as learning to read in English, the CAPS document will be explored further.

According to the DBE (2011), the subject, English Home Language, is divided into three components:

- Listening and speaking.
- Reading and phonics.
- Writing and handwriting.

The allocated time per component is set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Indication on time allocation per component

Topic	Time per Day	Time per Week
Listening and Speaking	15 minutes per day for three days.	45 minutes per week.
Reading and Phonics	*Phonics*: 15 minutes per day for five days (one hour and 15 minutes). *Shared reading*: 15 minutes per day for three days (45 minutes).	4 hours and 30 minutes per week.

	Group Reading: 30 minutes per day (two groups each for 15 minutes) for five days (two hours 30 minutes).	
Handwriting	15 minutes per day for 4 days.	1 hour per week.
Writing	15 minutes per day for 3 days.	45 minutes per week.
	Total hours per week:	**7 hours**

Table 2.1 indicates that listening and speaking are scheduled for 15 minutes per day for three days per week. Phonics gets a time allocation of 15 minutes per day for five days per week while shared reading gets a time allocation of 15 minutes for three days per week. Handwriting should be done for 15 minutes per day for four days per week and writing 15 minutes per day for three days per week.

The structured phonics programme that was implemented in this study focused on phonics (15 minutes), but also included listening and speaking (15 minutes) as well as shared reading (15 minutes) and handwriting (15 minutes). This indicated that the hour intervention a day was in line with the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011).

Shared reading refers to the whole class reading the same text such as big books, posters, and pictures, a text on an overhead transparency (projection), individual fiction, or non-fiction texts for each child (DBE, 2011). According to the CAPS document for Home Language, shared reading should be done for 15 minutes every day (DBE, 2011). Shared reading is most often used in primary Grades. After the teacher has read the text several times with the children, the teacher uses it to teach phonics and high frequency words (Tompkins, 2013). The focus of each shared reading session will be on some of the following concepts (DBE, 2011):

- Concepts about print.
- Text features.
- Phonics.
- Language patterns.
- Word identification strategies.

- Comprehension at a range of levels e.g., literal, reorganisation, inferential, evaluation, and appreciation questions.

According to the CAPS document for Home Language (DBE, 2011), the first shared reading session has to focus on the enjoyment of reading where children should be given a personalised response to the text. The next session should involve the same text, but this time the focus must be more on reading with the teacher, using the discussion that takes place to develop vocabulary, comprehension, decoding skills, and text structure (grammar, punctuation, etc.). On the third and fourth encounter with the text, the children should engage with the text themselves (DBE, 2010).

In order to be able to do shared reading, teachers need appropriate texts that are decodable by the learners in the class (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). Shared reading needs to be paired with the phonics being taught (DBE, 2011). This means that the available reading pieces for shared reading must be built on the phonetic sounds taught in the class (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). The learners must be able to follow the teacher when reading. This can be done by using big books or individual reading pieces (DBE, 2011).

To summarise, the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) suggests that teachers should focus on three language components, namely listening and speaking, reading and phonics, and writing and handwriting (DBE, 2011). The focus of this study will be on the first two components, namely listening and speaking and reading and phonics, whilst specifically focusing on emergent reading in the Grade 1 submersion classroom.

2.4 TEACHERS AS PART OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAPS

Teachers are the people who must put the curriculum into practice in the classroom (Govender & Hugo, 2018). They have to understand basic language constructs in order to be able to teach learners how to read in their early Grades (Spaull & Taylor, 2022). They will not be able to teach effectively when they do not understand such constructs themselves (Christiansen & Bertram, 2019; Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017; Spaull, 2015). Teachers should understand how to teach reading by making use of

explicit, rigorous, and systematic phonics (Armstrong & Squires, 2015). Their attitude towards reading could influence how they teach reading (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017).

In recent years, the focus in the UK has shifted from how the learners learn, to the training of teachers and institutions responsible for teaching learners (Pritchard, 2017). They suggest that teachers should be trained on the most recent and relevant research on theories for the classroom practice (Pritchard, 2017). This is an important viewpoint as the researcher set out to investigate if the teachers felt that their training was adequate to teach reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms.

An important aspect that policy makers must keep in mind is the training of teachers in the specific field that they are teaching: “No educational system can go beyond the competencies and quality of its teachers” (Spaull, 2015:6). Research has consistently revealed that South African teachers are lacking the basic knowledge and pedagogical skills to teach the subjects allotted to them (Christiansen & Bertram, 2019; Spaull, 2015). An important aspect to keep in mind is to determine teachers’ understanding of what is meant by *reading comprehension* and *reading strategies* (De Lange *et al*., 2020).

Teachers face challenges as cultural and linguistic diversities in their classrooms increase. In this study some of the teachers may feel intimidated and discouraged by the fact that they do not speak the home language (mostly isiZulu) represented by the learners in the classroom. Being able to speak an indigenous language is necessary for working with diverse learner populations (Abney & Krulatz, 2015). It should be regarded as imperative for teachers to be aware of their own cultural biases and to be trained to promote cultural diversity (Enever & Lindgren, 2017).

Reading in South Africa will not improve unless teachers have more knowledge in their content areas (Spaull & Jansen, 2019). Meaningful learning opportunities to practise pedagogical practices are important. Teacher coaches seem to have a positive effect on learning outcomes, but it has immense financial implications (Spaull & Jansen, 2019). Recent studies have focused on on-site coaching by means of classroom visits and virtual on-site training (Kotze, Fleisch, & Taylor, 2019).

When teachers are curriculum designers and not only receivers, they should help to design the curriculum according to the community's needs (Comber, 2016). Teachers need to be actively involved in the integration of the curriculum at Grade level (Comber, 2016), having an adequate understanding of the curriculum to implement it practically in the classroom (Macalister & Nation, 2010).

Mather and Land (2014) note that educators need to receive effective training and ongoing support to fully understand the expectations of the curriculum if South African learners want to benefit from the CAPS. Teachers need to be thoroughly equipped for the complex task to teach emergent reading by having sufficient knowledge of the subject. According to Little and Akin-Little (2014), 95% of illiteracy in the USA is not accounted for by a reading disability but rather an inappropriate or insufficient instruction in reading. If we do not try to enhance teachers' pedagogical knowledge in South African schools, an improvement of the educational system will not be achieved (Spaull & Jansen, 2019).

Training by the Department of Education needs to be well planned. Additionally, it must elaborate on what the CAPS document states regarding reading and pedagogical practices associated with it (Mather & Land, 2014).

2.5 READING INSTRUCTION

Phonics is often criticised, as many people believe that a phonetic approach to reading does not focus on reading comprehension (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). Phonics is an approach to reading where the emphasis is on the decoding of words. Letter-sound relations are taught first and then letters are used to form words. After that, words are read together to form sentences (Pearson & Hiebert, 2015).

The "reading wars" refer to the debate on reading acquisition in the 1990s between the phonics and the Whole Language approach (Flippo, 2012; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). According to the Whole Language reading theory, reading is the process in which thoughts and language interact as the reader builds meaning (Goodman & Goodman, 2014). The Whole Language approach focuses on the idea that the child's attention should be on the communicative function of written language rather than its formal capacity (Stahl & McKenna, 2006). A combination of the two approaches can

be referred to as the Balanced Approach. The Balanced Approach is therefore a combination of the traditional bottom-up approach (phonics) and top-down approach (Whole Language) to reading acquisition.

According to Spaull and Pretorius (2022:153), "Whole Language conceptions of early reading cannot be reconciled with evidence-based reading instruction, and it is unclear why attempts to 'balance' these approaches have been prioritised over the large body of evidence supporting phonics approaches to initial reading instruction".

Recent research emphasises the importance of explicit phonics instruction, especially when acquiring early reading skills (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; Rastle & Taylor, 2018; Sparks & Patton, 2016; Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). Research agrees that the goal of reading acquisition should be to read for meaning. Research also indicates that reading comprehension in the Intermediate and Senior Phases are predicted by the fluency in the Foundation Phase, which is predicted by the level of knowledge of phonetic sounds or phonics in Grade 1 (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

The importance of phonics/decoding is emphasised by Chapman and Tunmer (2020), discussing a reading intervention that was implemented in New Zealand. This intervention relied on one-on-one tutoring and skills used in the Whole Language reading theory. According to these researchers, this intervention was not contributing to reading achievement in New Zealand (Pearson *et al*., 2016). They claim that more attention should be given to decoding as part of the reading process than semantic or synthetic cues (Chapman & Tunmer, 2020; Pearson *et al*., 2016).

Extensive reviews of reading research have concluded that phonics approaches in reading are superior to the Whole Language approach and that phonics instruction is the most powerful in the process of learning to read (Chapman & Tunmer, 2020).

Since the focus of this study will be on reading acquisition in Grade 1 (early reading skills), the main focus will be on phonics as the method of reading instruction. Phonics will, however, not be discussed in isolation, but as one of the five concepts of reading. In 1998, Snow, Burns, and Griffin published a report called *Preventing reading difficulties in young children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) and in 2000 the National Reading

Panel (NRP) issued a report about the five skills needed for reading acquisition (NRP 2000) that are also mentioned in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). The following five concepts should be used to teach reading in the Foundation Phase (DBE, 2011):

- Vocabulary;
- phonological awareness;
- word recognition (phonics and sight words);
- fluency; and
- comprehension.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms. The phonics programme was designed by the researcher on the five concepts mentioned above. Each concept will be discussed in detail below.

2.5.1 Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the understanding of words and their meaning (Hansen, 2018). Oral comprehension is often associated with a range of verbal language skills like vocabulary, definitions of words, oral sentence construction, and syntactic skills like word order and sentence order knowledge (Hjetland, Lervåg, Lyster, Hagtvet, Hulme, & Melby-Lervåg 2019; Yeung *et al*., 2016). Teachers use different strategies to teach vocabulary including making use of pictures, videos, and real-life objects (Syafrizal & Haerudin, 2018). Teaching learners vocabulary and grammar in the language in which they have to read, should be part of the components followed when teaching ELLs to read (Nation & Macalister, 2020). The use of pictures can be beneficial in enhancing learners' grammar and spoken language skills when learning how to speak a new language (Nasri *et al*., 2019).

Research has indicated that vocabulary depth is strongly linked to reading comprehension (Hansen, 2018). In a longitudinal study, it was found that early vocabulary skills had a significant correlation with reading comprehension at the age of 12 (Suggate, Schaughency, McAnally, & Reese, 2018).

A learner's English language vocabulary plays a very important role in their reading performance (Foote & Debrick, 2016; Hansen, 2018; Li *et al*., 2020; Suggate *et al*., 2018). Learners that start school in their second language may have slower vocabulary growth and face disadvantages in later academic tasks (Manten *et al*., 2020). Learners' vocabulary correlates more with reading comprehension than with word reading alone (Chapman & Tunmer, 2020). This means that although children may be able to read certain words by using their knowledge of the letter-sound relations, they will not be able to comprehend what they read if the word is not in their vocabulary (Chapman & Tunmer, 2020).

Research has indicated that interactive vocabulary instruction as well as reading stories may help in vocabulary building in the Grade 1 year (Van den Berg, 2019). Evidence suggests that vocabulary and listening comprehension are the most important factors in linguistic comprehension among bilingual learners (Li *et al*., 2020).

2.5.2 Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is an important skill that learners need to develop, as it will enable them in their learning process to read. Phonological awareness is the skill to identify individual speech sounds and is regarded as the best predictor of reading ability (Afflerbach, 2015; Manten *et al*., 2020;): "Phonemic awareness is recognising that speech consists of sounds and is able to recognise these individual sounds, how they make words and how these words make sentences" (DBE, 2011:12). This is an awareness that should start as early as Grade 1 (Rohde, 2015). It is also suggested that reading problems may originate from linguistic difficulties rather than visual impairments (Tønnessen & Uppstad, 2015). This means that learners struggle to hear the sounds of the language being learned but do not struggle that much to identify the letters visually.

Phonological awareness skills need to be developed. Rhyming and alliteration forms the basis which later leads to segmenting and blending phonemes (Rohde, 2015). Phonological processing skills or phonemic awareness can be improved by instruction and practice, which can lead to significant achievement differences in reading acquisition (Le Roux, Geertsema, Jordaan, & Prinsloo, 2017; Tønnessen & Uppstad, 2015).

According to Scanlon, Anderson, & Sweeney (2010), it is important for teachers to remember the difference between phonemic awareness and phonics. Teachers need to be sensitive to the sounds that occur in spoken words to be effective in guiding children to attend to those sounds. Phonological awareness forms the foundation for phonics learning and development. Instructions on how to improve phonological awareness were provided in the structured phonics intervention programme implemented in this study. An elaborate discussion on how this was achieved can be found in Chapter 4 of this study.

2.5.3 Word Recognition (Phonics and Sight Words)

According to the English Home Language curriculum, word recognition can be divided into two categories, namely phonics and sight words (DBE, 2011).

2.5.3.1 Phonics

The phonics approach refers to a synthetic phonics instruction in which the instruction in letter and sound relation precedes word recognition. Phonics can also be described as the process by which the sounds in spoken language are represented by letters in printed language (Scanlon *et al*., 2010). Making use of letter-sound patterns is the foundation for identifying the words to be read (Chapman & Tunmer, 2020). In a study on the English Home Language curriculum from the CAPS, teachers are of the view that phonics needs to be taught more systematically (Govender & Hugo, 2018).

A synthetic phonics approach is aligned with theories of early reading development (Shapiro & Solity, 2016). This is a widely accepted approach for teaching learners how to read in English (Shapiro & Solity, 2016). “Letter-sound relations should be taught in an explicit, organised, and sequenced fashion” (Shapiro & Solity, 2016:3). Synthetic phonics holds that learners should be taught to sound out every phoneme in a word and then blend these phonemes together to pronounce the whole word (Shapiro & Solity, 2016).

2.5.3.1.1 Writing to reinforce phonics learned

According to Nation and Macalister (2020), writing the letter shapes help learners to learn the phonics taught. Writing is an important skill to enhance the phonics which were taught as well as to improve spelling (DBE, 2011). More research on writing in a

second language and how this can enhance second language skills is needed (cf. Manchón & Polio, 2022).

2.5.3.2 Sight Words

Sight word reading refers to any word that can be automatically read by sight, whether regular or irregular (Ehri, 2014). Word recognition is an important skill in the English language since it contains a lot of irregular words that cannot be decoded by using only phonics sounds (DBE, 2011; Manten *et al*., 2020). Sight word training is used to teach children high frequency words with irregular spelling (Colenbrander, Wang, Arrow, & Castles, 2020; McArthur, Kohnen, Jones, Eve, Banales, Larsen, & Castles, 2015). Learners must store irregular words in their memory – this is known as orthographic representation (Colenbrander *et al*., 2020; Shapiro & Solity, 2016). With increased exposure to the same words, the orthographic representation becomes more detailed and secured in their memory, allowing them to rapidly access the pronunciation of the word from written text (Colenbrander *et al*., 2020; Shapiro & Solity, 2016).

Shapiro and Solity (2016) profess that there is no clear answer on the best way to teach sight words. It is suggested that attention should first be given to decoding and grapheme-phoneme correspondences, after which it would be beneficial to introduce learners to a small set of irregularly spelled words. Learners should practise these sight words until they are familiar with it (Shapiro & Solity, 2016). It is important to focus on the detail of a word's spelling, and to combine the detailed spelling with the learners' vocabulary knowledge to help them read sight words (Shapiro & Solity, 2016). The structured phonics intervention programme that was implemented in this study introduced sight words at each lesson to assist learners in learning high frequency words and words with irregular spelling.

2.5.4 Fluency

Defining reading fluency is a rather difficult task. According to Tønnessen and Uppstad (2015), reading fluency is thinking your way through the text, but not allowing yourself to focus too much on the written medium. This means that the learners must have a certain skill set to identify words without giving too much attention to the skills (like decoding, word recognition, and phonemic awareness) which they are applying.

Reading fluency is indicative of the general reading skills of readers and correlates closely with reading comprehension (Afflerbach, 2015). According to the CAPS document for English Home Language (DBE, 2011), reading fluency involves the following elements:

- Accuracy in decoding;
- the rate of speed reading: Be able to recognise the words and read the words quickly and effortlessly;
- reading smoothly with expression; and
- to be able to comprehend what is read.

Reading fluency is one of the main goals in reading acquisition for young learners. Letter naming in Grade 1 (to be able to say the sound of individual letters when presented) is a good prediction of reading fluency (Afflerbach, 2015). Learners should be assisted to obtain reading fluency. This can be done with the following strategies (Nation & Macalister, 2020):

- Learners should be presented with a familiar text that does not include any unknown words.
- Speed reading practise in word recognition.
- Speed reading with comprehension.

It was the aim of this study to see if a phonics programme could assist learners with reading fluency.

2.5.5 Comprehension

The end goal of reading is for learners to comprehend what they read (Castle *et al*., 2018; Hansen, 2018). Readers should be able to comprehend what they read at least to the degree that a learner would be able to comprehend the message of the text when given aurally (Venezky, 2019). Reading comprehension is achieved by oral language skills, word recognition, and working memory (Yeung *et al*., 2016). The aim is for learners to decode a written text to such an extent that it is done automatically, so that more time can be spent on understanding the context of the text (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

In this study the focus was thus on the decoding of words, to improve fluency and also to improve comprehension as the end goal in English submersion classrooms.

2.6 THE NEED FOR PHONICS INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES TO CATER TO ELLs IN ENGLISH SUBMERSION CLASSROOMS

Woore (2022) has critically investigated recent research on the importance of phonics when second language learners learn how to read. He concludes that explicit phonics instruction is likely to be beneficial to ELLs in improving reading accuracy (Woore, 2022). Recent research discloses that intervention programmes that focus on explicit systematic phonics and phonological awareness activities improve reading acquisition skills in English classrooms where English is the learners' second language (Buckingham, 2020; Cheung & Slavin, 2012; Huo & Wang, 2017; Woore, 2022). It is important to include appropriate phonological awareness activities in structured phonics programmes to enhance reading acquisition (Pearson *et al*., 2016).

The formal and appropriate teaching of phonics is an area of neglect, especially in rural schools (Hoadley, 2016). This may be due to teachers struggling with the most effective methods of teaching phonics as well as a lack of teacher training on how to teach phonics in the classroom (Dilgard, Hodges & Coleman, 2022). Learners in South Africa often battle with decoding, which means that they decode words at such a slow rate that they are unable to understand what they are reading (Cilliers & Bloch, 2018).

South African studies argue that providing learners with reading material that is phonetically-sequenced and available to each learner, exposes a positive improvement in reading in the learners' mother tongue (Cilliers & Bloch, 2018; Spaull & Taylor, 2022). More research in English submersion classrooms is necessary. Learners need to engage in appropriate reading activities to enhance reading acquisition (Cilliers & Bloch, 2018; Pearson *et al*., 2016).

The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) does not mention the context of learners learning in English on home language level, but with a different mother tongue

(Govender & Hugo, 2018). It also does not provide a reading programme with instructions to teachers. Structured reading programmes will provide teachers with strong routines and core methodologies to follow in the classroom (Spaull & Taylor, 2022).

There are many reading programmes that have been proven successful in recent research, but these programmes focus on reading in the learners' mother tongue (Cilliers & Bloch, 2018; Spaull & Taylor, 2022; Taylor *et al*., 2017). The researcher has observed a need for research on interventions that can assist teachers and learners in English submersion classrooms in South Africa.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the different approaches to SLL, comprising of the English immersion model, the English submersion model, and the bilingual model. From the literature it is clear that bilingual models for the teaching of a second language as well as the immersion approach to SLL still include a learner's mother tongue in instruction and may have better results regarding to English language learning as opposed to the submersion approach where the learners' mother tongue does not form part of the classroom instruction. Due to various reasons, learners in South Africa find themselves in schools with only English as the language of learning and teaching and with no reference to their mother tongue from as early as Grade 1. These learners are referred to as ELLs in this study.

ELLs follow the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) curriculum. The title "home language" as mentioned in the title of the curriculum does not refer to the learners' home language but rather to a certain proficiency level in the language of education. In these schools, English is not only the language of learning and teaching but is also taught as a subject, with no reference to the learners' mother tongue. The English Home Language curriculum does not make any reference to ELLs and does not give special instructions on how to teach reading to these learners. Literacy is divided into three components in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011), namely listening and speaking, reading, and phonics, complemented by writing and handwriting. The focus of this study will be on *listening and speaking* as well as *reading and phonics* as part of a structured phonics reading intervention to assist learners with reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms. Teachers as part of the implementation

of the curriculum and the importance of teacher training in teaching reading were also discussed.

The chapter included a discussion on the literature available on the best approaches to reading instruction. Although a balanced approach to reading has merits, systematic phonics is an important indicator for reading success in early reading acquisition. The five concepts of reading as suggested by the national reading panel and the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) were discussed as part of the reading components that are important in reading, namely vocabulary, phonological awareness, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.

The chapter is concluded with a discussion on the importance of a structured phonics reading intervention programme in an English submersion classroom.

The next chapter presents both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study.

CHAPTER 3
CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The *conceptual framework* of the study will include an evaluation of the current English Home Language curriculum and how it relates to reading in English submersion classrooms. The *theoretical framework* for the study will be built on three theories, namely the SCT, the CDST to second language learning, as well as the CMR. As explained in Chapter 1, the SCT will focus on the psychological perspective of the study. The CDST will form part of the linguistic perspective of the study while the CMR will guide the study from an educational perspective.

3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

3.2.1 English Submersion Classrooms

English submersion classrooms are not unique to South Africa. In fact, it is a phenomenon occurring across the globe, where learners have to learn in English from Grade 1 onward (Krenca *et al*., 2019). These learners mostly have a different mother tongue, but are enrolled in “English only” classes in English submersion schools (cf. section 2.2.3 for a detailed discussion on English submersion classrooms). The reason for parents enrolling their children in English submersion schools are numerous (cf. section 2.2.3). It can be argued that the curriculum designers need to describe the specific context in which ELLs learn in the curriculum and provide more guidance to teachers on how to accommodate these learners (Manchón & Polio, 2022).

The researcher therefore made use of a curriculum design diagram to assess the degree to which the curriculum is providing support for ELLs in English submersion classrooms.

3.2.2 Curriculum Evaluation in English Submersion Classrooms

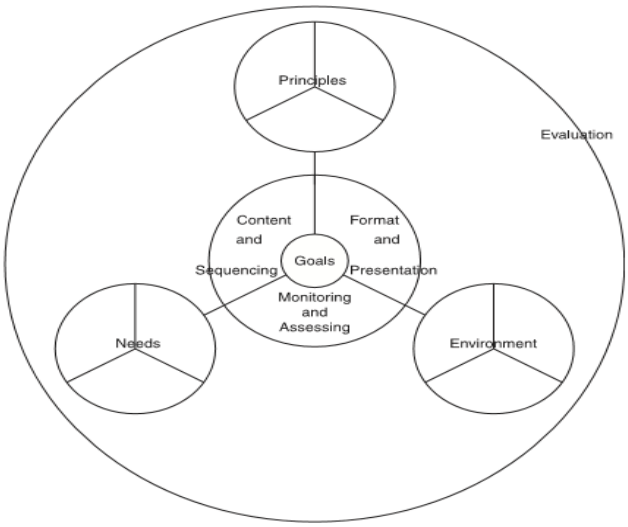
Curriculum evaluation is a process of professional development to improve the quality of education (McCormick & James, 2018). It also applies to the improvement of teaching techniques and learning material available (McCormick & James, 2018). Curriculum evaluation can either be product focused, process focused, or research focused

(McCormick & James, 2018). For this study, the curriculum will be evaluated from a research perspective. It will also be evaluated using the curriculum design diagram presented by Macalister and Nation (2010) to evaluate the language curriculum design applied in English submersion classrooms in South Africa.

3.2.3 Curriculum Design Diagram

The conceptual framework of the study will be built on the curriculum design diagram as described in the language curriculum design by Macalister and Nation (2010). Designing a curriculum is a complex task and should be based on specific theories and models (McLachlan *et al*., 2018). The curriculum design diagram suggested by Macalister and Nation will be discussed in detail below to explain the individual concepts suggested by it.

Figure 3.1. The curriculum design diagram as presented in Macalister and Nation (2010)



The goals that the designers have when creating a curriculum, form the heart of the curriculum design process (Carilo, 2018; Govender & Hugo, 2018; Hall, 2016; Macalister & Nation, 2010). The main aspect to keep in mind when designing a curriculum is to think about the goals of education and to raise deeper questions into the purpose of schooling (Null, 2017). The goals of the curriculum are achieved by investigating key concepts, namely content and sequencing, format and presentation, as well as monitoring and assessing (cf. Figure 3.1).

The inner circles of Figure 3.1 (suggested by Macalister & Nation, 2010) are balanced with three major pillars, namely needs, environment, and principles (cf. Carilo, 2018). The whole process and all the pillars need to be evaluated to keep a clear and open mind on the details of the process as illustrated by the outer circle (Macalister & Nation, 2010). The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) will be discussed by making use of the curriculum design diagram.

3.2.4 The Three Pillars of the Curriculum Design Diagram

The three pillars, namely *needs, environment*, and *principles* of the curriculum, as suggested by Macalister and Nation (2010) will be used to evaluate the current English Home Language curriculum for ELLs in English submersion classrooms.

3.2.4.1 Needs Analysis

Needs analysis entails gathering information about the specific learners that engage with the curriculum (Hall, 2016). This includes the specific language that learners need to learn as well as ideas or skill items of learners' current and future needs and wants (Carilo, 2018). The needs of learners should be addressed in the curriculum in order for teachers to ensure their participation in language activities and to promote learning of the basic fundamentals on which further learning can be built (Christiansen & Bertram, 2019). The needs of the learners that formed part of the study were specifically that they were learning in a new language (English) and not in their mother tongue. The ELLs in the classrooms that formed part of the study had specific needs regarding language, as well as cultural and environmental needs. The researcher could not find evidence in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) that refers teachers to the needs of learners or describes the current model of English submersion classrooms in South Africa.

3.2.4.2 Environmental Analysis

Environmental analysis involves identifying factors in the environment which include resources and constraints that will have an influence on the curriculum (Hall, 2016). Factors that need to be considered when designing a curriculum include human resources, physical resources, the educational environment, as well as social and political factors. Table 3.1 describes these factors and how they relate to this study.

Table 3.1. Important factors to consider in curriculum design and how it relates to this study (adapted from Hall, 2016)

Factors	Application in this Study
Human resources including teachers	The teachers teaching reading play a key role in this teaching of reading to ELLs, and need to be equipped for this task.
Physical resources including materials	This research will investigate available reading resources in English submersion classrooms.
The educational environment	The researcher was interested in the physical environment in which learners learned, including the overall attitude towards reading by the teachers and learners.
Social, cultural, and political factors	This research aimed to get insight into the social and cultural needs of the ELLs in the classroom environment.

These factors need to be considered when planning the curriculum. Principles form an important part of the curriculum and will be discussed next.

3.2.4.3 Principles

The curriculum needs to state the principles that were used when it was designed. Observations made by the researcher in regard to the principles set out in the English Home Language curriculum with regard to English submersion classrooms, are:

- No introduction to inform teachers on the possibility that learners may be learning in another language than their home language.
- In the English Home Language curriculum, no mention is made of promoting language development to enhance reading skills for ELLs. No mention is made of the reality of South Africa's schooling system to explain to teachers about ELLs.
- The only tip that is introduced in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) is the importance of "read aloud" time where the teacher reads stories out loud as part of a balanced literacy programme.

- Limited guidance on the importance of vocabulary for improvement of reading are mentioned.
- The English Home Language curriculum does not mention making use of themes.

From the abovementioned bullets it is clear that the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) does not specify any principles on the teaching of ELLs. No reference is made to schools that utilise the English submersion model, nor is there any advice on what to do if the learners following the English Home Language curriculum has a different mother tongue. This means that these teachers do not receive any guidance on principles to be followed when teaching ELLs to read. The researcher aimed to explore what strategies teachers use to assist ELLs on how to read.

Needs, the environment, and principles were discussed as part of the pillars of the language curriculum as suggested by the curriculum design diagram by Macalister and Nation (2010). Next the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) will be discussed by looking at the inner circle of the curriculum design diagram, namely content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment.

3.2.4.4 Content and Sequencing

The content and sequencing of the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) with regards to reading expectations in English submersion classrooms will now be discussed. Although the guidelines in the curriculum give structure to teachers, it can be argued that teachers need to understand and comprehend what is expected from them (Spaull, 2015).

Table 3.2. Overview of the phonetic reading requirements for learners in Grade 1, according to the English Home Language curriculum

Reading	Phonics Sounds	Vowel Combinations	Consonant Blends
Grade 1	All single sounds are taught in Terms 1 and 2	Only single vowel combinations	Diagraphs: “ch”, “sh”, “wh”, “th”, “st”

			Different combinations of words ending with a double consonant like “mu-st” and beginning with double consonants like “cl-ap”

What the researcher observed from the Table above is that the phonics suggested for English Home Language moves at a fast pace. All the letter sounds of the alphabet are introduced in Grade 1 (Terms 1 and 2). Different combinations of words ending with a double consonant like “mu-st” and beginning with double consonants like “cl-ap” are introduce in Term 3 and 4 as well as diagraphs like “ch” and “sh” (DBE, 2011). An area of interest for this research is to investigate the suitability of the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) in relation to the set pace and expectations set for teaching reading in English submersion classrooms.

3.2.4.5 Format and Presentation

The format and presentation of the curriculum design includes the format of the lessons, as well as the techniques and types of activities that will encourage goals (Macalister & Nation, 2010).

3.2.4.5.1 Lesson plans

Lesson plans can be seen as a tool that can be used to improve instructional practices in the classrooms. It has the potential to impact instructional practices as it can bring structure to each day (Kotze *et al*., 2019). These plans can assist with pacing and conceptual progression (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017). To the researchers’ knowledge, no lesson plans in English Home Language are available from the Department of Education. This implies that teachers need to design their own lesson plans. It can be problematic if teachers are not familiar with the content of the curriculum or if the curriculum does not provide enough guidelines to the teacher.

It was the aim of the researcher to provide detailed instructions on how to teach reading in English Grade 1 submersion class. These guidelines were not intended as lesson plans, but rather as support to the teaching of reading when making use of the English Home Language workbook.

3.2.4.5.2 English Home Language workbooks

The DBE has developed workbooks that are in line with the CAPS. Workbooks are available for home language, additional language, mathematics, and life skills. Workbooks are developed to better equip teachers with the necessary resources to teach reading and other foundational skills (DBE, 2012; 2017). The workbooks form part of the Department of Education's strategy to improve learner performance and to help both schools and the public to focus more on core foundational skills (DBE, 2012; 2017; Govender & Hugo, 2018). Workbooks could be utilised to bring international best practices into the classroom if carefully designed with the correct pacing and conceptual progress (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017). The workbook should assist the curriculum, shedding more light on what is expected by the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017).

The reasons for developing these workbooks can be summarised as follows (DBE, 2012): To provide organised work in the form of worksheets for every child in mathematics and languages. The aim is to provide workbooks in the child's home language for languages and mathematics as well as FAL and life skills.

The aim is also to help teachers who often had to develop their own worksheets and make photocopies at their own expense. The workbooks can be useful for teachers with big classes and those who do not have resources like photocopiers and reading materials.

The workbooks provide each teacher with activities and reading for each day in accordance with the CAPS document (DBE, 2011). It was developed in the current 11 official languages of South Africa and displayed on the website of the DBE (2017). This means that all schools across South Africa have structured activities that can be done regardless of the LoLT. The workbooks are an initiative of the government to promote core learning skills (DBE, 2017; Spaull & Jansen, 2019).

The English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019) was written according to the requirements of the CAPS document (DBE, 2011) and fills a great need in schools in the form of a resource for learning (DBE, 2012; 2017). Although the workbook is aligned according to the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011), the activities should

be comprehensive enough for teachers to be able to confidently teach Grade 1 learners to read in English submersion classrooms. The teachers and classrooms that formed a part of this study were all using the English Home Language workbook in class to assist with reading acquisition. The teachers' opinions on the workbook and the findings in regard to the workbook will be discussed in Chapter 5 of the study.

3.2.4.6 Monitoring and Assessing

This part of the curriculum design focuses on observing learning and testing the results of what was learned (Macalister & Nation, 2010). Some studies indicate that the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) focuses too much on assessment while too little time is allocated for teaching (De Lange *et al*., 2020; Govender & Hugo, 2018 ;Spaull, 2015). The need for benchmarks in word reading is another important aspect that should be investigated in South Africa (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). The focus of this study was not on assessment, but a need for benchmarks in reading acquisition was identified.

3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY

3.3.1 The Social Cognitive Learning Theory

The SCT was first introduced by Bandura in 1986 (Bandura & National Institute of Mental Health, 1986; Zhou & Brown, 2017; MacBlain, 2018) and stemmed from his earlier theory called the social learning theory. Bandura changed his initial theory on social learning to include elements of cognition (Razon & Sachs, 2017). It is one of the most influential psychological theories of learning (Phillips, 2014). The term "social" describes the effect of social influence on thinking and actions whereas "cognition" refers to thought processes relevant to motivation, affect, and action (Sharma, 2017).

The SCT asserts that learning is achieved through observation within a social context (Frey, 2018; Johnson, 2019). Social learning is often referred to as observational learning because learning is achieved through the observation of models (Zhou & Brown, 2017).

3.3.1.1 Cognitive and Social Aspect of Second Language Learning

Learning takes place through cognitive processes such as observing models in social contexts through processes of attention and reproduction (Bandura, 1969). Learners

should be able to pay attention to what is taught by the model and reproduce what was learned (Bandura, 1969). Research reveals that cognitive learning models can be used to investigate the learning of a new language, just as well as current linguistic models of learning (Bulat, Clark, & Shutova, 2017).

As mentioned, learning takes place through observing models. Behavioural research suggests that humans represent the meanings of concepts through an association with other concepts (Bulat *et al*., 2017). This indicates that learners can make new associations based on concepts that are already familiar to them. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory has expanded on the notion that learning will occur when new concepts are associated with previously learned concepts (Vygotsky 1978). This is significant to reading acquisition in a second language because it holds that learning occurs between what the learners already know and can do independently and that which they have the potential to know under the guidance of someone more knowledgeable (Topçiu & Myftiu, 2015). The zone of proximal development is used to scaffold the learning process and should be taken into consideration by teachers and curriculum designers (Rubbi Nunan, 2022).

Vygotsky agrees with Bandura that learning occurs as a result of interaction with individuals that are more advanced than them (Erbil, 2020). Observing a model can prompt learners into modelling behaviour they have learned (Johnson, 2019; Zhou & Brown, 2017). Direct modelling refers to a situation where a learner observes another person directly (Johnson, 2019). This is often the type of modelling that happens in the classroom where teachers and learners interact with each other. The SCT can be applied to reading acquisition in a second language because it states that behaviour can change through the observation of other people/models in the life of a learner (Phillips, 2014). Imitation and identification are two key concepts in the SCT (MacBlain, 2018). Learners imitate the actions observed by others in their environment and by identifying with the person they observe, and they assimilate learning into already existing concepts (MacBlain, 2018). Learners will model learned behaviour that requires attention because of their interest in the behaviours that is built on prior knowledge learned – with or without positive or negative outside reinforcement (Bandura, 2017). Motivation plays a key role in learning (Neukrug, 2015).

According to Vygotsky, the knowledge that learners already have acquired in a social context and further knowledge obtained will be applied in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978; Kim, Raza, & Seidman). As learners are social beings (Mitchell *et al*., 2019), social factors are key in the learning process, according to the SCT (MacBlain, 2018). Learners were observed in social context in this study, to see how social interaction in English will influence reading acquisition.

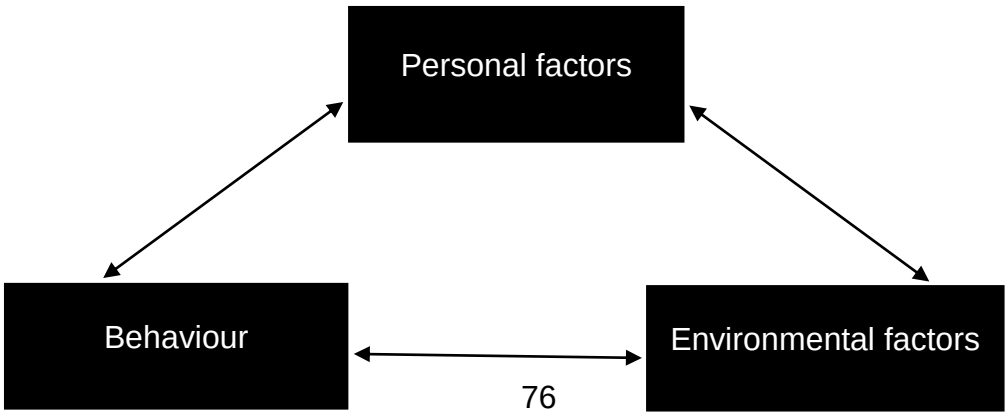
3.3.1.2 Social Cognitive Learning Theory and the Processes of Learning

The SCT suggests that learning is achieved by means of four processes, namely attention, retention, production, and motivation (Frey, 2018; Johnson, 2019). It is important when learning (or acquiring a new skill like reading), that the learner pays attention and focuses on the skill that is being learned (Bandura, 1969; Johnson, 2019). Retention is when the learner processes the information for future reference. Visual and auditory cues can help learners to remember (Bandura, 1969; Johnson, 2019). Production is when learners recall information stored and when they get an opportunity to practise the required skill (Frey, 2018; Johnson, 2019). Motivation is the final process where the learner decides whether to repeat the process based on the feedback they received (Frey, 2018).

3.3.1.3 Social Cognitive Learning Theory and Reciprocal Determinism

The SCT is built on three dimensions necessary for learning, namely the behavioural, environmental, and personal dimensions (Fletcher, 2018; Sharma, 2017). According to the SCT, these dimensions are all equal and interlocking determents of each other (Zhou & Brown, 2017). The interaction between these dimensions is known as reciprocal determinism or triangular interaction (Phillips, 2014; Sharma, 2017).

Figure 3.2. The reciprocal determinism model suggested by Bandura (1997)



Bandura proposes the concept of reciprocal determinism which means that the three factors listed above are fully influencing each other (Neukrug, 2015; Razon & Sachs, 2017; Zhou & Brown, 2017). Personal factors, behaviour, and environmental factors will be discussed separately.

3.3.1.3.1 Personal factors

Personal factors that influence learning include cognition, thoughts, emotions, and physiology (Razon & Sachs, 2017). Each learner is uniquely based on personal factors that will determine on which level the learner will learn optimally.

3.3.1.3.2 Behaviour

Both the environment and personal factors influence behaviour while behaviour also influences the environment and personal factors (Razon & Sachs, 2017). Despite these elements influencing each other reciprocally, another critical factor that determines behaviour is the notion of self-efficiency – believing that you can achieve the desired outcome (Razon & Sachs, 2017).

3.3.1.3.3 Environmental factors

From a SCT perspective the environment is regarded as flexible and can be shaped into a desired situational context (Fletcher, 2018). An environment is the contexts that learners find themselves in – those they select and those they create (Neukrug, 2015). In this study the environment will be the classroom and school context that the learner finds themselves in as well as the learners' home environment that may have an influence on their reading acquisition.

The environment may also include a cultural and political context. Language development is a complex system embedded in cultural and political strains of the environment (Patriarca, Heinsalu, & Léonard, 2020). The effectiveness of specific bilingual or monolingual frameworks when it comes to reading acquisition (cf. section 2.2.4) depends on the environment in which it is implemented (Enever & Lindgren, 2017).

Language development and reading acquisition in a second language has a high sensitivity to the environment. This includes the status of the person speaking the specific language as well as the context of the communication or learning (Patriarca *et al*., 2020). If the language and culture are not accommodated by the teacher (model)

within the classroom, it may have a negative effect on the learners' identity and self-esteem (Enever & Lindgren, 2017). The identity of learners (social class, status of home language, and culture) are socially constructed dimensions (Mitchell *et al*., 2019).

3.3.1.4 The social cognitive learning theory and its relevance to second language learning in the classroom

The SCT can be used in classroom practice in the following ways (cf. Johnson, 2019):

- Social interaction where structured learning experiences happen through conversations.
- Cognitive modelling where learners are taught cognitive skills and processes through direct modelling.
- Elements of effective skills instructions which are modelled, namely input, guided practice, and individual practice.

The SCT will guide this study in the investigation of reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms. The researcher was interested in the class environment in which ELLs learned as the SCT emphasises the importance of the social context in which learners learn. The viewpoints of the teachers (models) in the classrooms could shed light on how these ELLs learn how to read in English submersion classrooms.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development forms part of the theory that underpins the structured phonics reading intervention that was developed by the researcher (Vygotsky, 1978). According to this intervention, teachers should act as models in the classroom to promote observational learning of target skills by using the process of scaffolding (Frey, 2018). Scaffolding refers to activities that are designed by educators to ensure that learners are working optimally in the zone of proximal development (Taber, 2018). Scaffolding refers to teachers being able to use the zone of proximal development when teaching Grade 1 learners how to read by providing them with activities where they can read independently, using the phonics sounds learned in class. This was the aim of the researcher: To provide teachers with enough reading activities to give learners the opportunity to practise skills necessary for reading acquisition.

3.3.2 The Complex Dynamic System Theory

The CDST is a unifying label to combine the CT and the DST with each other (Ortega & Han, 2017). Both theories target the same shift in thinking about the learning of a second language. Both theories regard SLL as a complex, interconnected, adaptive and non-linear system (Ortega & Han, 2017).

The CDST has been used in many other areas of science and social sciences to describe development and patterns (Rosmawati, 2014). It is a theory that is relevant to SLL because language learners and language communities are all complex systems (De Bot *et al*., 2013). In traditional theories, language development is regarded as a separate area of development with reference to the learning environment, input, or instructional conditions, and how these systems may have an influence on language development. These areas are independent with specific linear results when a certain input is given. The CDST looks at SLL by combining all the different areas of language development into a complex process where these areas have an influence on each other (Dörnyei, MacIntyre, & Henry, 2015). The CDST focuses on the dynamic relation between learners' cognition and the environment (social and cultural), and the influence these systems have on each other (Han, 2019).

The CDST aims to explain the functioning of a complex, inter-connected, adaptive, and non-linear system in relation to SLL (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). Systems are groups of entities or components that function together to form a system (De Bot *et al*., 2013).

3.3.2.1 The Complex System and its Inter-Connected Components

For the sake of this study, the focus will be on the complex dynamics between the different components in the development of SLL (Patriarca *et al*., 2020). The CDST of SLL poses that the learner and all the components of the environment play a role in the learning of a second language (Dörnyei *et al*., 2015). What makes SLL a complex system is that its components are interconnected (Ortega & Han, 2017).

According to the CDST, the environment and the learner are components within the complex system, each with their own components nested in each other (Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuk, 2015; Ortega & Han, 2017). The principle of "nestedness" is evident in the complex system's own hierarchy (Hooker, 2011; Larsen-Freeman, 2016).

The classroom is situated within a school, a circuit, and a district, and it forms part of a national teaching system. The learner and teacher in the classroom form the first components of the system followed by the specific class, school, and district in which these learners find themselves. The curriculum and Department of Education form the outer layer of the complex system. The researcher was interested to observe from an objective point of view how the complex system pertaining to SLL and specifically reading was interacting and developing through the new CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). The system cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs (Hi-ver & Al-Hoorie, 2016). In the case of this study, the context of the system is visible in the different levels of nestedness of the system. In order for the research at hand to make sense, we have to look into the context of the occurring phenomena from a social point of view (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2016).

One of the main aims of SLL research is to look at what facilitates its process and what the best instruction, inside or outside the classroom could be (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2017).

3.3.2.2 The Adaptive System

The complex systems referred to above, adapt themselves on the basis of previous interactions (Rosmawati, 2014). An adaptive system can change in response to changes that take place in the environment (Ortega & Han, 2017). The CDST regards SLL as an adaptive system that can change and grow if the system remains open for input (Ortega & Han, 2017): “Learning is the process of adaptivity” (Hooker, 2011:9). Language continually adapts to express the needs of people and changing societies (Enever & Lindgren, 2017). It is important for the teachers as well as the curriculum designers to stay adaptive within the different contexts of SLL by making use of scaffolding (Topçiu & Myftiu, 2015). Teachers need to stay adaptive to determine the zone of proximal development when teaching SLL as part of an adaptive system.

3.3.2.3 Non-Linear System

The CDST describes the complex system of SLL as non-linear (Hooker, 2011). This means that the outcome of behaviour is not linked to the sum of the input (Hooker, 2011; Rosmawati, 2014). A good way to describe non-linearity is the butterfly effect which states that a small influence in the system can have a huge impact later (Han,

2019; Ortega & Han, 2017). This means that our expectations of what should happen with a given input can be inaccurate due to the fact that the system is non-linear, whereas a small input can give a whole different outcome (Ortega & Han, 2017). The environment and the system of language acquisition are dynamic and open to change, specifically with relation to context (Fogal & Verspoor, 2020).

The CDST is a theoretical framework that describes SLL as it happens in the classroom. It does not assume that language learning is linear or simplistic. It regards SLL as a complex process, open to influence from the environment (Fogal & Verspoor, 2020; Rosmawati, 2014).

The CDST theory aims to explain SLL as part of a complex theory that is dynamic, open, adaptive, and non-linear. This theory will guide the research in terms of ELLs that have to read in English on a home language level in Grade 1. The theory will guide the researcher when investigating the complexity of the ELLs in the context where these learners find themselves. The environment of the ELLs, the location of the school, and the size of the classrooms will all be investigated as part of the complex dynamic system's nestedness. The researcher was also interested in how teachers have to adapt to accommodate ELLs who have to learn in English from Grade 1 onward. How these teachers adapt to form part of the complex system of teaching Grade 1 learners to read in another language than their mother tongue was of interest to the researcher. The researcher also realised that the complex system of English language learning meant that a structured phonics intervention programme may not have a linear or fixed effect in all contexts and that each school will be regarded as a separate complex system in which learning occurs.

3.3.3 The Componential Model of Reading

The CMR ascribes reading performance to a variety of factors which can be divided into three main domains, namely cognitive, psychological, and ecological (Chiu *et al*., 2012; Joshi & Aaron, 2012; Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2020; Ortiz, Folsom, Al Otai-ba, Greulich, Thomas-Tate, & Connor, 2012). Factors from these three areas are contributing to reading achievement. The CMR was suggested in an article written by Aaron *et al*. (2008).

The componential model of reading is a reading framework that is built on the simple view to reading as suggested by Gough and Tunmer (1986; cf. Aaron *et al*., 2008). The simple view to reading theory is presented as a formula, R = D x C: Reading (R) equals the product of decoding (D) multiplied by listening (oral) comprehension (C) (Aaron *et al*., 2008; Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2020; Yeung *et al*., 2016). This means that reading is a comprisal of decoding and linguistic skills (Kim, 2020; Suggate *et al*., 2018). Decoding is the ability to recognise and name letters, identify the sounds of letters, produce the letters, and match text letters with their sounds while oral comprehension refers to the learners' understanding of the language when spoken (Rohde, 2015).

Although there has been extensive research done that proves that the simple view to reading is a good theoretical framework for reading development, there are also researchers who deem it as too simple (Li *et al*., 2020). The componential model of reading was suggested to investigate reading comprehension in a broader spectrum (Aaron *et al*., 2008). The simple view of reading (cognitive component) was thus expanded by adding two domains, namely the psychological domain as well as the ecological domain (Li *et al*., 2020).

In a study by Joshi and Aaron (2012) that investigated the reading performance of Grade 1 learners towards the end of the year, it was noted that 20% of the variance in reading performance was due to ecological factors, 18% was explained by psychological factors, and 16% was explained by cognitive factors.

Ortiz *et al*. (2012) assessed 224 learners for reading achievement in Grade 1, and determined that 54% of the reading variance was because of the three domains suggested by the CMR. The cognitive domain was the strongest indicator of reading achievement in Grade 1. This study took place in Northern Florida in the USA.

3.3.3.1 The Cognitive Domain

Li *et al*. (2020) have determined that the cognitive factor has the biggest direct influence on reading achievement on ELLs. The cognitive domain of the CMR is built on the simple view to reading theory. As mentioned, this theory holds that reading is built

on two concepts, namely decoding (D) and listening (oral) comprehension (C) (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2020; Yeung *et al*., 2016).

Decoding and oral language comprehension are both important in different phases of learners' reading development. Grade 1 and 2 learners' reading comprehension are better predicted by their decoding skills (D) while from Grade 3 onward, linguistic comprehension (C) plays a bigger role (Hugh, 2018; Lervåg, Hulme, & Melby-Lervåg, 2017). Kim (2015) agrees that word reading and decoding skills play a more advanced role in the beginning phases of reading acquisition whereas listening comprehension is strongly related to reading comprehension in later phases of reading acquisition: "This hypothesis largely stems from the changing role of word reading in reading development (as word reading places a larger constraint on reading comprehension at the beginning phase of reading development than at an advanced phase) as well as the nature of texts" (Kim, 2020:5).

In another study by Kim (2017) that took place in the south-eastern United States, which was built on the simple view to reading, the results of 350 English Grade 2 learners revealed that language and cognitive components explained 86% of reading variance. Reading comprehension was explained by word reading and listening comprehension (Kim, 2017). Longitudinal research that was done in the USA suggests that more than 99% of variation in reading comprehension by the age of seven is explained by the combination of spoken language knowledge and a decoding ability (Hjetland *et al*., 2019).

Aaron *et al*. (2008) have explored reading comprehension and discovered that if the weaker area of reading comprehension is identified (either by means of decoding or language comprehension) and specific attention is being given to it, the reading comprehension ability improves dramatically. They used a sample of 125 learners from Grade 2 to 5.

The theoretical framework held by the simple view theory will be the focus of this study. According to this theoretical framework, a systematic focus on decoding and the understanding of the LoLT is important for reading acquisition. Teachers need to be aware of these components of reading and should be educated on how to apply these

principles in the classroom to teach ELLs to read by developing their oral language skills and focusing on systematic phonics when teaching emergent reading skills. This study aims to investigate whether a structured phonics intervention programme will make a positive impact on the reading ability of a Grade 1 ELL.

3.3.3.1.1 Listening (oral) comprehension

Oral language development is an important aspect in reading success (Hjetland *et al*., 2019; Manten *et al*., 2020; Rohde, 2015; Suggate *et al*., 2018; Venezky, 2019). Farrell and Matthews (2010) argue that although oral and written language share many components it is important to remember that they are not identical. Oral language is used primarily in conversations with other people and is usually fairly simple. Facial expressions as well as gestures facilitate this communication. Written language is usually an individual activity with a more formal and complex style. When we look at the simple view to reading, the focus is on oral language comprehension and not on reading comprehension. According to Hoover and Gough (1990:131), “oral comprehension refers to the ability to take lexical information and derive sentence and discourse interpretations”. From this definition, we can deduce that oral language development means that learners should be able to form oral sentences in the acquired language as well as being able to understand what is being communicated to them.

There is a correlation between language proficiency and reading, spelling, and reading comprehension skills (Foote & Debrick, 2016; Manten *et al*., 2020; Rohde, 2015). In a longitudinal study of six years, Hjetland *et al*. (2019) established that early oral language skills predict initial levels of reading comprehension skills. An important aspect to remember is that reading can also contribute to oral language development in the sense that it can aid in vocabulary learning as well as acquiring more complex syntactic structures of the language (Hoadley, 2016).

An important indicator of linguistic knowledge is the vocabulary that a learner has in the language that is being read (Foote & Debrick, 2016; Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019, Lervåg *et al*., 2017).

3.3.3.1.2 Decoding

In the English language, the foundation of text is based on the 26 letters of the alphabet. The term “alphabetic principle” refers to the connection between the symbols of the alphabet and the sound that each represents (Byrne, 2014). Attention to alphabetic coding skills, alongside thorough attention to vocabulary in early literacy instruction is helpful for most children, especially those that are really struggling (Arrow & Tunmer, 2012).

Decoding is the ability that learners should develop to recognise and name letters by identifying the sounds of the letters and being able to produce correct sounds to match the letters in a given word (Rohde, 2015; Shapiro & Solity, 2016; Suggate *et al*., 2018). Initially, young learners will not be able to identify the sounds that the different letters represent, but through explicit instruction into the relation between the letters and their sounds, learners become able to decode words (Shapiro & Solity, 2016).

Decoding is an important skill in the development of reading acquisition. It takes more time in opaque orthographies like English than in transparent orthographies (Alcock, Ngorosho, & Jukes, 2018; Colenbrander *et al*., 2020). In opaque orthographies the phoneme-grapheme is less direct where one alphabetic letter can represent more than one sound (Manten *et al*., 2020). Although English is a relatively opaque writing system, there are still 60 grapheme-phoneme relations for learners to master and 58 exceptional words that do not follow typical spelling-sound patterns (Solity, 2020). This can complicate the teaching of reading acquisition. Consider for example the different “i” sounds found in the words /is/, /bit/, and /mine/. Because of the different sounds represented by one alphabetic letter, it complicates decoding and therefore reading acquisition (Colenbrander *et al*., 2020; Manten *et al*., 2020). Besides these difficulties in the English language structure, learners are still able to decode 75% of words encountered in the first three years of reading instruction (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

Phonemic awareness (identifying the sounds in a word) and phonological awareness (the knowledge that a language consists of smaller units such as syllables and sounds) are two important prerequisites of becoming a good decoder (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019). Phonemic awareness activities can benefit learners’ reading abilities and are most effective when it is direct and systematic (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019).

Decoding can be improved by explicit instruction through a synthetic phonics approach. In a study by Aaron *et al*. (2008), based on the CMR, the area of cognition was tested. Learners that received word recognition skills (by means of syntactic phonics) showed significant improvement as opposed to learners in the control group (Aaron *et al*., 2008). During the early years of learners learning in English, decoding is more influential than verbal comprehension (Yeung *et al*., 2016).

The most fundamental requirement for reading comprehension is automatic word recognition that is obtained by linguistic word recognition component abilities, namely phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, and letter-sound correspondence (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). Another domain that plays a role in reading acquisition as suggested by the CMR is the psychological domain, which will be discussed next.

3.3.3.2 The Psychological Domain

Psychological factors have an influence on reading acquisition, according to the CMR (Aaron *et al*., 2008). This includes factors such as feeling safe, the teacher's knowledge, and reading motivation. Research proves that reading motivation is an important factor for the reading comprehension of second language learners (cf. Li *et al*., 2020). Acculturation (exposure to mainstream culture) is also a psychological factor that has been associated with reading achievement (Li *et al*., 2020).

Section 2.4 has explained that teacher knowledge, especially relating to language constructs, influence the literacy development and reading skills of learners (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019). Studies have revealed that if teachers' knowledge improves (e.g., through workshops) it will also positively influence learners' results (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019). Evidence suggests that the quality of classroom instruction is a better predictor of success than a specific method when learning English (Barrow & Markman-Pithers, 2016; Cheung & Slavin, 2012). The teacher's engagement with learners is the main way in which learners learn (Comber, 2016). Early learning activities become meaningful for learners when teachers have a solid knowledge base of what is expected of them in teaching reading (Rohde, 2015).

The psychological factors that have an influence on reading comprehension are:

- Motivation;
- teacher knowledge;
- teacher expectations;
- learners' social skills; and
- behaviour (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019; Li *et al*., 2020; Suggate *et al*., 2018).

These factors need to be considered when investigating SLL and specifically when investigating reading in English submersion classrooms. The third and final domain that has an influence on reading achievement, according to the CMR, is the ecological domain.

3.3.3.3 The Ecological Domain

Ecological factors should be considered when assessing learners' reading ability (Kilpatrick *et al*., 2019). Reading is one of the most complex activities of the human race and needs to be investigated in this light (Chen, Kong, Gao, & Mo, 2018). According to Li *et al*. (2020:3), a "large body of evidence points to a strong association between home literacy environment factors (e.g., number of books at home, parent education background, and family literacy activities) and reading outcomes among young children across different languages".

Family socio-economic status (SES) has a direct influence on academic learning and reading acquisition. White (1982) analysed almost 200 studies and found a positive correlation between family SES and academic achievement (Chen *et al*., 2018). Chiu *et al*. (2012) have established that ecological factors accounted for as much as 91% of reading variance. Another study that was conducted in China by Chen *et al*. (2018) determines that family SES influences reading ability directly.

There is a dynamic relation between language and the ecological system in which learners find themselves (Patriarca *et al*., 2020). Although it is impossible to change the home environment of a learner, it is possible to investigate the influence that this learner's context has on their language development and reading acquisition in the

classroom. This should also be kept in mind when designing reading material or deciding on curriculum requirements (Rubbi Nunan, 2022).

The home environment and socio-economic status of the learners were important to this study as they influenced reading acquisition in Grade 1 classrooms. The researcher was interested in how the environment influenced the impact that the structured phonics intervention programme could have on reading acquisition.

Learning levels among learners from developing countries are often below the standard of the expected curriculum (Crouch, Rolleston, & Gustafsson, 2021). Recent studies by the World Bank have indicated that about half of all the learners in low and low-middle income countries are unable to read a basic paragraph at the age of 10 (Crouch *et al*., 2021).

The environment and poverty have a direct influence on language acquisition and reading (Rohde, 2015). The context in which many ELLs find themselves is not always optimal (Manten *et al*., 2020). Literacy is often regarded by researchers as a socio-cultural practice as language develops in the context of the environment (Comber, 2016). The ecological domain and how it influences reading acquisition was the last domain suggested by the CMR and concludes the discussion on the theories that underpin the study.

The structured phonics intervention programme is grounded in the principles of oral language comprehension and knowledge of phonics sounds to be able to decode texts. The researcher was also interested to investigate how the ecological and psychological domain of the individual learners influenced reading acquisition in the English submersion classroom.

3.3.4 Comparison of the Different Theories that Underpinned the Study

The theories that underpinned this research can be summarised by comparing the similarities and common principles that each theory was built on. The researcher noted that aspects of cognition, social interactions, and environmental sensitivity were included in all three of the theories used in the study.

Table 3.3. Comparison of the theories that underpin the theoretical framework of the study

Theory	Cognitive	Social	Environmental
Social cognitive theory	Learning is a cognitive process that happens when learners observe models. Learners engage with the content being learned through the process of scaffolding.	Learning occurs through social interaction with peers as well as with more knowledgeable others.	The environment plays an important role in all learning, according to the SCT. The physical environment in which learners find themselves has a direct influence on learning to read in a second language. This includes the status of the learners' mother tongue as well as political factors.
Complex dynamic system theory	Learning a new language is a complex cognitive process.	Learning a new language is embedded in a complex system that is composed of social interactions between learners and teachers as well as between learners mutually.	The environment is a complex system in which learning occurs. It is an interconnected system where all the parts have an influence on each other as well as on the learners in the process of second language learning. It includes the class as part of the school and the school as part of the educational system.
Componential model of reading	Reading is regarded as part of three domains. The cognitive domain is an important indicator of success in learning to read and is based on decoding skills as well as oral language comprehension.	The second domain of the CMR that influences the process of reading is the psychological domain, which refers learners' motivation to read as well as the teachers' knowledge and how it is carried over in the class. Learners' social skills and behaviour will also influence reading acquisition.	The third domain that has an influence on reading achievement, according to the CMR, is the environmental domain. This domain refers to the learners' home as well as their school environment. According to the CMR, a low socio-economic status of learners has been associated with difficulty in reading acquisition.

The three theories that underpinned the research were compared in Table 3.3 with reference to cognitive, social, and environmental factors that influence learning. From the three theories it is clear that cognitive processes (processes that happen in the brain when learning) are important when teaching learners to speak a language, as well as teaching learners to read. The three theories indicate that social factors (social engagement, modelling, etc.) have an influence on learning and should be considered when investigating reading acquisition. The third factor that is important when investigating reading and learning is the environment in which these learners have to learn how to read. This includes the learners' social economic status, the curriculum, the teachers, as well as the learners' home environment.

3.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

For the conceptual framework the researcher evaluated the current English Home Language curriculum by comparing it to the curriculum design diagram of Macalister and Nation (2010). The focus was on how the English Home Language curriculum relates to English submersion classrooms in South Africa. The curriculum was evaluated by investigating the three principles suggested by Macalister and Nation (2010), namely the ELLs' *needs*, the *environment,* as well as the *principles* that the curriculum was built on. The researcher went on to discuss the *content and sequencing*, the *format and presentation*, and the *monitoring and assessing* of the CAPS for English Home Language.

The theories that underpinned the research were discussed. The SCT formed the psychological perspective that guided the study. The theory looked at learning from a social and cognitive point of view. Learning takes place when learners pay attention to what they are being educated. They then retain this information and are able to produce this information when asked. Teachers can make use of scaffolding, by presenting learners with information and skills that fall within their "zone of proximal development". The CDST is the theory that guided the research on a linguistic perspective to learning English as a second language. The CDST describes the complexity of learning English as a second language. The process of learning a new language is not a linear process, which means that expected results may not always be the product of the input.

Language learning always happens within the different components of the environment. Teachers should be aware that SLL is an adaptive and complex system. The CMR holds the educational perspective to learning to read. It argues that learning to read depends on three factors, namely the cognitive domain, the psychological domain, and the ecological domain. The cognitive domain of learning to read was described as a process that will only happen if a learner can comprehend the language in which they have to read as well as the learners' ability to decode the alphabet. Oral language comprehension and decoding form the cognitive component of reading as described by the CMR. Psychological factors influence the reading process. According to the CMR, the socio-economic status of the learners also plays an important role when teaching learners to read.

The next chapter will present the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This research investigated reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms in South African schools. The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms. The researcher was also interested to get insight into classroom practices as well as the efficiency of the CAPS for English Home Language in regard to reading requirements in the Foundation Phase. The specific focus was on English submersion classrooms where learners must learn through the medium of English from Grade 1 onward, although the learners have a different mother tongue. Reading in English as a second language is a complex system and the research done in this field should be consistent with its nature of complexity (Koopmans & Stamovlasis, 2016).

Educational research is inquisitive, objective, and original by nature (Mertler, 2019). It needs to be critical, systematic, transparent, evidential, theoretical, and original (Coe, Waring, Hedges, & Arthur, 2017). The researcher aimed to uphold these principles during the research process. The purpose of educational research is to investigate and identify a problem and to attempt to answer questions that arise from the problem. The problem that the researcher identified will be discussed next.

4.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Reading and learning in English is mostly challenging for ELLs. They have to learn and read in English from Grade 1 onward, though they have a different mother tongue. The researcher noticed a gap in available research in South Africa on reading acquisition in the context of English submersion classrooms. The problem that the researcher observed was a lack of suitable phonetic reading material in English submersion classrooms. The CAPS for English Home Language instructs teachers to do shared reading for 15 minutes per day for three days per week, but teachers do not seem to have readily available phonetically aligned reading material to practise shared reading (Gouws, 2017).

The research questions helped to guide and focus the study (File, Mueller, Wisneski, & Stremmel, 2017). The four research questions and accompanying hypothesis are discussed below.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main Research Question

- How does a structured phonics programme impact the reading acquisition of Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms?

A research hypothesis outlines an assumption that the research is designed to test (Roni *et al*., 2020). Question 1 was the main research question of the study and can be formulated into a hypothesis.

Hypothesis of the Study

- A structured phonics programme will assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

Research Sub-Questions

Sub-Question 1

- How does the home and class environment of Grade 1 ELLs in submersion schools look and how does it influence reading acquisition?

Sub-Question 2

- What role does language play in reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms?

Sub-Question 3

- What are teachers' beliefs about the suitability of the requirements for the English Home Language curriculum in terms of reading acquisition for Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms?

The researcher aimed to answer the research questions in the specific context of the study.

4.4 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

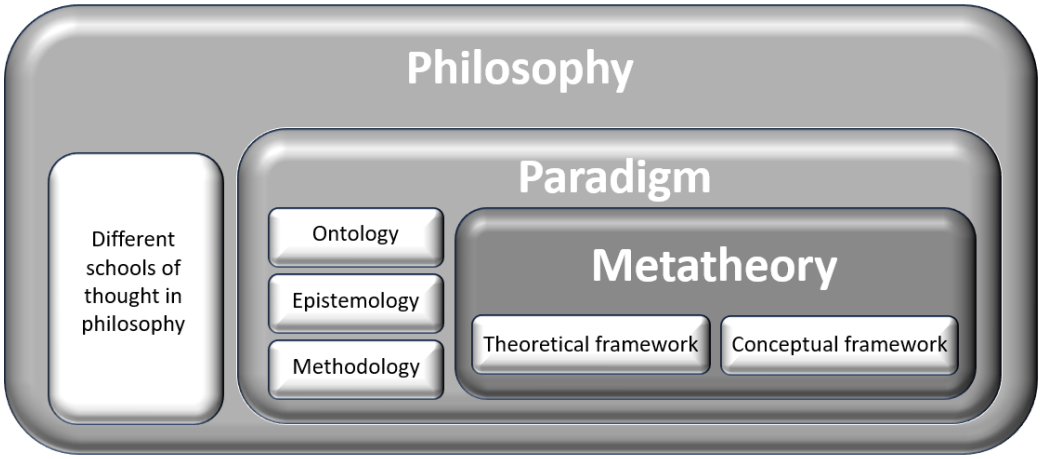
This study was conducted in English submersion schools. The study included three schools from different socio-economic backgrounds. It included two schools from rural areas and one school from an urban area. The specific context in which the research took place was the Grade 1 classrooms of these schools. The research included the Grade 1 teachers as well as the Grade 1 learners that participated in the study.

The paradigmatic perspectives of the researcher guided the study, as it formed the foundation of the study's philosophy.

4.5 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is like a roadmap to research: Without it research will lack direction (Sefotho, 2015). Although a certain philosophy is present in all research, it needs to be described by the researcher (Sefotho, 2015). The philosophy of research is based on different research paradigms as well as ontological and epistemological beliefs which can be joined to form these paradigms (Leavy, 2017). Figure 4.1 explains philosophy as it was used in this research (adapted from Sefotho, 2015).

Figure 4.1. Outlay of the research philosophy used in this study



The research philosophy of this study was built on a research paradigm. The paradigm included the ontology, epistemology, and methodology of this study. The metatheory acted as the umbrella that guided the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

4.5.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a worldview or a philosophical orientation about the world that a researcher brings to a study (Coe *et al*., 2017; Creswell, 2014; 2015). The research paradigm that guided this study is a pragmatic worldview. Pragmatism is concerned with finding solutions to problems presented and is often a paradigm that is followed when using MMR (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Pragmatism holds that "truth" cannot be accessed through a single method (like positivism or the humanistic paradigm), but that the best methods that suit certain circumstances should be used and combined (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

4.5.2 Metatheory

The metatheory guided the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. The CDST used as the linguistic perspective on SLL in the theoretical framework of the study served as the metatheory that guided the research paradigm. "Metatheory deals with the conceptualisation of phenomena but not with reality *per se"* (Sefotho, 2015:32). A metatheory's assumptions are broader and less specific than theories' assumptions (Mattson & Haas, 2014).

Research about complex systems are relevant, acting as meaningful research that can be applied to language learning (Koopmans & Stamovlasis, 2016). A complexity viewpoint can be used to study the multidimensionality of development or change in context (Fogal & Verspoor, 2020). It emphasises the notion that developmental paths emerging through the interaction of internal and external subsystems are often not predictable (Fogal & Verspoor, 2020). MMR requires creativity and flexible thinking by the researcher (Poth, 2018).

Complexity is an interdisciplinary paradigm that often involves both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate certain phenomena (Patriarca *et al*., 2020). The focus can be on pure quantitative research or pure qualitative research, or it can be a combination of the two research methodologies to get the best results for a specific study.

Using the CDST in research can be useful due to the theory being open to changes and challenges that could develop during the research project (Plano Clark & Ivan-

kova, 2016). One of the benefits using a complex sensitive paradigm is the capacity to respond and adapt to evolving situations (Poth, 2018). The researcher made used of the CDST as a guide throughout the research project.

4.5.3 Epistemology and Ontology: Positivist and Humanistic

In education, *epistemology* is a philosophical belief system about how research proceeds, especially the role between the researcher and the participants (Leavy, 2017). It refers to the study of gaining knowledge on how the world works (Aidley, 2019).

Ontology refers to how the researcher views the nature or form of the social world (Coe *et al*., 2017; Leavy, 2017). Whereas ontology is about the expectations researchers have of the nature of reality and understanding of the world, epistemology relates with ways to learn about the social world, thus with the study of knowledge and how to find knowledge on reality (Maree, 2016).

Pragmatism is a research paradigm that temps to combine the two philosophies of thought that are most often used in research, namely positivism and constructivism (Alexander, 2015). From a positivist approach (which includes quantitative data gathering) knowledge is gained by cognition and governed by science – apart from the researcher (Alexander, 2015). The researcher took on this role by approaching the research in a top-down manner, where she moved from general to specific by collecting data and then analysing these data to make specific deductions from the findings (File *et al*., 2017; Mertler, 2019; Swain, 2016). While the researcher was following this approach, she had to stay objective (Aidley, 2019) and investigate the data in a scientific manner.

On the other hand, the humanistic approach (usually associated with the qualitative approach) is regarded as subjective and influenced by the views of the researcher and participants (Alexander, 2015). The researcher made use of this approach to capture the views of the teachers who participated in the study and to get a more comprehensive picture of the research questions (File *et al*., 2017; Mertler, 2019; Swain, 2016). Constructivism embraces relativism and subjectivism (Aidley, 2019). Data were gathered by listening and engaging with participants and gathering data in a bottom-up manner.

The aim of the researcher was to avoid the paradoxes of radical relativism and extreme subjectivism by regarding educational research as a balancing act between these two extremes (Alexander, 2015). By using a pragmatic paradigm, the researcher aimed to combine relativism and subjectivism to get a clear and better understanding of the research questions at hand. This was done by using multiple strategies that supported each other.

The research design is the type of inquiry within the research method that provides direction for procedures in a study (Creswell, 2014). The research design can be described as the plan to carry out the research (Mertler, 2019).

4.6 METHODOLOGY: MIXED METHOD RESEARCH APPROACH

The research methodology explains how the study was conducted. It includes the research design, the population of concern, and the sampling procedure (Ary *et al*., 2018). The study was built on a MMR design. Over the past decade, MMR has grown as a methodology in educational research (Roni *et al*., 2020).

The complexity of language learning calls for a research design that can look at research questions from multiple perspectives (Fenwick *et al*., 2015). MMR is often used in research on complex and dynamic systems as is the case with learning in a second language (Enever & Lindgren, 2017; Poth, 2018). MMR integrates quantitative research designs and methods with qualitative designs and methods (Subedi, 2016; Watkins & Gioia, 2015). This is done to get comprehensive data and insight into social inquires (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Leavy, 2017; Watkins & Gioia, 2015). MMR is appropriate when the goal is to *explain* and *evaluate* (Leavy, 2017).

The main focus of this study was on the quantitative data; the qualitative data served to enhance and complement the quantitative data. The specific mixed method design that was used is the intervention mixed method research design.

4.6.1 Intervention Mixed Method Research Design

Mixed method typology is defined as a set of different mixed method designs that can be used to suit a specific study (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). The advanced mixed method design that was used for this study is the intervention mixed method design. The primary design, which is a quantitative experiment (or intervention) intersected with a qualitative secondary strand to enrich the experimental results. The qualitative data are embedded within the quantitative data to provide personal and contextual information (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

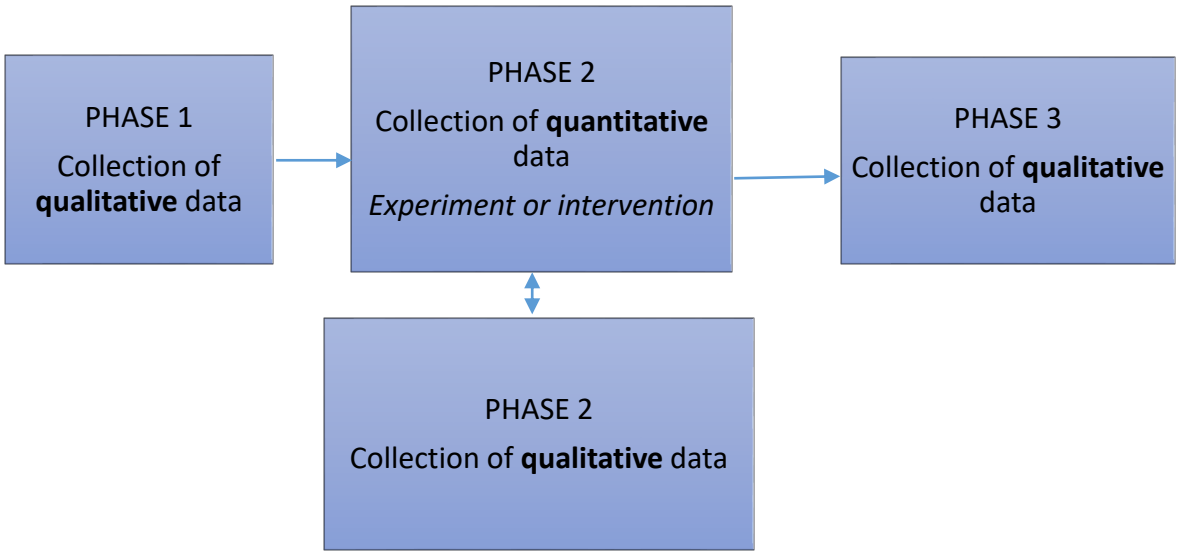
The study was divided into 3 phases:

- *The first phase* consisted of *qualitative* information gathering. The method of data gathering included semi-structured interviews with three reading experts as well as the training of nine teachers on how to implement the structured phonics intervention programme in the class.

- *The second phase* consisted of *qualitative and quantitative* data gathering. The method of data gathering included semi-structured interviews with seven Grade 1 teachers (qualitative data gathering) and a quasi-experiment that included 207 Grade 1 learners (quantitative data gathering). In the second phase the qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

- *The third phase* again consisted of qualitative data gathering. The methods for data gathering included semi-structured interviews with six Grade 1 teachers as well as an online questionnaire that was completed by seven Grade 1 teachers. The qualitative findings serve to enhance the results of the experiment (Ngulube, 2022). Figure 4.2 explains the different stages of data gathering throughout the study.

Figure 4.2. The intervention MMR design (adapted from Kaushik, 2017)



4.6.1.1 Phase 1

Phase 1 of the study started with a qualitative enquiry, where the researcher conducted interviews with three reading experts to obtain feedback and instruction on how to improve the planned structured phonics intervention programme that would serve as the reading intervention in the experimental part of the study. This part of the study also included a group training session with selected teachers from sampled schools on how to implement the structured phonics intervention programme in the class. This session gave teachers the opportunity to ask clarifying questions and to comment on their initial impressions of the programme. After the qualitative information was analysed and the necessary adjustments were made to the programme, the researcher moved to phase 2 of the study where quantitative and qualitative data were gathered concurrently.

4.6.1.2 Phase 2

In phase 2 of the study, quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently (Kahwati & Kane, 2020). To gather qualitative data in this part of the study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with seven Grade 1 teachers from sampled schools to get a better understanding on the circumstances surrounding the ELLs in these schools. The interviews focused on the teachers' experiences and included their opinions and viewpoints on the English Home Language curriculum that was followed in English submersion classrooms.

As part of phase 2 of the research, the researcher made use of a quasi-experimental design to gather quantitative data. Quantitative research collects data that are numerical in nature (Recker, 2021; Roni *et al*., 2020) and are often described as a more scientific approach where numbers are used to represent values and the interpretation of the numbers are viewed as scientific evidence of how a phenomenon works (Morgan, 2013; Recker, 2021).

The quantitative and qualitative data which were gathered in phase 2 of the research were analysed and compared before proceeding to the final phase of the study. The final phase of the study was qualitative in nature and explored and expanded on the data that were analysed in phase 2 (Kahwati & Kane, 2020).

4.6.1.3 Phase 3

The third phase of the study comprised of semi-structured interviews with the same Grade 1 teachers that participated in phase 2 of the research. Only six of the seven teachers that participated in phase 2 of the study, participated in phase 3. This was due to the seventh teacher relocating to another school by the time the researcher was busy with the post-interviews. The teacher did, however, still participate in completing the questionnaire online.

The post-interviews were conducted to find out how the teachers experienced the reading intervention and to capture their observations. This phase of the study was concluded with a questionnaire that was completed anonymously online by seven Grade 1 teachers. The questionnaire was set up by the researcher using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of closed as well as open-ended questions and was distributed to teachers via e-mail. Teachers had a week to complete the questionnaire. Results were uploaded to Google Forms automatically and participants stayed anonymous.

Data from the questionnaire was combined with data from the semi-structured interviews to gain a comprehensive overview on matters arising from the quantitative findings. In order to understand each phase of the research design in light of quantitative

and qualitative data gathering, these two approaches and how the research was conducted using each approach will be discussed in detail. The sampling process was done to best suit the MMR design of the study.

4.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The sampling process in MMR is sometimes complicated as the samples from the different designs should be informative of each other. Different sampling techniques were used in each phase of the research. The total population for the study comprised three schools which included 207 Grade 1 learners and nine Grade 1 teachers, as well as three reading experts that participated in the study. This totalled a number of 219 participants for the study.

4.7.1 Phase 1

For phase 1 of the research that included semi-structured interviews with three reading experts, the researcher made use of purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was used by selecting reading experts because of their knowledge, experience, and availability (Bryman, 2016). The first criterion for selecting reading experts was that they should still be teaching learners to read that are schooled in “English only”. The second criterion was that they should have 10 years or more of experience in the field of teaching reading to ELLs.

Table 4.1. Biographical data of the three reading experts (phase 1)

Expert	Gender	Years of Experience in the Field of Reading
Reading expert 1	Female	17 years
Reading expert 2	Female	10 years
Reading expert 3	Female	14 years

In Table 4.1 the biographical data of the reading experts of phase 1 of the study are displayed. This was obtained through purposeful sampling and was independent from the sample of teachers being included in phases 2 and 3 of the research.

4.7.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 consisted of gathering quantitative and qualitative data concurrently (Baran & Jones, 2016). Quantitative data were gathered by means of a quasi-experiment

while the qualitative data were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers teaching in English submersion classrooms.

4.7.2.1 Phase 2: Quantitative Sampling

The aim was to select a sample that represents the characteristics of the larger population on which the research was based (Farghaly, 2018) to be able to generalise the results to the population (Watkins & Gioia, 2015). The sample for the quantitative data was selected by making use of cluster sampling. Cluster sampling was done by using already existing clusters in the population (schools) located in a specific geographical setting (Rahi, 2017). The size of the study did not determine the quality of the study, as the researcher was guided by the requirements of how best to respond to the research question (Biesman-Simons *et al*., 2020).

The four steps in the sampling process were (Blair & Blair, 2014; Taherdoost, 2016) are indicated below.

Step 1: Define the population

The target population for the study included the following:

- Schools that have English submersion classrooms in the Foundation Phase in a certain district in Mpumalanga, South Africa.
- Locality: Schools that were within a 150 km radius of the researcher's location.

The target population for this study was Grade 1 learners as well as Grade 1 teachers at English submersion schools in South Africa.

Step 2: List from which the population was drawn

A list of all the schools in the selected district was obtained. The list included the LoLT of each school (to identify English submersion schools) and is summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Distribution of schools according to the language of learning and teaching

Language of Learning and Teaching	Count	Percentage
Afrikaans Home Language	21	6.31
English Home Language	50	15.01
IsiZulu Home Language	179	53.75
Sesotho Home Language	6	1.81
SiSwati Home Language	77	23.12
Total:	333	100

Table 4.2 displays the number of schools per LoLT. A total of 50 schools had English as their medium of instruction and formed the basis of the population that was used in the cluster sample. The sample frame was further divided by making use of stratified sampling. Stratified random sampling is a sampling technique that is used to select a sample from each subgroup (Baran & Jones, 2016). In the case of this study, the sub-groups were the quintile classifications according to the Department of Education of the 50 English schools that formed part of the sampled pool.

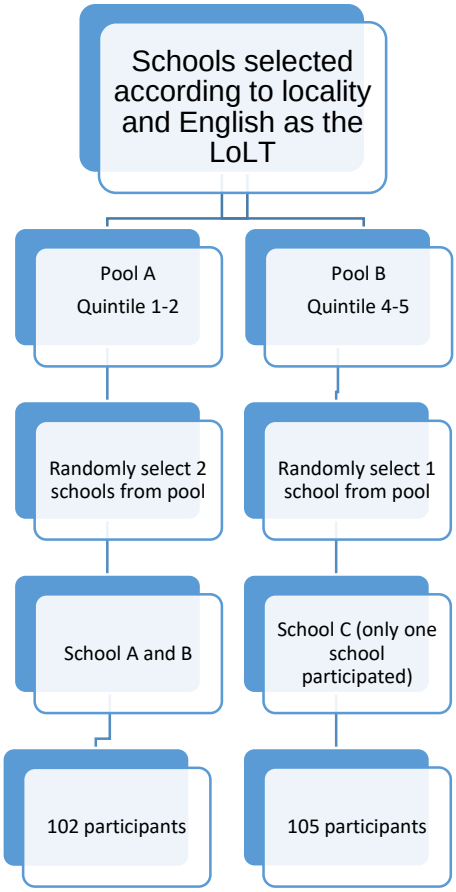
Schools in South Africa are categorised into different quintiles, with quintile 1 schools being the poorest and quintile 5 being the most affluent (Van Dyk & White, 2019). The researcher wanted to include schools from different socio-economic statuses and thus used the stratified sampling technique to select two schools from Pool A (quintile 1-3 schools) and one school from Pool B (quintile 4-5 schools). Each subgroup was given an equal chance to be selected (Rahi, 2017).

Table 4.3. English medium schools divided according to quintiles 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 as received from the district office

Quintile	Count	Probability
1	15	0.30000
2	5	0.10000
3	0	0.00000
4	20	0.40000
5	10	0.20000
Total:	50	1.00000

Table 4.3 indicates that there are 15 school in the quintile 1 category, five schools in Quintile 2, no schools in quintile 3, 20 schools in quintile 4, and 10 schools in quintile 5. The researcher has decided to select two schools from quintiles 1 and 2 and one school from quintile 4 or 5. The three schools were selected randomly.

Figure 4.3. Sampling process



Two of the schools belonged to the quintile 1-2 category (Pool A) and one school to the quintile 4-5 category (Pool B). Together the three schools had a total number of 275 potential participants (Grade 1 learners). Due to certain parents withholding parental consent for the study and/or absenteeism on either the pre-test or the post-test day, the total number of the participants included for this study equalled 207 (N = 207). A summary of the sampled schools is displayed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Summary of the sampled schools

Pool	School	Quintile	Amount of classes	Number of participants
A	School A	2	2	28

	School B	1	2	74
	Total			102
B	School C	5	5	105
	Total			105

Pool A (quintile 1-2 schools) totalled a number of 102 participants and Pool B (a quintile 5 school) equalled a total of 105 participants. Table 4.5 indicates the number of sampled learners according to their school and class. All participants had an African Home Language and were African in ethnicity.

Table 4.5. Summary of the sample size according to classes

	School			
Class	**A**	**B**	**C**	**All**
1	17	37	17	71
2	11	37	23	71
3	0	0	28	28
4	0	0	17	17
5	0	0	20	20
Total:	28	74	105	207

Table 4.5 indicated that school A had two Grade 1 classes, school B had two Grade 1 classes, and school C had five Grade 1 classes.

The classes were randomly assigned to be experimental and control classes for the study in each school and numbered 1 and 2 at schools A and B. The classes were numbered 1 to 5 at school C. Selected classes (cf. shaded blocks in Table 4.5) received the intervention first. At school A, class 1 was selected as the intervention group. At school B, the second class was selected as the experimental class. At school C, classes 1, 2, and 3 were selected as the experimental classes.

When making use of the sequential MMR design, the sample that is chosen for the qualitative research had to be part of the larger sample that was chosen for the quantitative research (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019). Teachers that were involved in the experimental part of the study as well as the teachers teaching at the control group are included in the qualitative data gathering.

4.7.2.2 Phase 2: Qualitative Sampling

Phase 2 of the research included semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers. The sample selected for the qualitative research represented a subset of those participants selected for the quantitative sample (Ngulube, 2022) and was selected with a purposeful sampling method.

The Grade 1 teachers that formed part of the schools which were selected randomly for the quantitative part of the study were included in the qualitative data gathering. Schools A and B had two Grade 1 classes each while school C had five Grade 1 classes. This totalled a number of nine classes which totalled nine potential teachers to be interviewed. All the relevant teachers (participant 1 to participant 9) attended the training. However, participants 2 and 4 did not want to continue and did not agree to participate in the interviews. Hence, only seven of the nine teachers agreed to the semi-structured interviews. This means that seven teachers (participants 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) participated in the semi-structured interviews (phase 2).

From the seven teachers that participated in phase 2 of the research, only six (participants 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9) participated in phase 3 of the research. This was due to one teacher relocating during this time. The teachers that participated in phases 2 and 3 of the research contributed to the qualitative data gathering of this study. A summary of the biographical data of the Grade 1 teachers can be viewed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Biographical data of the nine Grade 1 teachers that participated in the research, indicating which participants only partook in the training and which participants partook in the semi-structured interviews

Table 4.6.1. Biographical data of the nine Grade 1 teachers that participated in the research

Participant	Gender	Race	Highest qualification	Home Language	School	Teaching Experience at Grade 1	Participation in Training
1	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School A	13 years	Yes

Par-tici-pant	Gen-der	Race	Highest qualifica-tion	Home Lan-guage	School	Teaching Experi-ence at Grade 1	Partici-pation in Train-ing
2	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School A	10 years	Yes
3	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School B	1 year	Yes
4	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School B	3 years	Yes
5	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School C	13 years	Yes
6	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School C	5 years	Yes
7	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School C	10 years	Yes
8	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School C	1 year	Yes
9	F	Caucasian	Bachelor degree	Afrikaans	School C	4 years	Yes

Table 4.6.2. Informative data of the nine Grade 1 teachers that participated in the research

Partici-pant	Where Train-ing Took Place	Partici-pated in First Inter-view	Where In-terview Took Place	Duration of Interview	Partici-pated in Post Inter-view
1	Empty class-room	Yes	Empty classroom	29 min 20 sec	Yes
2	Empty class-room	No			No
3	Staff room	Yes	Empty classroom	15 min 7 sec	No
4	Staff room	No			No
5	Empty office	Yes	Empty room	18 min	Yes
6	Empty office	Yes	Empty room	23 min 9 sec	Yes

7	Empty office	Yes	Empty room	31 min 36 sec	Yes
8	Empty office	Yes	Empty room	15 min 5 sec	Yes
9	Empty office	Yes	Empty room	17 min 2 sec	Yes

Tables 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 indicate that all the teachers at the three sampled schools were female and Caucasian. These Tables also indicate which teachers participated in the training and the interviews. The duration of the interviews and where it took place are also indicated. Participants 2 and 4 did not agree to participate in the interviews and questionnaires.

4.7.3 Phase 3

The qualitative sampling method for phase 3 of the research included purposeful sampling (Taherdoost, 2016). The seven teachers sampled for phase 2 of the study were also included in phase 3 of the study. Quantitative and qualitative methods were utilised in the data gathering process during the different phases of the research.

4.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data were collected throughout the three phases in the MMR design. The different forms of data collection for each phase will be discussed in detail.

4.8.1 Phase 1

In phase 1 the researcher gathered data through semi-structured interviews with three reading experts. For this phase of the study the researcher made use of purposeful sampling in order to gain rich data and an understanding of the planned intervention (Bernard & Clarence, 2015; Bryman, 2016). All the reading experts had 10 years or more of experience in teaching ELLs to read. The researcher was interested to discuss the structured phonics intervention programme with the reading experts to get their input and perception of the programme.

Phase 1 of the research also included group-training for the Grade 1 teachers on how to implement the structured phonics intervention programme (phase 2) in the class. This part of the study gave the participating teachers the opportunity to ask clarifying

questions and to make comments and suggestions about the programme. Qualitative data were gathered during phases 1, 2, and 3 of the intervention MMR design in an attempt to answer the research questions presented in the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Leavy, 2017).

4.8.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 of the research consisted of quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered concurrently.

4.8.2.1 Phase 2: Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative research is often associated with a positivist approach (Subedi, 2016). A deductive approach to reasoning is used where the researcher moves from a general concept to more specific findings and is often referred to as the top-down method (File *et al*., 2017; Leavy, 2017). Quantitative measures can be used to construct or test a theory (Hoy & Adams, 2016). This study was hypothesis driven, thereby testing the hypothesis presented in this study (Roni *et al*., 2020). Quantitative data arise from studying many people and assessing responses to a few variables. Numerical data are compiled to explain phenomena, trends, or relations between variables (Leavy, 2017; Roni *et al*., 2020).

Experimental research involves the process of testing the impact of one variable on other variables. It is thus used to determine cause and effect relations among variables (Rahi, 2017). In experimental research there were three main variables which the researcher considered (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Roni *et al*., 2020):

- *The independent variable*: This is the variable that is the consequence/reason for something to happen (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). For the purpose of this study the independent variable was the phonics programme that was implemented in the experimental classrooms.
- *The dependant variable*: This is a variable that can change and is the variable that the researcher wants to measure. For the sake of this study the dependant variable will be the reading speed of the Grade 1 learners.

- *Control variables*: These are the variables which may influence the study, and which are not always possible to control. These variables should be limited as far as possible as to not affect the study.

There are many forms of experimental research. The researcher made use of the quasi-experimental research design for the purpose of this study. The quasi-experimental research design differs from a true experimental design in the sense that participants are not randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). The reason for selecting this design is because the schools' pre-existing classes were used to randomly assign experimental and control groups, meaning that groups were not artificially created, but randomly selected from the already existing classrooms. This is a very useful design in educational research as it is often impossible to randomly assign participants to the control and experimental groups within a school environment (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

In this type of quasi-experimental design, one group may differ in characteristics from the other since participants were not randomly assigned (Recker, 2021). This type of quasi-experimental design can be referred to as a non-equivalent groups' pre-test/ post-test control and comparison group design (McMillan & Shumacher, 2014). The term "non-equivalent" indicates that the randomly assigned classes may differ in characteristics which may pose a risk to the internal validity of the research (McMillan & Shumacher, 2014). An independent t-test was used to establish homogeneity before the start of the experiment, using the different groups' pre-test scores.

The researcher made use of a *switched replication with treatment removal design* in which an experimental treatment is "replicated" by switching the treatment and control groups in two subsequent iterations of the experiment (Trochim, Donnelly, & Arora, 2016). This means that the experimental classes (which were randomly selected from each sampled school) had the opportunity to receive the reading intervention first for four weeks after which the intervention was removed from these classes and switched over to the control group and to also give these learners the opportunity to receive the intervention. This was done to give the research ethical surety so that at the end of the experiment all the Grade 1 learners in the sampled schools received the interven-

tion, only in different time slots. Figure 4.4 explains the implementation of the experiment at school A. Figure 4.5 explains the implementation of the quasi-experiment at school B while Figure 4.6 explains the implementation of the quasi-experiment at school C.

Figure 4.4. Quasi-experimental design (a non-equivalent switched replication design) implemented at school A

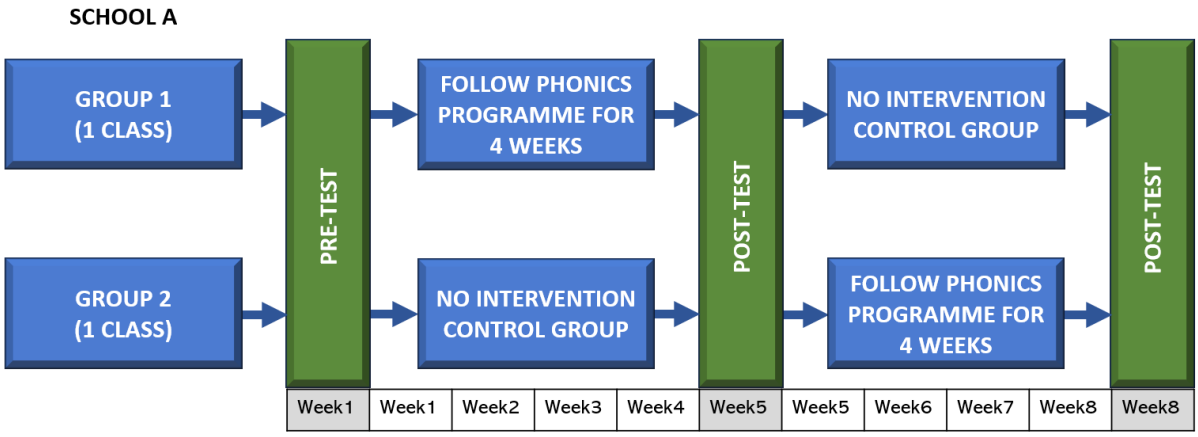


Figure 4.5. Quasi-experimental design (a non-equivalent switched replication design) implemented at school B

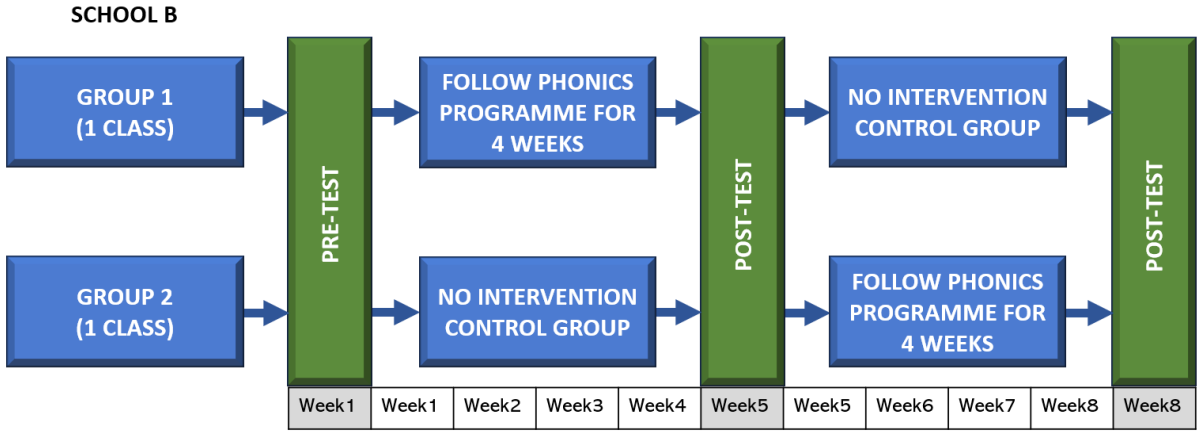
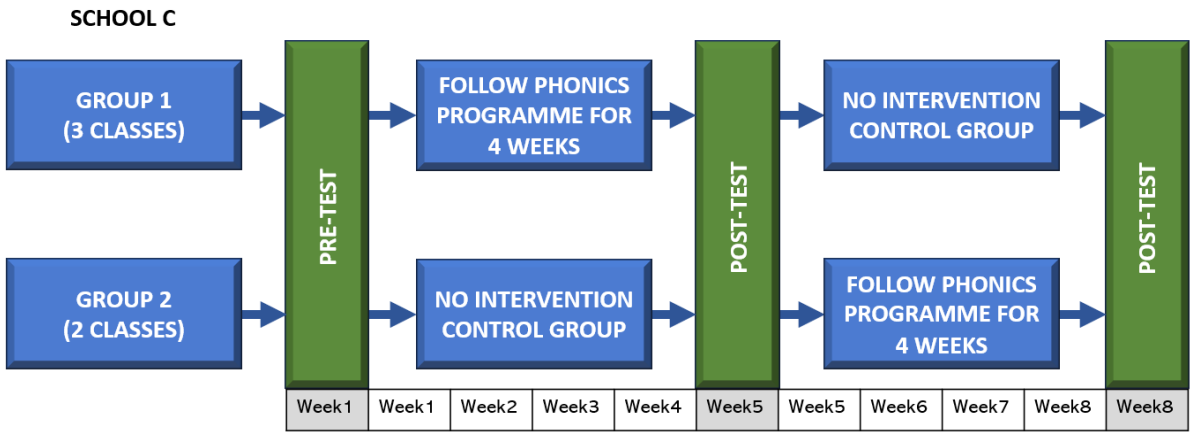


Figure 4.6. Quasi-experimental design (a non-equivalent switched replication design) implemented at school C



Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 indicate that all schools followed the same procedure during the quasi-experiment. Only the data from the first intervention and control group were used to calculate inferential statistics. The second set of data could not be used because the effects of the intervention could not be taken away in the first intervention group. The repeated intervention was thus done purely for ethical reasons. The researcher aimed to answer the hypothesis presented in the study with the quasi-experimental research design.

4.8.2.1.1 Conceptualising of the intervention programme

The researcher aimed to provide the teachers in the study with a structured phonics intervention programme in English submersion classrooms. In the CAPS for English Home Language, it is stated that a school can use any phonics programme to assist learners with reading (DBE, 2011) as long as the school is consistent with the programme that they have chosen from Grades 1 to 3. The introduction of alphabet letters can be done in any sequence if the given pace is followed (one to two new sounds each week).

The one challenge that the researcher observed with the phonics programmes used in some schools are that they are often expensive and therefore not all schools can afford to buy them. The other challenge is that the phonics programme does not always correspond with the curriculum and the workbook given to schools by the De-

partment of Education (DBE, 2019). This can cause confusion in the classroom environment. The structured phonics programme used in this study was developed by the researcher after she observed a gap in English submersion classrooms when doing research for her Master's degree (Gouws, 2017). The programme was based on a phonetic approach, but also included a focus on vocabulary building, phonological awareness, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension.

The researcher provided the teachers in the study with a structured phonics programme to assist them with reading acquisition in the Grade 1 English submersion classroom. The structured phonics programme consists of a teacher's guide and a reading book. The teacher's guide corresponds with the English Home Language workbook and refers teachers to pages in the English Home language workbook (DBE, 2019). The teacher's guide gives instructions on what the teacher should do besides the instructions already given in the workbook in order to give more support to teachers by giving detailed guidance on what is expected from them (DBE, 2019). The teacher's guide also refers the teacher to the reading book which is developed by the researcher with extra phonetic reading as well as stories that are phonetically decodable.

The reading in the extra reading book is designed in such a way that it includes only the phonics sounds that were already introduced to the learners so that they could easily read the texts and stories on their own (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

Reading decodable texts, after having been taught the phonetic sounds of each letter provides a context for the reader to apply the phonics instruction (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). According to Spaull and Pretorius (2022:183),

> [t]his link – between the explicitly taught graphemes and a text including those new graphemes and the ones learnt in previous lessons – is key to developing reading skills. When children have an opportunity to apply the newly learnt skills to make sense of a simple text, they see the reason for their efforts.

The aim of the researcher was to provide the teachers with decodable texts and stories that learners could read at shared reading time that was built on the phonics taught in the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019). The instructions that had to be

followed in the structured phonics intervention programme are found in the teacher's guide and the extra reading book. The specific instructions included in this programme will be explained in more detail.

4.8.2.1.1.1 Instructions

The phonics programme developed by the researcher was meant to build on the instructions and activities given in the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019). An example of the instructions in the English Home Language workbook are displayed below (DBE, 2019). The example includes the instructions for term 2, week 1.

Table 4.7. Instruction on reading and phonics activities in the English Home Language workbook, term 2, week 1 (DBE, 2019)

33 **We play** *66*	35 **Games** *70*
Speaking about a picture Reading a sentence Phonic: c Say the sound and colour it in, then find and circle it. Word work: Read the words and listen to the sounds. Reading: Match the word cards with these words. Fun activity: Trace the dotted lines of animal shapes.	Speaking about a picture Reading a sentence Phonic: k Say the sound and colour it in, then find and circle it. Word work: Read the words and listen to the sounds. Reading: Match the word cards with these words. Fun activity: Trace the dotted lines of animal shapes.
34 **The letter c** *68*	36 **The letter k** *72*
Writing: Trace and practise the letter c. Circle the pictures that start with the c-sound. Fill in the letter c in the spaces so that the words match the pictures.	Writing: Trace and practise the letter k. Circle the pictures that start with the k-sound. Fill in the letter k in the spaces so that the words match the pictures. Writing: Build words by combining the letters.

The aim of the structured phonics intervention programme was to add to the structure of the already available resources of the teacher, namely the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019) and the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). The instructions in the English Home Language workbook are short sentences that indicate the activities to be done in the book (DBE, 2019).

The structured phonics intervention programme was developed to support the teacher in teaching the learners to read in English submersion classrooms. The structured phonics intervention programme included a teacher's guide that was based on the five concepts as suggested by Spaull and Pretorius (2022), namely phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These five reading concepts are

also in line with the CAPS for English Home Language that suggests the same reading strategies for reading acquisition (DBE, 2011).

In the English Home Language workbook, learners are introduced to two new phonics sounds per week. The researcher divided these two sounds into two components A and B, for example term 2, week 1: The phonics sound that was introduced in part A was the “c” and the phonics sound that was introduced in term 2, part B was the “k”.

Table 4.8. Example of the teacher’s guide: Structured phonics intervention programme (term 2, week 1a)

Week	Activity
1a	**1. Oral language development**: Have a class discussion about the picture on pg. 66 of the DBE book. Make sure learners discuss the picture with each other first. Ask the learners to point to the following objects and repeat the words after you: • Cat • Dog • Flower • Boy • Girl • Ladder • Jungle gym • Ball • Park • The lady reading Ask the learners to answer the following questions: • What is the boy with the yellow shirt doing? “The boy with the yellow shirt is climbing up the ladder to play on the jungle gym”. • What is the dog doing? “The dog is barking at the cat”. • What is the boy with the white and red shirt doing? “He is kicking the ball to the girl with a heart on her jersey”. • What is the girl on the bench doing? “She is reading a book”.
	2. Phonological awareness: • Read the words on pg. 67 of the DBE workbook. The learners should listen to the sounds and repeat the “c” sound to the teacher. • Ask learners to tell you the starting sound of each word. For example: C-A-T = C • Ask the learners to say out loud the ending sound of each word. For example: R-A-T = T • Break up each word into segments. The learners can clap with each segment that they hear. For example: SH-EE-T

Week	Activity
	3. Practise phonics (reading): • Do revision on phonics taught in term 1 on pg. 23 of the phonics book. • Introduce the letter “c” to the learners. • Read the words on pg. 67 with the learners. • Learners should read the words and the shared reading in the phonics book pg. 24 + 25. • The learners can circle all the “c” sounds with a red crayon. • Read the sentence on pg. 66 of the DBE book.
	4. Practise phonics (writing): • Practise the learned phonics. Read as you write on pg. 24. • Word work. Do the activities on pg. 68 + 69 of the DBE book.

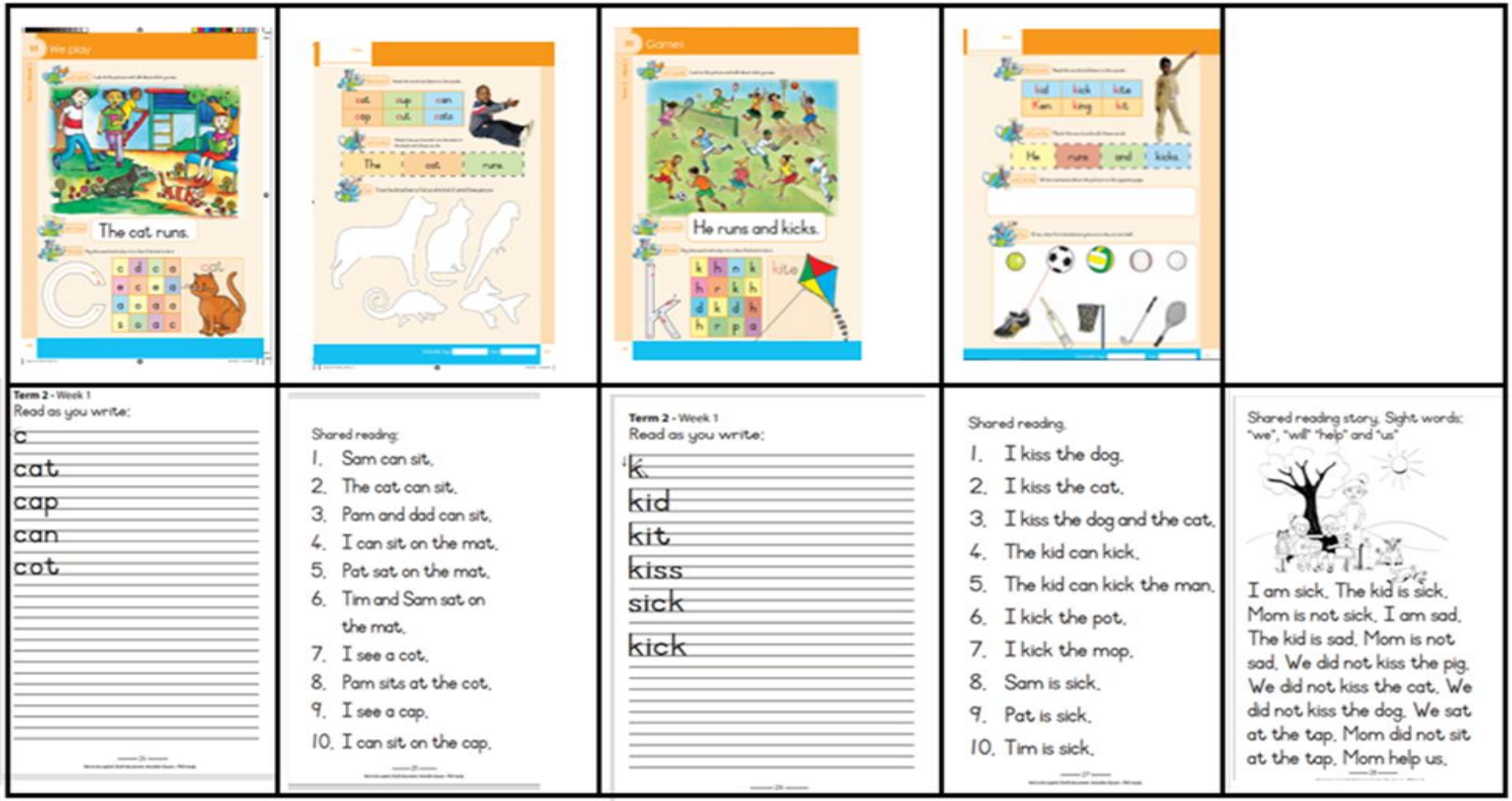
Table 4.9. Example of the teacher’s guide: Structured phonics intervention programme (term 2, week 1b)

Week	Activity
1b	**1. Oral language development**: Have a class discussion about the picture on pg. 70 of the DBE book. Make sure learners discuss the picture with each other first. Ask the learners to point to the following objects and repeat the words after you: • Soccer ball • Hockey ball • Hockey stick • Netball ball • Netball ring • Netball girl • Cricket ball • Cricket bat • Tennis ball • Tennis racket • Tennis net • Hockey girls • Rugby ball Ask the learners to answer the following questions: • What kind of sport do you like to play and why? Learners’ own answers. • What are the hockey girls doing? “They are dribbling the ball”. • What are the netball girls doing? “They are throwing the ball to each other and throwing the ball through the hoop to score a goal”. • What is the boy with the rugby ball doing? “He is running with the rugby ball, tucked away under his arm”.
	2. Phonological awareness: • Read the words on pg. 71 of the DBE workbook. The learners should listen to sounds and repeat the “k” sound to the teacher.

Week	Activity
	• Ask learners to tell you the starting sound of each word. For example: K-I-D = K • Ask the learners to say out loud the ending sound of each word. For example: K-E-N = N • Break up each word into segments. The learners can clap with each segment that they hear. For example: K-I-CK
	3. Practise phonics (reading): • Do revision on phonics taught in term 1. • Introduce the letter “k” to the learners. • Read the words on pg. 71 with the learners. • Learners should read the words and the shared reading in the phonics book pg. 26 + 27. • The learners can circle all the “k” sounds with a red crayon. • Read the shared reading story on pg. 28 of the phonics book. Comprehension: Ask the learners to answer the following questions orally after reading the story with them. • Who is sick? • Who is not sick? • Who is sad? • Who is not sad? • Did mom sit at the tap? • What did we do? Read the sentence on pg. 70 of the DBE book.
	4. Practise phonics (writing): • Practise the learned phonics. Read as you write on pg. 26. • Word work. Do the activities on pg. 72 + 73 of the DBE book.

The structured phonics intervention programme includes four sections in the teacher’s guide, namely oral language development, phonological awareness, phonics, and writing. The instructions under each section refers the teacher to either the DBE book (DBE, 2019) or the extra developed reading book. The activities in the English Home Language workbook and the extra self-designed phonics book are displayed in Table 4.10. The first column depicts the pages from the English Home Language workbook whilst column two depicts pages from the extra phonics reading book that formed part of the intervention.

Table 4.10. Activities in the DBE book and the extra reading book



From Table 4.10 it can be derived that the extra reading file provides the teacher with extra reading activities that learners will be able to decode with the phonics that they have learned throughout the year up to the point of the example displayed above. (To view the English Home Language workbook please visit the DBE website at HL_ENG _Gr1_B1.pdf [education.gov.za] and HL_ENG_Gr1_B2 [1].pdf. To view the extra teacher's guide and reading book, cf. the embedded files in the right margin.) The conceptualisation of the structured phonics intervention programme was described to give a better understanding of how this programme was utilised in the classroom.

Phonics Programme.pdf

Phonics Book.pdf

4.8.2.1.2 Procedure of quasi-experiment

The hypothesis presented in the study (section 4.2) was tested by making use of a quasi-experimental research design. A structured phonics intervention programme was implemented in three schools in Mpumalanga. The three schools were randomly selected to provide for generalisation (Creswell, 2015). After the schools were sampled and permission for the study was obtained from the schools, the teachers of the participating learners were trained on how to implement the structured phonics programme in the class.

4.8.2.1.2.1 Teacher training

The Grade 1 teachers of the three different schools received training on how to implement the structured phonics programme in the class. The training was done by the researcher in person. The researcher visited each of the schools separately and explained the study to the participating teachers. The training was done in the form of an informal meeting between the researcher and the participating teachers. The teachers were provided with a copy of the structured phonics programme (embedded files on page 119). A summary of the training can be viewed in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11. Summary of the training per school for Grade 1 teachers

School	Number of teachers being trained	Duration of the training	Where the training took place
A	2	1 hour	Classroom
B	2	1 hour	Staff room
C	5	1 hour	Office

At school A, the researcher explained the research to the two teachers and illustrated how the intervention should be implemented. The training took about one hour, and it took place in a classroom at the school. At school B, the researcher also trained the two Grade 1 teachers. The duration of the training was about one hour, and it took place in the staff room at the school. At school C, five teachers were trained at an office at the school. The dates for when the reading programme would be implemented were discussed and each teacher received a daily checklist (cf. Appendix J) where they had to mark down the activities related to the phonics programme that were done for the day. This was done to enhance the manipulation validity of the study (section 4.13.4).

Table 4.12. Example of the daily checklist that teachers had to complete

Date	Regular English lesson	Oral language development (10 minutes)	Phonological awareness activity (10 minutes)	Phonics: Reading activities (25 minutes)	Phonics: Writing activities (15 minutes)	Teacher signature
	√	√	√	√	√	

To increase the manipulation validity of the study, the teachers had to complete a daily checklist for the duration of the intervention. The intervention had to be implemented on a daily basis (school days). Teachers had to spend 10 minutes per day on the oral language developmental activities, 10 minutes per day on the phonological awareness activities, 25 minutes per day on the phonics reading activities, and 15 minutes per day on the phonics writing activities. This equalled a one-hour intervention, five times per week for four weeks – a total number of 20 hours per intervention period. Each activity and how it should be implemented in the class using the teachers' guide was discussed in detail.

During the informal trainings and discussions, the teachers were allowed to ask the researcher anything that they were uncertain of. The teachers were also provided with the researcher's telephone number if they had any uncertainties during the intervention. None of the participants contacted the researcher during the duration of the intervention.

4.8.2.1.2.2 Pre-test

Before any intervention was implemented, all participants (Grade 1 learners) from the three different schools completed a standardised one minute reading test (cf. Appendix C). The pre-test provided a measure of the learners' ability to decode and read words in one minute (WPM) before any treatment was received (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). The WPM were recorded for each participant. The researcher and two trained field workers conducted all the pre-tests. The pre-tests' mean scores for the intervention and control groups were compared by making use of an independent t-test to see if the groups were homogeneous before the intervention started.

4.8.2.1.2.3 Post-test

After the four-week intervention the researcher and the two field workers conducted the one minute reading test again with all the participants in the study. The post-test was done in order to compare the pre- and post-test scores of the participants in the intervention and control groups. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this process is referred to as group comparison. The researcher obtained scores for all the participants and recorded them on a class list (cf. Appendix N).

4.8.2.1.2.4 Repeated measure design

The experiment was repeated with the control group for the next four weeks in order to give the remaining classes in the school access to the same intervention to bring about ethical surety to the study (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011). The data set for the repeated intervention was not used because the effect of the programme in the classes where the programme was implemented first, could not be removed. Therefore, the intervention group could not be compared to the control group in the second phase of the study. The second intervention period was for ethical surety only.

4.8.2.2 Phase 2: Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative research is widely accepted in social sciences and applied fields of practice (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Research is a form of inquiry intended to expand the researcher's understanding of certain phenomena (File *et al*., 2017). Qualitative re-

searchers are often called constructivists (Subedi, 2016). These researchers often follow an inductive approach, building upon and generating information from the bottom-up (Leavy, 2017; Mertler, 2019).

Qualitative research requires an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reason behind these behaviours (Hoy & Adams, 2016). The qualitative approach requires observation and explanation about human behaviour (Atieno, 2009; Swain, 2016). The researcher used in-depth semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers to get a comprehensive description of their views as is often the case with qualitative research (Roni *et al*., 2020). The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with the researcher and the teacher being in the same location. Semi-structured interviews are some of the most used types of interviews in social studies (Brinkmann, 2013). The participant is more active in shaping the semi-structured interview than in the case of a structured interview. The researcher has less control, and the semi-structured interview gives the participant more freedom to shape the interview (Lyons & Coyle, 2021).

These interviews were done to understand the personal narratives of the teachers and reading experts and to probe the perspectives of these individuals on teaching reading in English submersion classrooms (Creswell, 2015). Qualitative research has a broad and holistic approach to data collection (Mertler, 2019).

Phase 2 of the research consisted of semi-structured face-to-face interviews with seven Grade 1 teachers. The semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to better understand the environment of the ELLs in submersion classrooms. It also provided information on teachers' perception on the suitability of the English Home Language curriculum for ELLs (DBE, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher individually and in a place and time suitable to the interviewee. Table 4.6 provided the information about the teachers that contributed to the qualitative data gathering of the study.

The interviews provided the researcher with rich data on the context of English submersion schools and classrooms. None of the interviews was rescheduled and the researcher did not encounter any challenges during any of the interviews.

4.8.3 Phase 3

Phase 3 consisted of six semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers after they have implemented the four-week reading intervention in their classrooms. The purpose of the interviews was to get feedback from the teachers on how they experienced the reading programme.

This phase also presented an anonymous online questionnaire completed by the seven Grade 1 teachers that participated in the study. The questionnaire helped to shed some light on the findings of the quantitative data of the study and to enhance the validity of the study (Baran & Jones, 2016).

The perception of the researcher when conducting the interviews in the three phases of the research was that reality is not fixed or agreed upon and that each teacher had her own perspective to add to the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). It was the attempt of the researcher to understand more of the social environment in which the teachers and learners find themselves in English submersion classrooms (Leavy, 2017).

The data analysis of the study was done separately for each phase of the research.

4.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Gathered data were analysed in order to develop the findings and implications of the study (File *et al*., 2017). When analysing data for MMR it is important to be aware of the foundations of qualitative and quantitative data analysis separately, but also to be aware of the integration of the two methods. The MMR design consisted of three phases and data were analysed accordingly. Figure 1.4 and section 1.8.7 address the sequence in which quantitative and qualitative data were analysed.

When analysing the quantitative and qualitative data of the research both separately and concurrently the following principles were followed as suggested by Ngulube (2022):

- *Reduction*: This was done by looking at the quantitative and qualitative data obtained and reducing it to the relevant data in answering the research questions.

- *Display*: The data were analysed and displayed in the form of graphs, diagrams, and descriptions.
- *Transformation*: The data were transformed and described to make it useful.
- *Correlation*: A correlation between quantitative and qualitative data was made and described when analysing the data.
- *Consolidation*: The data were then summarised in order to consolidate the most important findings of the study.
- *Comparison*: The data of the quantitative and qualitative strands were compared in search of differences and similarities.
- *Integration*: Finally, the data were integrated to present the quantitative and qualitative findings in relation to supportive literature.

It was the aim of the researcher to reduce the gathered data, display it properly, and transform it in order to explain it to the reader. This was followed by the consolidation of all the data gathered and by comparing the different types of data (quantitative and qualitative) with each other. The final phase of the analysis was integrating the data and presenting the findings.

The process for analysing the data will be discussed below, according to the different phases of the MMR design.

4.9.1 Phase 1

Phase 1 consisted of three semi-structured interviews with the reading experts. Analysing qualitative data included three activities: 1) Data reduction; 2) data display; and 3) drawing conclusions from the data (McNabb, 2020).

Data for qualitative research was analysed while inductively building from particular questions to general themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This is accomplished by identifying arising themes, categories, and concepts, and are highly descriptive (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Rather than relying on numbers, words are used to describe findings of the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The researcher focused on arising themes and categories from the interviews.

The findings of the qualitative data were presented by including quotations from participants and the researcher's field notes (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The findings of qualitative research focused on individual meanings and reports on the complexity of the situation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data from phase 1 were analysed in full before continuing with phase 2 of the research.

4.9.2 Phase 2

Phase 2 of the research consisted of quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered and analysed concurrently.

4.9.2.1 Phase 2: Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis of data involves performing various statistical operations and techniques (Adu & Okeke, 2022). The quantitative data analysis that was used, was consistent with the research design and the hypothesis that the researcher wanted to test (Hartas, 2015).

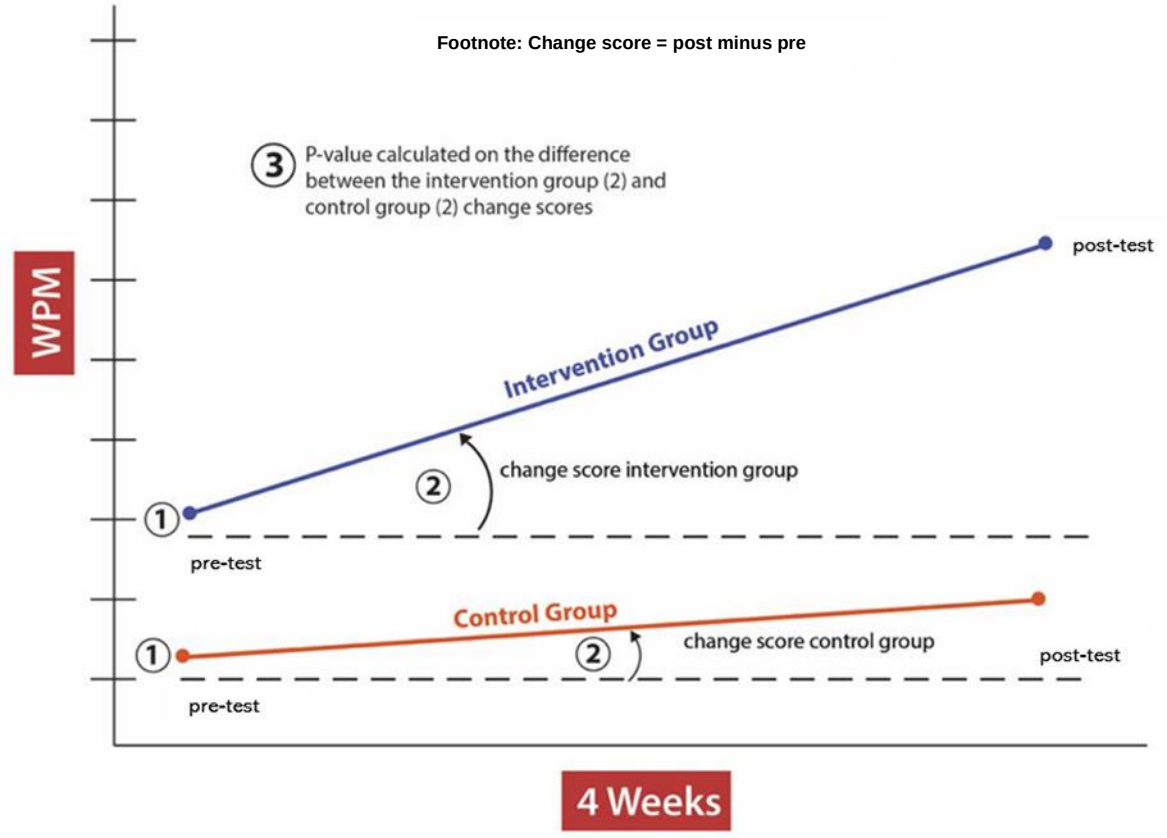
There are two broad categories of statistical analysis techniques, namely descriptive and inferential statistics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Data were gathered and analysed by making use of descriptive and inferential statistics, and by presenting information in charts, graphs, and Tables (McNabb, 2020; Recker, 2021).

Descriptive statistics refers to measurements of central tendency like mode, median, and mean (Adu & Okeke, 2022). It often involves frequencies, means, and standard deviations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Descriptive statistics are used to describe and summarise numerical data. Data was reported in Tables and Figures and include descriptions about the data collected.

A hypothesis is usually tested using *inferential statistics* (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An inferential statistical analysis was used to analyse data obtained from the quasi-experiment, in an effort to determine if the hypothesis presented in the study could be true (Recker, 2021). A statistical programme called SAS JMP (version 16) was used to analyse the raw data that were obtained from the quasi-experimental design. A qualified statistician also assisted the researcher in the interpretation of the data.

For each school the descriptive statistics will be described first, followed by the inferential statistical analysis. For the inferential statistics, four steps were followed to analyse the data. The four steps were followed for each school separately.

Figure 4.7. Steps followed to analyse data of the quasi-experiment



Step 1

Figure 4.7 indicates that the first step in the process of data analysis is to compare the pre-test scores of the intervention and control groups to establish if the groups were homogeneous before the start of the intervention. This was done to establish if the intervention and control groups tested the same at “pre-level” in order for the researcher to compare the groups to each other. Should it be established that the intervention and control groups were similar in their reading scores before the intervention, it could be argued that any differences in their abilities after the intervention could be attributed to the effect of the intervention.

The pre-scores were compared to one another using an independent t-test to get a calculated p-value. A probability coefficient, displayed as p-values, are used to measure significance. The p-value determines if there is a statistically significant difference

in pre-scores between the intervention and control groups before the start of the experiment for each school. Ideally, a low probability is preferred in human sciences research as this implies that the probability that the results was due to change is less than 5 in 100. For statistical significance the p-value must therefore be less than 5 in 100 ($p < 0.05$) (Dornyei, 2007). The p-value ranged between 0 and 1.

Step 2

Step 2 of the data analysis was done by calculating a change score for each learner. Figure 4.7 indicates that the change score was calculated by subtracting the pre-test score (WPM) from the post-test score (WPM) for each learner (Allison, 1990; Jennings & Cribbie, 2016). For example, if a learner has read 36 WPM before the intervention and 45 WPM after the intervention the change score would be calculated as follows: 45 (post-score mark) - 36 (pre-score mark) = 9 WPM (change score). A mean change score for the intervention and control groups was also calculated.

To be able to use the change score of participants, the researcher made sure that by subtracting the pre-test from the post-test score that the two comparison groups were first equalised at baseline on the dependent variable (Rogers, 2011). This was done as step 1 mentioned above.

Step 3

To compare the means between two independent groups, an independent t-test can be used (Kim, 2015). The independent groups for the purpose of this study are the experimental and control groups. The independent t-test is one of the most popular statistical techniques used to test whether the mean difference between two groups is statistically significant (Mishra, Singh, Pandey, Mishra, & Pandey, 2019). To summarise, the independent t-test, also called unpaired t-test, is an inferential statistical test that determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means in two unrelated (independent) groups (Mishra *et al*., 2019). In social sciences a p-value of 0.05 or less is considered significant (McCrum-Gardner, 2008; Rumsey, 2021).

The p-value ranges between 0 and 1. For statistical significance the p-value must be less than 5 in 100 ($p < 0.05$) (McMillan & Shumacher, 2014). The p-value for each school was calculated separately by using SAS JMP (version 16).

As the t-test is a parametric test, samples should meet certain preconditions, such as normality, equal variances, and independence (Kim, 2015). When the assumptions of the test are met, the independent samples t-test is the most powerful test for comparing the means between two independent samples (Derrick, Russ, Toher, & White, 2017). One of the assumptions of the independent t-test is *equal variances*. Levene's test is used to determine equal variances in selected samples. The significance level of Levene's test is computed and when it is insignificant ($P > 0.05$), equal variances are assumed, otherwise when $P < 0.05$, unequal variances are assumed between the groups (Mishra *et al*., 2019). If unequal variances are noted, the Welch test can be used to compare the groups instead of using the independent t-test (Derrick *et al*., 2017).

Parametric methods refer to a statistical technique in which one defines the probability distribution of probability variables and makes inferences about the parameters of the distribution. In cases where the probability distribution cannot be defined, nonparametric methods are employed (Kim, 2015). The Wilcoxon signed rank test is used as the non-parametric alternative to compare two paired samples, but assumptions for the paired t-test (normality of within-pair differences) are not satisfied (McCrum-Gardner, 2008).

Since the skewness and kurtosis values are mostly different from zero, acceptable ranges are determined for these values. These ranges have been suggested to state that the normality assumption is not fulfilled when the skewness coefficient is outside the range of $^{\pm}2$ and the kurtosis coefficient is outside the range of $^{\pm}7$ (Bryne, 2010). This was also the range accepted as a normal distribution for the sake of this study.

Step 4

Effect size was calculated by making use of Cohen's D. In addition to statistical significance, the measure of effect size should be calculated. Effect size indicates the magnitude of the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. This means that the effect size indicates how large the impact of an observed finding actually is and is and this can be useful in research because it provides an objective measure of the importance of the effect (Cohen *et al*., 2011). While statistical tests of significance portray the likelihood that the results of an experiment were due to change, effect size describe the relative magnitude of the experimental treatment (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). The procedure of calculating effect size identifies the strength of the conclusion of group differences (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). Calculating the Cohen D score is the procedure to determine the practical or meaningful difference in means scores (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021; McMillan & Shumacher, 2014).

Effect size can be calculated using the following formula: The raw mean change score of the intervention group minus the raw mean change score of the control group, divided by the standard deviation of the two conditions (Thalheimer & Cook, 2002). According to Vogt (2011), Cohen's D effect size can be interpreted as follows:

- Near 0.2: Small effect.
- Near 0.5: Medium effect.
- Near or larger than 0.8: Large effect.

Should a non-parametric test be used, Cliff's delta would be sufficient to determine effect size, instead of Cohen's D (Macbeth, Razumiejczyk, & Ledesma, 2011).

To conclude, statistics were analysed in the order of the four steps mentioned above. Each school's results were analysed and discussed separately.

4.9.2.2 Phase 2: Qualitative Data Analysis

Phase 2 of the MMR consisted of quantitative and qualitative data gathering which were done concurrently. The qualitative data were gathered by seven semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers teaching at Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

When analysing data from an interview, it is important to present the verbal conversation in written form – this is called transcribing the interview (Baran & Jones, 2016; Hartas, 2015). After transcribing all the interviews in full, the following prescriptions were followed when analysing the interviews as suggested by Baran and Jones (2016) as well as Creswell and Creswell (2018):

- First, the researcher organised the data to be meaningful by setting out units that are coded with words or very short phrases that signify a category. This is done by reading the data multiple times.
- The researcher grouped data together to find codes and themes.
- The researcher then summarised the coded data.
- All the similarly coded data were examined.
- The researcher then looked at patterns by observing an overall impression on the depth of answers, credibility, and usefulness of information.
- The researcher also looked for relations between the categories and patterns that suggested generalisation.
- In the end, the researcher interpreted the findings inductively, synthesised the information, and drew inferences.

The quantitative and qualitative data of phase 2 were analysed in full before continuing to phase 3 of the research.

4.9.3 Phase 3

Phase 3 consisted of six interviews that took place after the structured phonics reading intervention to determine the teachers' perspectives on how they perceived the implementation of the programme in their classes. Interviews in phase 3 of the research were audio recorded and transcribed in full. Themes were identified and coded (Sreejesh & Mohapatra, 2014).

Phase 3 of the research also included an anonymous questionnaire that was completed by the seven participating Grade 1 teachers using Google Forms. The questionnaires were used to gather data on questions that arose from phase 2 of the study. The questionnaire contained open- and closed-ended questions. The answers were

updated automatically on Google Forms once the teachers submitted their questionnaires online. The questionnaires were analysed by making use of the google forms software for closed-ended questions, thematic analyses, and data reduction for the open-ended questions. The questionnaire helped to explain some of the findings of phase 2.

4.10 REPORTING ON FINDINGS

Finally, the data were interpreted to draw conclusions and interpret the results of the study (McNabb, 2020). These findings will be discussed in Chapter 5 of this study.

4.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Multi method research may enhance the trustworthiness of a study (Ngulube, 2022). Matters that were considered important for the trustworthiness of this study will be discussed below.

4.11.1 Qualitative Data

Although complete objectivity is impossible it is still the aim of the scientist to gather and analyse data with as much as possible impartial judgement (Hoy & Adams, 2016). Objectivity is not just a human trait, but it can also be a description of the way in which the research was carried out (Hoy & Adams, 2016).

A qualitative researcher needs good verbal skills, the capacity to describe and interpret data, and the ability to read between the lines (Cohen *et al*., 2011). A researcher should also consider their own subjectivity in analysing results and engaging with participants when doing qualitative research (Biesman-Simon *et al*., 2020). The goal is for the researcher to be aware of her own bias rather than trying to avoid it (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

4.12 RELIABILITY

Reliability and validity are two important indicators of quantitative research (Aidley, 2019). Reliability refers to minimising errors and removing biases as far as possible (Subudhi & Mishra, 2019). The values of quantitative research are for the researcher to make sure that the research process is neutral and as objective as possible (Leavy,

2017). An aim in quantitative research is to ensure transparency throughout the research design: How the data was collected and analysed and how it supports conclusions (Coe *et al*., 2017). Appropriate measurement is one of the most important factors when doing quantitative research as it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and the theoretical and mathematical expression of relations (Recker, 2021).

Reliability means that the instrument used for obtaining data should do so consistently over time and precisely in different situations (Baran & Jones, 2016; Ngulube, 2022; ; Recker, 2021; Roni *et al*., 2020). To improve the reliability of the test scores for the one minute reading test that was conducted, the researcher has put the following measures in place:

- The researcher and two fieldworkers conducted all the one minute reading tests and captured the scores accurately.
- Proper training for the two field workers included the following:
  - Only one minute should be given to each learner to read the words in the test.
  - If a learner can sound the phonics, but cannot blend them together, it will not count as a word read.
  - All words read incorrectly or skipped should be deducted from the total WPM.
  - At the end of the minute the total number of words read by the learner should be accurately recorded.
  - All learners should be treated fairly and given the same amount of attention and courtesy as the other learners.

As mentioned above, two aspects that are important in quantitative research are validity and reliability. Quantitative instruments need to have validity and reliability to make the results of the study trustworthy (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

4.13 VALIDITY

Validity can be divided into different categories, namely content validity, internal validity, external validity, and manipulation validity (Recker, 2021; Subudhi & Mishra, 2019) which will each be described in full as related to the study.

4.13.1 Content Validity

The content validity of an instrument means that the variable that the instrument tests should be in line with the theoretical construct investigated in the study (Baran & Jones, 2016; Recker, 2021). In other words, the validity of a research instrument investigates whether a designed instrument accurately measures what it was intended to measure (Ngulube, 2022). If an instrument does not measure what it is set out to measure the results will not be accurate or of any use. It is important to know why the construct that is tested, was included in the study (Williams, Wiggins, & Vogt, 2022).

The researcher was interested in the reading fluency of the Grade 1 learners that received the intervention. The one minute reading test measured the reading speed of the learners and is a key indicator of reading fluency, according to the statement recorded in the CAPS document for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). Reading fluency involves the following elements:

- Accuracy in decoding.
- The rate of speed reading: Be able to recognise the words and read the words quickly and effortlessly.
- Reading smoothly with expression.
- Be able to comprehend what is read.

For the sake of this research the focus was on the first two constructs of reading fluency as this was what was measured in the one minute reading test.

The one minute reading test that was used for the purpose of this study is standardised for South African learners (cf. Appendix C). It includes reading norms that indicate how many WPM correspond to the biological age of learners in South Africa and could also give the researcher an overall indication on the reading fluency of the participants when the pre-test was conducted, even before the intervention and the post-test.

4.13.2 Internal Validity

Internal validity is concerned with controlling as many extraneous variables as possible to rule out the possibility that these factors could contribute to changes in the dependant variable (Baran & Jones, 2016). Other factors that could influence the dependant variable include “contemporary history, maturation process, pretesting procedures, measuring instruments, and statistical regression” (Baran & Jones, 2016:32). Quotations and cites to raw data can also be used to improve internal validity (Subudhi & Mishra, 2019).

4.13.3 External Validity

External validity refers to the external application of conclusions about the research and to generalise it to the population (Ngulube, 2022). Both sample size and randomisation are important to ensure external validity (Ngulube, 2022). The sampling technique that was used, namely stratified random sampling helps to make generalisations from the sample to the population. This can be an advantage because such generalisations are more likely to be considered to have external validity (Sharma, 2017). The sampling procedure of stratified random sampling aided the study in external validity.

4.13.4 Manipulation Validity

Manipulation validity is used in an experiment to make sure that the experimental group does indeed receive the intervention and that the control group does not (Recker, 2021). The researcher made use of a daily checklist (Appendix J) that the teachers had to sign and hand in at the end of the study to enhance the manipulation validity of the study. The control group did not have access to the intervention since these learners were learning in a different class.

4.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations cover issues like who will be fairly included in or excluded from the research (Poth, 2018). One of the major concerns when making use of an experimental research design is the question of the experimental group receiving an intervention whereas the control group will be deprived of the intervention (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021). This issue was addressed in the methodological design of the study where a *switching replication with treatment removal* design was used to make

sure that all participants had access to the intervention, only at different times (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Trochim *et al*., 2016). For the quasi-experiment, experimental and control groups (Grade 1 classes) were assigned randomly (Johnston, Schooling, & Leung, 2009). After four weeks of reading intervention, the experimental group became the control group, and the control group became the experimental group to give all learners in the sampled schools the same access to the intervention. At the end of the experiment, all learners in the sampled schools received four weeks of the reading intervention.

Ethical considerations are specifically important in research involving human participants and even more so if the participants include minors (Coe *et al*., 2017). The researcher aimed to keep all ethical moral codes high during this study. All participants were fully informed about what to expect from the study and the possible goals of the research (Coe *et al*., 2017; Watkins & Gioia, 2015). In this study, there were no physical, mental, or social risks to participants (McMillan & Shumacher, 2014). Informed consent was obtained from teachers and parents as well as assent from learners (Ary *et al*., 2018). The teachers at the participating school assisted the researcher in explaining the consent form to the parents on a voice note that was distributed via the school's WhatsApp groups. This was done to assist parents that could maybe not read in English or needed additional assistance in understanding the research. All participants were reminded that they had the right to give or withhold confirmed consent, either before the research has started or at any time during the research process, without any penalty (Ary *et al*., 2018; McMillan & Shumacher, 2014).

All data were kept confidential, making sure that no school, teacher, or learner could be identified, thus all the information stayed anonymous (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2013).

4.14.1 Ethical Considerations in Quantitative Research

The one minute reading test was done by the researcher and the field workers with objectivity and courtesy to the young learners. No learner was in any way embarrassed or reprimanded for reading words inaccurately or too slowly. The researcher and the field workers focused on positive reinforcement to the learners and treated them with dignity, friendliness, and respect.

4.14.2 Ethical Considerations in Qualitative Research

The study was clearly explained to the teachers that participated in the study while open communication was established between the researcher and participants. The nature of the research, how data would be collected and analysed, and the potential benefits of the study were explained to the participants (Coe *et al*., 2017; Watkins & Gioia, 2015). The researcher obtained permission from the teachers to audio record all the interviews (Coe *et al*., 2017).

An important ethical factor that needs to be considered when doing qualitative research is how to ask sensitive questions without causing anxiety for the interviewee (Coe *et al*., 2017). The researcher aimed to set the interviewees at ease by indicating that there were no right or wrong answers to the interview questions. If the participants felt uneasy about a question, they could just move on to the next question without any penalty.

4.15 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 4 explained the research design of the study. This included the research methodology and the research methods used to conduct the study. The problem statement, the main research question of the study, as well as the sub-questions were discussed. The context of the study was described. This was followed by a detailed discussion on the research philosophy that was used in this study, including the paradigm, the ontology, the epistemology, and the metatheory.

The epistemology and ontology of the research were discussed. The epistemology of the study focused on combining qualitative philosophies with quantitative philosophies into a pragmatic worldview or paradigm. The pragmatic viewpoint holds that a researcher can make use of a positivist and a constructivist approach by combining the two views to find answers to the research at hand. The ontology of the study was built on the view that the world of learning is complex. Complexity views the world and reality as complex systems that need to be approached with caution. Nothing is certain and the system is dynamic and ever changing.

The research methodology was described in full. This research is built on a MMR design which makes use of both quantitative and qualitative research designs to gather

data. The specific mixed method research design that was used is the intervention MMR design, the design comprised of three phases**.**

Data gathering methods included interviews, a quasi-experiment, and a questionnaire. A total of 219 participants were involved in the study. Purposive sampling was utilised to select the participants for the interviews and questionnaires while cluster sampling was used to identify the participants for the quasi-experiment to provide data. The participants were selected from three schools situated in different socio-economic areas in Mpumalanga, South Africa.

The structured phonics intervention programme that was implemented in the study was conceptualised and the teachers' training was described. A repeated measure design was used to conduct the quasi-experiment, which means that both the control and the intervention groups received the intervention, but only in different time slots. The quantitative data were analysed with the help of a statistician. The qualitative data were analysed with the help of recurring themes and codes. The trustworthiness and ethical considerations for the study were also discussed.

The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Learning how to read is not a natural phenomenon, but it is a skill that needs to be acquired (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). English has become the fastest increasing language in the modern world, growing to the status of a global language (Rao, 2019). Different factors have contributed to the fact that many learners are now educated in English from as early as Grade 1 onward. For learners that have to learn in “English only”, but with a different mother tongue, learning to read can be very challenging.

In Chapter 4 the methodology of the study was described in full to outline the research design of the study. The main research question as well as the sub-questions of the study were described in section 4.2. The aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

The data for the study were collected in three phases. The different phases of the research were explained in sections 4.6.1.1.1 to 4.6.1.3. To recap, *phase 1* constituted a qualitative phase where three interviews with reading experts were conducted. This phase also included group training on how to implement the structured phonics intervention programme in the class. *Phase 2* consisted of a quasi-experiment to investigate the effectiveness of a structured phonics intervention programme as well as qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers. *Phase 3* consisted of interviews with Grade 1 teachers as well as an online survey to shed light on the quantitative findings of the study and to capture teachers’ perspectives on the intervention. The research findings of the first phase of the study are discussed comprehensively below.

5.2 PHASE 1

5.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews with Reading Experts

Phase 1 of the research started with semi-structured interviews with three reading experts to get input into the suggested phonics programme as a reading intervention.

The reading experts were sampled using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling was used so that the researcher would be able to get rich data from the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The reading experts were selected on the basis of their experience in teaching ELLs how to read in English (10 years and more). The purpose of this phase of the study was to get a reflection from the experts on the draft structured phonics programme and to make adjustments where necessary.

The researcher started the interviews with an explanation of what the planned structured phonics programme would consist of. All of the reading experts listened attentively to what the planned intervention entailed. All of the interviews with the reading experts where done separately. After the explanation of the planned structured phonics intervention programme, the reading experts had an opportunity to give their views and input on the programme.

Three themes emerged from the interviews which included the importance of language when learning to read, suggestions to improve the programme, and positive aspects on the structured phonics reading intervention as noted by the reading experts.

Table 5.1. Themes and sub-themes of phase 1 of the research

Theme	Sub-Theme
The importance of language in reading acquisition	• Oral language skills to promote reading. • Translanguaging. • Modelling English as a language.
Suggestions concerning the phonics programme	None.
Positive feedback concerning the suggested phonics programme	None.

5.2.1.1 Theme 1: The Importance of Language in Reading Acquisition

The first theme that arose out of the interviews was the *importance of building the learners' oral language skills* in order to promote reading. The important role that language plays in learning to read was highlighted in sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.3.1.1. The reading experts indicated that any reading programme should focus on the language in which the learners learn how to read. The reading experts agreed that vocabulary

is important and that teachers should focus on English language learning in the class (cf. section 2.5.1). They differed in their views on what the best way should be to teach the English language to the learners as can be seen in the sub-themes that emerged. Another sub-theme that arose was the use of translanguaging as a strategy to learn English as a new language. Reading expert 1 made use of translanguaging when teaching learners English. Translanguaging is the process of using the learners' home language to reinforce the language being learned (Conteh, 2018). Reading expert 1 described her strategy as follows:

Reading expert 1

> "*Building vocabulary in these learners that have an African language at home, but are schooled in English is very important. They don't have the vocabulary because they don't speak the language at home. It is advisable to start a conversation with a learner to see the level of English that the learner understands before starting to teach them how to read* [cf. sections 3.3.3, 3.3.3.1, and 3.3.3.1.1]*. I also make use of the strategy where I speak to them in their mother tongue – I have a bit of a Zulu background – and they can answer in their mother tongue so that I can explain to them how to verbalise it in English* [cf. section 2.2.1]*. I have learners that are very fluent in English and I also use them to translate for the learners that do not understand".*

The sub-theme of modelling English to the ELLs also arose. Reading expert 2 had a different approach to teaching learners English. She followed an approach where she as the teacher modelled English speaking to the learners and expected them to practise the new taught language (cf. sections 1.7.2.1 and 3.3.1).

Reading expert 2

> *"I teach them English by modelling the correct English to them…I let them only speak English. We usually tell them, 'Don't speak Zulu, you must speak English and learn to express yourself'…they have to speak the language often. And I think if you have a teacher that can speak Zulu, my advice would be to not explain anything in Zulu, to use only English in the class, because if you are not going to do this the learners will never learn English".*

From the abovementioned quotes it is clear that the reading experts are using different strategies to promote second language learning. Section 2.2.4 highlighted that there are different approaches in bilingual education and that each approach has benefits in its own way. All the participants agreed that language plays an important role when learning to read in a second language. The reading experts also made some recommendations on how to improve the structured intervention reading programme that was self-designed by the researcher.

5.2.1.2 Theme 2: Suggestions Regarding the Phonics Programme

The reason for interviewing the reading experts in phase 1 was to get their perspectives on the practicality of the self-designed programme and to ask them what challenges they foresee with the implementation of such a programme. The following suggestions were made regarding the programme:

- *Reading expert 2: "Learners can be requested to colour the learned phonics sounds in the reading story to make it more interactive".*
- *Reading expert 2: "Add questions to decodable stories, to start improving learner comprehension".*
- *Reading expert 1: "Do not include capital letters in the start of the programme, since this can be confusing to learners that are only beginning with reading acquisition".*

The suggestions made by the reading experts were reasonable and therefore the researcher incorporated them into the structured phonics intervention programme.

Overall, the reading experts were positive about the structured phonics intervention programme as explained by the researcher. Their suggestions were attended to by the researcher. The researcher also received some positive feedback from the reading experts which are further described under theme 3.

5.2.1.3 Theme 3: Positive Feedback on the Structured Reading Intervention

The three reading experts were of the view that a structured phonics reading programme could be beneficial to learners learning to read in English submersion classrooms. The following quotes were extracted from the interviews to shed light on the

feedback which the researcher received from the reading experts on the planned research.

Reading expert 1

> *"The one minute reading test will give you a standardised norm. It will help you to see where the learner was and where the learner is after the intervention. The learners will definitely do better after your intervention"*.

Reading expert 2

> *"A phonics programme does give a lot of support when teaching learners to read. That is why I like this programme. They write sounds and they repeat the sounds and then they read the story with the same sounds"*.

Reading expert 3

> *"I definitely think that there is a need for this and what is really interesting to me is the fact that it keeps on repeating the same things, which I have a problem with the DBE book because there is no repetition"*.

The overall impression from the reading experts were that they were of the view that the phonics programme could be beneficial to the learners and that there were no major adjustments to be made. The study could thus move to phase 2 of research gathering (see recommendation letter from reading expert 2 – Appendix M).

5.2.2 Group Training with Teachers

The researcher conducted training at the three sampled schools in the form of group training sessions. The sessions included a detailed explanation of the structured phonics intervention programme and how it should be implemented in the class (cf. section 4.8.2.1.1 for a detailed discussion on how the intervention was implemented). These training sessions gave the participants the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the implementation of the programme. The participants could also contact the researcher on her cell phone should they encounter any problems or uncertainties during the experimental phase of the study.

The training sessions took place at the different schools and gave the researcher the opportunity to observe the school and classroom environment. In the training sessions

the teachers were eager to share what resources and methods they were using in the classroom to teach learners in English submersion classrooms to read (cf. Table 4.6) for a detailed outlay of the participants that contributed to the qualitative data of the study). These casual group training sessions provided the researcher with rich data on the current strategies that the teachers are utilising in the Grade 1 classroom.

5.2.2.1 School A

School A is classified as a quintile 2 school (second lowest socio-economic status). The school is situated in a semi-rural environment with a calm atmosphere. The Grade 1 classes did not have a lot of learners per class (only 28 learners per class). The Grade 1 classrooms were stocked with educational materials on the walls. The researcher observed that the teachers were dedicated to making the school environment educational and stimulating for the young ELLs.

At school A, the teachers made use of different reading materials to teach ELLs how to read. Most of the materials used were copied from existing phonics programmes and adjusted as needed.

Participant 1

> "*We use Letterland to teach learners the phonics…but it is totally above their level…we simplified it, as Letterland is actually for first language learners".*

Participant 2

> *"We also make use of reading pieces called the Bad Fat Cat".*

Participant 2

> *"There is a big need for reading material that is on the learners' level. It is really frustrating. That is why we make our own".*

From the above responses it is clear that these teachers are creative in creating reading material for ELLs at school A. The participating teachers agreed that there was a need for extra reading material in English submersion classrooms.

5.2.2.2 School B

School B is classified as a quintile 1 school (lowest socio-economic status). School B is situated in a semi-rural environment and is classified as a no-fee school. Learners are receiving a daily meal at the school. The Grade 1 classes are very crowded with 48 learners per class. The Grade 1 classrooms do not have educational material on the walls. Besides the English Home Language workbook there was very limited reading resources available.

Participant 3

> "W*e read the sentences in the CAPS book* [English Home Language book] *and then I write sentences on the board that we first sound out and read at least seven times".*

Participant 4

> "*We repeat the whole alphabet every day, where I sound the phonics and the learners have to repeat it after me, numerous times".*

Participant 4

> *"I make one reading worksheet per week".*

Participant 4

> *"I feel that your idea is fantastic, because I feel that the DBE book is not complete".*

The main reading resource in school B is the English Home Language workbook. The school has limited reading resources, and the teachers are of the opinion that the DBE book does not provide enough reading material.

5.2.2.3 School C

School C is classified as a quintile 5 school (highest socio-economic status), situated in an urban environment. The researcher observed a calm atmosphere at the school. The Grade 1 classes do not have too many learners per class (only 28 learners per class). The Grade 1 classrooms are stocked with educational materials on the walls.

The researcher observed that the teachers are dedicated to making the school environment educational and stimulating for the young ELLs. The school has its own reading file in addition to the English Home Language workbook that they have compiled with stories from different reading programmes.

The school visits by the researcher to train teachers on how to use the suggested phonics programme provided good insight into what reading resources the schools already had and used. It also gave the researcher an opportunity to observe the classrooms and get a sense of classroom environment in which the learners learn. After the teachers were trained, the researcher was ready to move on to phase 2 of the research.

5.3 PHASE 2

Phase 2 of the research consisted of qualitative and quantitative data gathering. For the quantitative data gathering the researcher conducted a quasi-experiment. For the qualitative data the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with seven Grade 1 teachers. The data for this phase of the study were collected concurrently (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The data obtained from the quasi-experiment (quantitative data) will be discussed below.

5.3.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The data for this part of the study were gathered by means of a quasi-experiment. The quasi-experiment is different from a true experiment as the researcher made use of pre-existing classrooms that were randomly assigned into experimental and control groups (Recker, 2021). This means that participants were not randomly assigned to be in the experimental and control group, but rather the whole class. The study included three schools and a total of nine classes. Five classes were randomly assigned to form part of the experimental group while four classes functioned as the control group.

For the quasi-experiment the researcher and two field workers administered a one minute reading test to the 207 Grade 1 learners (cf. section 4.8.2.1 for detail on how the experiment was conducted). The classes that were identified to form part of the experimental group then received a structured phonics intervention programme for a duration of four weeks. The programme was implemented in the class by the class

teacher for a duration of one hour per day. After the four-week intervention the researcher (with the help of two field workers) administered the one minute reading test again to all the participants. This was done to investigate the difference in the mean change score of the intervention group as compared to the mean change score of the control group (cf. section 4.9.2.1.1 for a detailed discussion of how the mean change score was calculated).

5.3.1.1 Describing the Sample

The analysis of the quantitative data starts with descriptive statistics of the quantitative sample. The sample for the study included 207 Grade 1 (N = 207) learners attending three different schools (cf. section 4.7.2.1). The biological age of the participants is set out in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1. Biological age of the participants

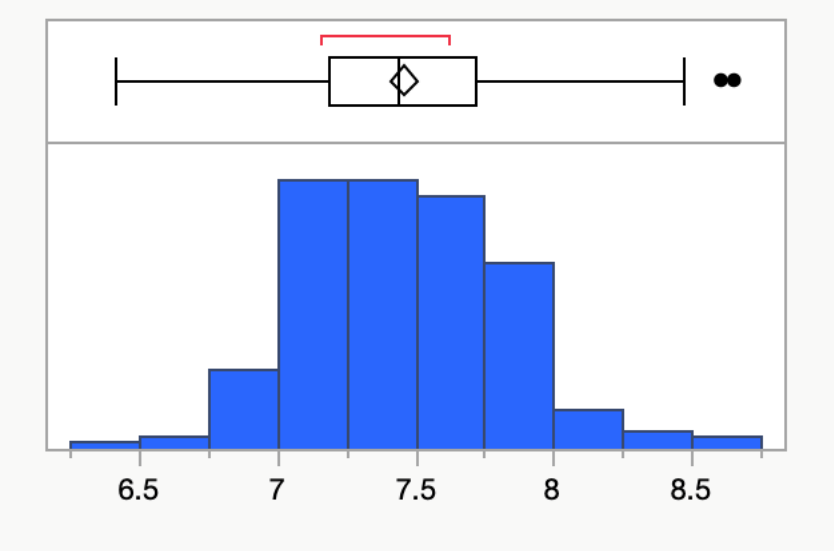
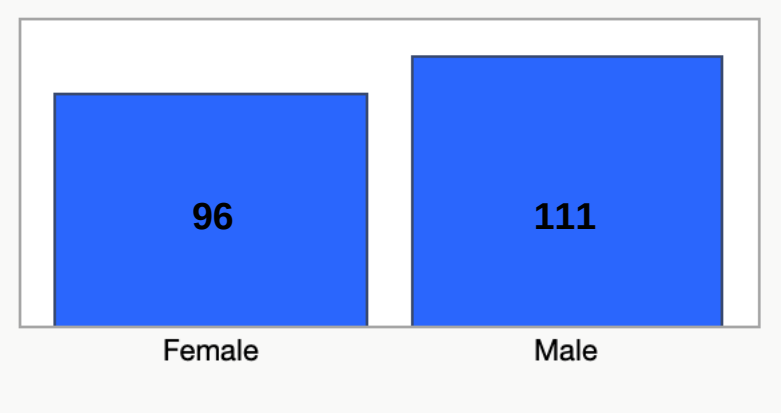


Figure 5.1 displays the average biological age (mean) of the learners. The mean age of the learners that participated in the study was calculated as seven years and four months. The study included 96 girls and 111 boys (cf. Figure 5.2) which totalled a number of 207 participants (N = 207).

Figure 5.2. Distribution of male and female participants



The study included 15 more male participants than female participants. The number of participants for each school also varied as can be seen in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2. Number of participants per school

School	Quintile Rank of School	Number of Grade 1 Participants
A	2	28
B	1	74
C	5	105
Total:		207

School A had a total of 28 participants, school B, 74 participants, and school C's total was 105. The total number of participants therefore equalled 207 (N = 207). School A (quintile 2) and school B (quintile 1) were sampled from pool A (cf. section 4.5). Pool A represented two schools from quintiles 1 to 3 and came from poorer geographical areas. School C was sampled from pool B and represented schools from quintiles 4 and 5 that are located in better socio-economic areas.

Figure 5.3. Number of participants per school

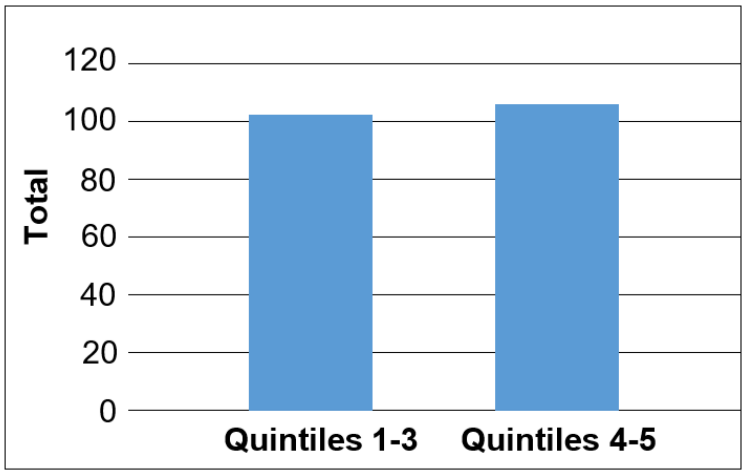


Figure 5.3 indicates that pool A (quintiles 1-3) had 102 participants and pool B (quintiles 4-5) had 105 participants which totalled an amount of 207 participants.

The descriptive statistics about the sample can be summarised as follows:

- The sample had an average biological age of seven years and four months.
- 96 girls and 111 boys were included in the study which totalled a number of 207 participants.
- School A had 28 participants, school B, 74, and school C, 105 participants which totalled 207 participants.

Since the three schools came from different socio-economic backgrounds, each school's statistics were analysed separately. The first step in analysing the data was to compare the difference between the pre-scores of the intervention and control groups (cf. section 4.8.2.1.2.2).

5.3.1.2 Comparison of the Difference between the Pre-Test Scores of the Intervention and Control Group

The first step in analysing the statistics was to determine if the pre-test mean score for the intervention and control groups could be compared. This was done by making use of an independent t-test to see if the groups were homogeneous before the intervention started (cf. section 4.9.2.1). The pre-test scores were compared and analysed per school.

5.3.1.2.1 School A

The intervention and control groups consisted of randomly assigned Grade 1 classes that existed at the same school. The school was located in a semi-rural area and was classified as a quintile 2 school. This means that the intervention and control groups came more or less from the same socio-economic background.

The independent t-test was done to establish if the pre-test levels of the intervention and control groups were homogeneous in order for the groups to be compared when doing the experiment. The results are displayed in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3. Results of the pre-test scores of the intervention and control groups to determine if the groups could be compared to each other at school A

				Test Normality		**Test Homogeneous Variances**	**Test Differences between Means**		
	N	**Pre-test Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	**P-value of Levine's Test**	**Test Statistic**	**P-value**	**Interpretation**
Intervention Group	17	10.4	8.69	1.29	2.05	0.9163	Independent t-test	0.51	Not statistically significant
Control Group	11	12.64	8.42	0.73	-0.70				

The intervention group had a mean reading score of 10.4 words per minute for the pre-test while the control group had a mean reading score of 12.6 WPM for the pre-test.

The assumptions of the independent t-test were not violated. This is why an independent t-test was used to determine the difference in mean scores between the experimental and control groups on the pre-test. A p-value of 0.51 indicated that the differences in the pre-test scores for the intervention and control groups could be regarded as not statistically significant.

Satisfied that the control and the intervention groups could be compared to each other, the teachers could implement the intervention programme in the experimental classes. A comparison of the pre-test scores for the intervention and control groups for school B will be discussed next.

5.3.1.2.2 School B

The intervention and control groups at school B were randomly assigned Grade 1 classes that were registered at the same school. The school was located in a rural area and was classified as a quintile 1 school (poorest socio-economic environment). This means that the intervention and control groups came more or less from the same socio-economic background. The intervention group had a mean reading score of 3.73 WPM for the pre-test and the control group had a mean reading score of 5.16 WPM for the pre-test.

Table 5.4. Results of the pre-test scores of the intervention and control groups to determine if the groups could be compared to each other at school B

				Test Normality		Test Homogeneous Variances	Test Differences between Means		
	N	**Pre-test Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	**P-value of Levine's Test**	**Test Statistic**	**P-value**	**Interpretation**
Intervention Group	37	3.73	3.49	3.83	17.51	0.46	Wilcoxon	0.16	Not statistically significant
Control Group	37	5.16	4.12	3.17	12.22				

Homogeneous variances could be assumed (Levine's p-value = 0.46). but due to the skewness of the sample measuring at 3.83 for the intervention group and 3.17 for the control group as well as the kurtosis being very high, at 17.51 for the intervention group and 12.22 for the control group, a normal distribution could not be assumed. The researcher therefore used the Wilcoxon test to compare the pre-test scores of the intervention and control groups.

The Wilcoxon test for non-parametric analysis, measuring the difference in the pre-reading scores between the experimental and control groups for the pre-test for school B had a p-value of 0.16 indicating that the differences in levels of the pre-test scores between the groups were not statistically significant as is clear in Table 5.4.

Satisfied that the experimental and control groups were homogeneous and could be compared to one another, the four-week intervention could commence at school B. A comparison of the pre-test scores for the intervention and control groups for school C will be discussed next.

5.3.1.2.3 School C

The intervention and control groups were randomly assigned Grade 1 classes that were registered at school C. The school was located in an urban area and was classified as a quintile 5 school. This means that the intervention and control groups came more or less from the same socio-economic background. The intervention group had a mean reading score of 22.5 WPM for the pre-test and the control group had a mean reading test score of 22.0 WPM.

Table 5.5. Results for the pre-test scores of the intervention and control groups to determine if the groups could be compared to each other at school C

				Test Normality		**Test Homogeneous Variances**	**Test Differences between Means**		
	N	**Pre-test Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	**P-value of Levine's Test**	**Test Statistic**	**P-value**	**Interpretation**
Intervention Group	68	22.5	18.52	1.52	2.87	0.68	Independent t-test	0.89	Not statistically significant
Control Group	38	22.0	18.46	1.57	2.62				

Homogeneity of variances as well as a normal distribution could be assumed and therefore an independent t-test was used. The independent t-test was done to establish if the difference in the pre-test levels of the intervention and control groups was statistically significant. The p-value of 0.89 indicated that the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. Satisfied that the control and the intervention groups could be compared to each other at school C, the four-week intervention could be implemented in experimental classes.

5.3.1.2.4 Summary of discussion of the pre-test scores at the three schools

The results for the comparison of the differences in the pre-test scores of the experimental and control groups indicated that the statistical difference between the pre-scores of the intervention and control groups at the three schools was not significant. Therefore, the researcher could carry on with the quasi-experiment.

After the four-week intervention that took place only in the experimental classes, a post-test was administered to all participants. The results in the differences between the mean change score for the experimental and control groups will be discussed below.

5.3.1.3 Descriptive and Inferential Results

5.3.1.3.1 School A: Descriptive statistics

School A is classified as a quintile 2 school by the DBE. This school is located in a rather rural area in Mpumalanga. The school had the smallest sample size of the three sampled schools. The reason for the small sample was the number of enrolled Grade 1 learners at the school, as well as the number of parents that gave consent for the study. School A had a total of 17 participants in the intervention group and 11 participants in the control group.

Table 5.6 displays the mean change scores that the intervention and control groups obtained, as recorded for the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 5.6. Mean raw scores displaying the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the intervention and control groups that were used to calculate the *change* score at school A

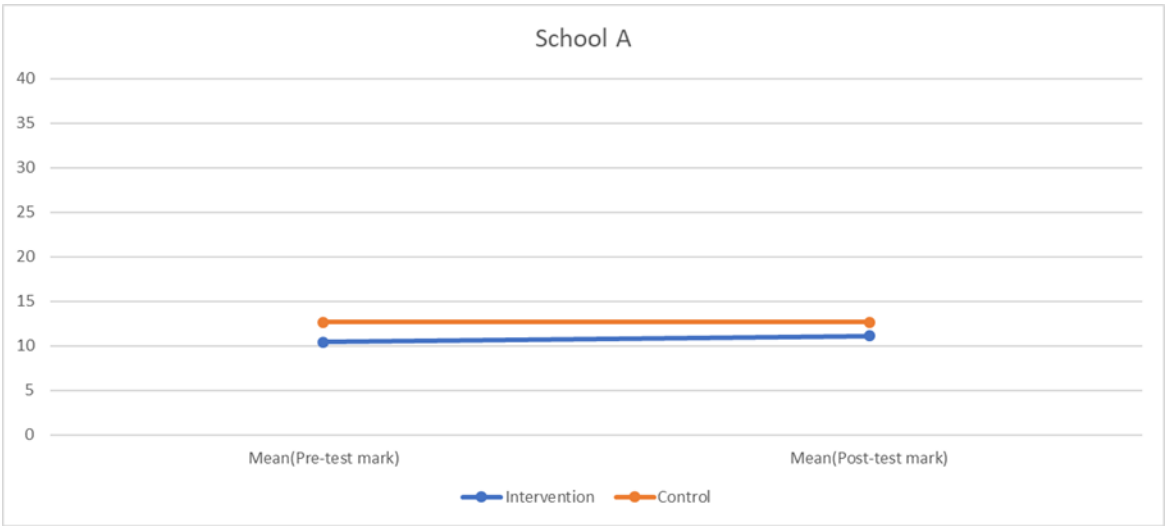
School A					
	Pre-test Score		Post-test Score		Mean Change Score
Group	N	Mean	N	Mean	
Intervention	17	10.41	17	11.12	0.71
Control	11	12.64	11	12.64	0.00

The intervention group had a sample size of 17 participants. The mean reading score of the intervention group was 10.41 WPM before the intervention and 11.12 WPM after the intervention. The mean difference in change score before and after the intervention was 0.71 WPM.

The control group had a sample size of 11 participants. The mean reading scores of the intervention group was 12.64 WPM before the intervention and 12.64 WPM after the intervention. The mean difference in change score before and after the intervention was 0 WPM (the change score of 0 was double-checked by the qualified statistician that assisted the researcher and verified as correct).

Figure 5.4 displays the change in the pre-test and post-test scores of the intervention and the control groups.

Figure 5.4. Change scores for the intervention and control group as set out graphically for school A



From Figure 5.4 it can be observed that the mean change score of the intervention group (0.71 WPM) was slightly more than the mean change score of the control group (0 WPM).

5.3.1.3.5 Results of the differences between the mean change scores for the control and treatment groups of school B

Table 5.7 displays the results obtained when comparing the mean change score of the intervention and control groups with each other.

Table 5.7. Results: School A

School A										
				Test Normality		**Test Homogeneous Variances**	**Test differences between Means of the Change Scores**		**Effect Size**	
	N	**Mean Change Score**	**Standard Deviation**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	**P-value of Levine's Test**	**Test Statistic**	**P-value**	**Cohens D effect size**	**Interpretation**
Intervention group	17	0.71	3.36	0.79	0.81	0.92	Independent t-test T(26) = 0.523	0.61	0.21 Small effect	Not statistically significant with a small effect size
Control group	11	0	3.6	-0.017	1.11					

For school A, the control group's mean post-test score stayed exactly the same at 12.64 WPM before and after the intervention. The intervention group's mean raw score of the pre-test indicated a reading score of 10.41 WPM. After the intervention the raw mean score of the intervention group increased to 11.12 WPM for the post-test. The mean change score was then calculated at 0.71 WPM as opposed to the mean change score of 0 for the control group. The mean change score of both the intervention and control groups was used to do an independent t-test.

An independent t-test can establish if the mean change scores of the intervention group were significant when compared to the mean change scores of the control group. This is done by measuring the probability coefficient or p-value. In social sciences a p-value of 0.05 or less is considered significant (Rumsey, 2021).

The sample displays homogeneous variances and normal distributions and therefore the independent t-test was done and a p-value of 0.61 ($p > 0.05$) was obtained that indicated that the difference in the mean change score of the intervention group was not statistically significant when compared to the mean change score of the control group.

After establishing statistical significance, it is important to also include effect size as suggested by Cohen. The Cohen's D effect size for school A tested at 0.21 (small effect).

5.3.1.3.3 Summary: School A

Learners in the experimental group had a mean reading score of 10.41 WPM on average before the intervention while the control group had a mean reading score of 12.64 WPM before the intervention. After the structured phonics intervention programme, the experimental group had a mean reading score of 11.12 WPM while the control group stayed at 12.64 WPM. An independent t-test was used to determine if the mean change score of 0.7 WPM for the experimental group was statistically significant when compared to the mean change score of 0 WPM of the control group. A p-value of 0.61 indicated that the improvement of the intervention group as opposed to that of the control group was not statistically significant. Cohen's D displayed an effect size of 0.21 (small effect).

5.3.1.3.4 School B: Descriptive statistics

School B is classified as a quintile 1 school by the DBE, indicating that it is located in a rural area and that it is also classified as a no-fee school. The learners that attend this school come from poorer families and also get meals provided by the school once a day. At the time of the research, the school had two classes with 48 learners in each class. Only 37 of the 48 learners' parents in each class gave consent for their children

to participate in the study. The study for school B thus consisted of 37 participants in the intervention group and 37 participants in the control group.

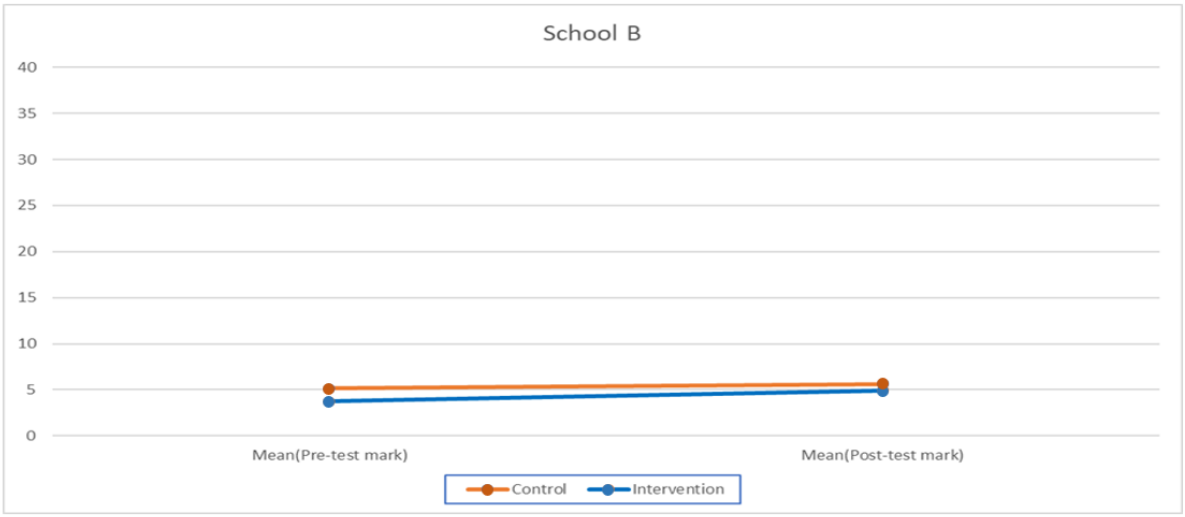
Table 5.8 displays the mean change scores that the intervention and the control groups obtained, as recorded for the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 5.8. Mean raw scores displaying the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the intervention and control groups that were used to calculate the mean *change* score at school B

School B					
	Pre-Test Mark		**Post-Test Mark**		**Mean Change Score**
Group	**N**	**Mean**	**N**	**Mean**	
Intervention	37	3.73	37	4.92	1.19
Control	37	5.16	37	5.65	0.49

The intervention group had a sample size of 37 participants. The mean reading score of the intervention group was 3.73 WPM before the intervention and 4.92 WPM after the intervention. The mean difference in change score before and after the intervention was therefore 1.19 WPM. The control group had a sample size of 37 participants. The mean reading scores of the intervention group was 5.16 WPM before the intervention and 5.65 WPM after the intervention. The mean difference in change score before and after the intervention was therefore 0.49 WPM.

Figure 5.5. Change in the pre-test and post-test scores of the intervention and the control groups at school B



From the descriptive data it is clear that the mean change score of the intervention group (1.19 WPM) was slightly more than the mean change score of the control group (0.49 WPM).

5.3.1.3.6 Results of the differences between the mean change scores for the control and treatment groups of school B

For school B, the control group's mean test score changed from 5.16 WPM before the intervention to 5.65 WPM after the intervention. The intervention group's mean pre-test indicated a reading score of 3.73 WPM. After the intervention the raw mean score of the intervention group increased to 4.92 WPM for the post-test. The mean change score was then calculated at 1.19 WPM for the intervention group as opposed to the mean change score of 0.49 WPM of the control group. The mean change scores of the intervention and control groups were used to compare these two groups with one another.

The results for school B are displayed in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9. Results: School B

School B										
				Test Normal Distribution		Test Homogeneous Variances	Test Differences between Means			
	N	Mean Change Score	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	P-value of Levine's Test	Test Statistic	P-value	Cliff's Delta	Interpretation
Intervention group	37	1.19	3.49	2.72	7.71	0.60	Wilcoxon's non parametric test T(72) = -0.79	0.70	0.05 Negligible	Not statistically significant and effect size negligible
Control group	37	0.49	4.12	-1.08	5.09					

Levine's test showed a p-value of 0.60 which indicated that homogeneous variances could be assumed ($p > 0.01$). A normal distribution could not be assumed, due to the skewness, as the intervention group tested at 2.72 (> 2) and kurtosis at 7.71 (> 7). Therefore Wilcoxon's non-parametric test was used. A p-value of 0.70 ($p > 0.05$) indicated that the results were not statistically significant.

When a distribution is not normal, then Cliff's delta test should be used to determine the effect size. The effect size using Cliff's delta calculated at 0.05 which can be regarded as a negligible effect.

5.3.1.3.6 Summary: School B

Learners in the experimental group at school B read 3.73 WPM on average before the intervention while the control group had a mean reading score of 5.16 WPM before the intervention. After the structured phonics intervention programme, a post-test was conducted. The experimental group had a mean reading score of 4.92 WPM after the intervention and the control group had a mean reading score of 5.65 WPM. A non-parametric test (Wilcoxon) was used to determine if the mean change score of 1.19 WPM for the experimental group was statistically significant when compared to the mean change score of 0.49 WPM of the control group. A p-value of 0.70 indicated that

the improvement of the intervention group as opposed to that of the control group was not statistically significant. Cliff's delta effect size of 0.05 indicated a negligible effect when looking at the effect size.

The descriptive and inferential data sets for school C will now be discussed in more detail.

5.3.1.3.7 School C: Descriptive statistics

School C is classified as a quintile 5 school by the DBE. This school is located in an urban area in Mpumalanga. The school had the biggest sample size of the three sampled schools. The reason for this is the number of enrolled Grade 1 learners at the school which was considerably more than the other two schools. School C had a total of 68 participants in the intervention group and 37 participants in the control group.

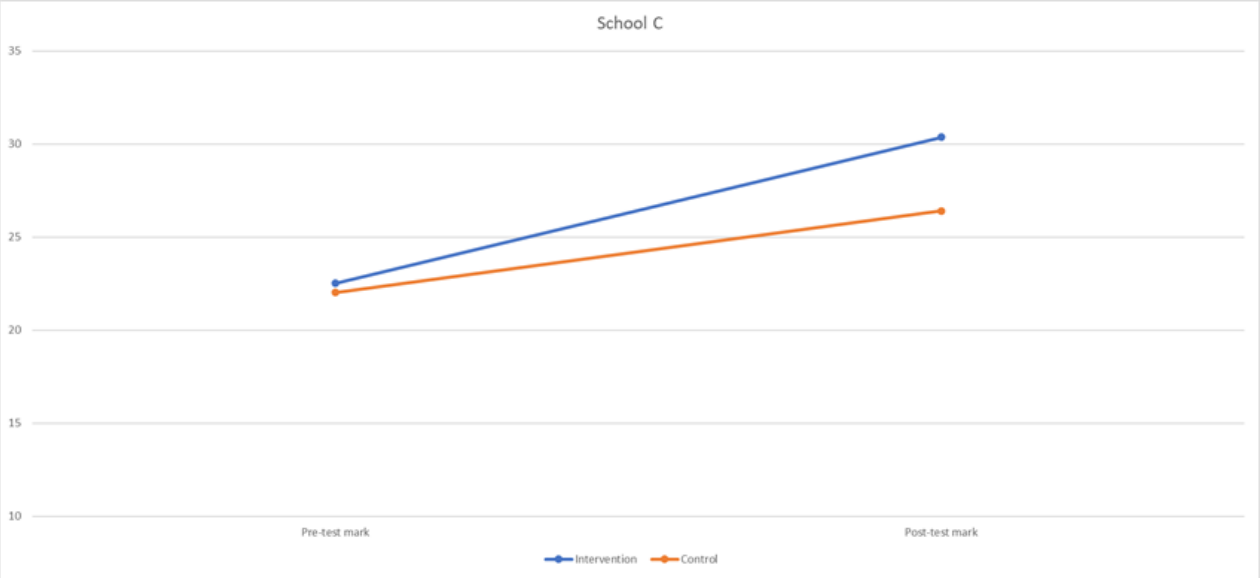
Table 5.10 displays the mean change scores that the intervention and control groups obtained, as recorded for the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 5.10: Mean raw scores displaying the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the intervention and control groups that were used to calculate the *change score* at school C

School C					
	Pre-Test Mark		**Post-Test Mark**		**Mean Change Score**
Group	**N**	**Mean**	**N**	**Mean**	
Intervention	68	22.5	68	30.36	7.86
Control	37	22.0	37	26.40	4.4

Learners in the experimental group at school C read 22.5 WPM on average before the intervention while the control group had a mean reading score of 22.0 WPM before the intervention. After the structured phonics intervention programme, the experimental group read on average 30.36 WPM while the control group read at 26.40 WPM. The intervention group had a mean change score of 7.86 WPM while the control group had a mean change score of 4.4 WPM. A graphic presentation of the differences between the pre-test and the post-test for school C can be viewed in Figure 5.6 below.

Figure 5.6. Change scores for the intervention and control groups as set out graphically for school C



From the descriptive data it is clear that the mean change score of the intervention group (7.86 WPM) was slightly more than the mean change score of the control group (4.4 WPM).

5.3.1.3.8 Results of the differences between the mean change scores of the control and treatment groups for school C

For school C, the control group's mean test score increased from 22.0 WPM before the intervention to 26.40 WPM after the intervention. The intervention group's mean test score increased from 22.5 WPM before the intervention to 30.36 WPM. The mean change score of the intervention group was then calculated at 7.86 WPM as opposed to the mean change score of 4.4 WPM of the control group. The mean change scores of both the intervention and control groups were used to do an independent t-test.

Table 5.11. Results: School C

School C										
				Test Normality		Test Homogeneous Variances	Test Differences between Means			
	N	Mean Change Score	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	P-value of Levine's Test	Test Statistic	P-value	Cohen's D	Interpretation
Intervention Group	68	7.85	7.22	0.68	0.50	0.15	Independent t-test T (103) = 2.53	0.0128	0.52	Statistically significant with a medium effect size
Control Group	37	4.37	5.62	0.65	-0.29					

An independent t-test was used for the measurement of the difference between the mean *change score* of both the control and the experimental groups. This t-test can establish if the mean change scores of the intervention group were significant when compared to the mean change scores of the control group. This is done by measuring the probability coefficient or p-value. In social sciences a p-value of 0.05 or less is considered significant (Rumsey, 2021).

Satisfied that the assumptions of the t-test were met, an independent t-test was used to compare the mean change score of the intervention group with the mean change score of the control group at school C. The p-value of 0.0128 ($p < 0.05$) obtained from the independent t-test indicated that the results could be regarded as statistically significant.

The statistical measure to determine effect size called Cohen's D, was used to calculate the effect size at school C. This was done by comparing the mean change score of the intervention group (7.85 WPM) to the mean change score of the control group

(4.38 WPM). The Cohen's D effect size at school C was 0.52 which could be regarded as a medium effect.

5.3.1.3.9 Summary: School C

Learners in the experimental group at school C read 22.5 WPM on average before the intervention and the control group had a mean reading score of 22.0 WPM before the intervention. After the structured phonics intervention programme, the experimental group read on average 30.36 WPM while the control group read 26.40 WPM. An independent t-test was used to determine if the mean change score of 7.86 WPM for the experimental group was statistically significant when compared to the mean change score of 4.4 WPM of the control group. A p-value of 0.0128 indicated that the improvement of the intervention group as opposed to the control group was statistically significant. Cohen's D was calculated to a score of 0.52 which indicated a medium effect.

5.3.1.3.10 Summary: Quantitative data analysis

The pre-test scores obtained from the standardised one minute reading test showed that participants from different socio-economic backgrounds scored differently on the pre-test. The importance of the ELLs' environment, including their socio-economic status was highlighted in section 1.7.2.3.3 as well as 3.3.3.3. The participants from the poorest socio-economic backgrounds (school B) scored the lowest mean raw score on the pre-test, followed by the school that was located in a semi-rural area (school A). The school that was located in the highest socio-economic environment (school C) had the highest mean raw scores on the pre-reading test as compared to the other schools. The CDST holds that learning is part of an interconnected system, which includes the learners' home and school environment when learning to read in English. This was highlighted in sections 3.3.2, 3.3.3.3 and 3.3.1.3.3. The complexity of learning to read in English was evident from the mean pre-test scores for schools A, B, and C. Although the teachers at the three schools were qualified and had the relevant experience in teaching ELLs to read, the pre-test scores of the learners were far below the standardised benchmark of the one minute reading test (Appendix C). On the standardised reading test 31 WPM are equivalent to a biological age of six years and six months. Although the standardised reading test was set for English Home Language learners, the mean biological age of the sample of seven years and four months

and the mean reading score of 13.4 WPM tested considerably low when compared to the test's norms. This means that they scored far below the benchmark for their biological age and their pre-scores could not be traced on the standardised norm (because it was too low and not listed). The low scores on the pre-test scores may be due to the fact that most learners are first learning to read in English in Grade 1, as language plays an important role in learning to read. The importance of language in learning to read was explained in sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.3.1.1.

The CDST also holds that learning in English is non-linear, which means that results obtained are not only the product of the sum of the input, but should be regarded as complex and dependent on the context in which the learning takes place. This was highlighted in section 3.3.2.1. More research is needed in the complex context of English submersion classrooms in South Africa and the different factors that play a role in learning to read in English.

After a four-week structured phonics reading intervention, a post-test was administered to all the participants using the same standardised one minute reading test that was used for the pre-test. A change score was calculated for each participant by subtracting the pre-test score (WPM) from the post-test score (WPM). A mean change score was calculated for each intervention and control group at each school. The mean change score was then used to conduct an independent t-test (or relevant test depending on the skewness and kurtosis of the data) by comparing the mean change score of the intervention group to the mean change score of the control group. This was done to discover if the difference in the mean change score of the intervention and control groups showed a statistically significant difference.

A p-value of 0.61 at school A indicated that the difference in the mean change score of the intervention group as opposed to the mean change score in the control group could not be regarded as statistically significant. At school B a p-value of 0.70 showed that the difference in the mean change score of the intervention group was not statistically significant when compared to the control group. There was, however, a statistical significance in the mean change score of the intervention group when compared to the mean change score of the control group at school C. The p-value at school C was 0.0128 ($p < 0.05$).

The componential model of reading holds that reading achievement is dependent on three domains, namely the cognitive, the psychological, and the ecological domain (cf. section 3.3.3). The domain that is evident in the data presented is the ecological domain. The schools located in lower socio-economic environments had lower pre-test scores and did not show significant improvement when implementing the structured phonics programme. The school located in a better socio-economic environment showed higher pre-scores as the programme made a significant difference in the school. This may be because the learners scored higher in their pre-test which means that the designed programme was not too difficult for the learners. If learners can use the knowledge that they already have to do tasks independently, they are operational in the zone of proximal development (Erbil, 2020). Learning occurs when learners are actively engaged in the learning process (Erbil, 2020).

At school A, the effect size was calculated at 0.21 which indicated a small effect, according to Cohen's D. At school B, the effect size calculated at 0.05 which could be regarded as negligible. At school C the effect size tested at 0.52 using Cohen's D which can be regarded as a medium effect size.

As part of the data gathered for phase 2 of the study, the researcher had seven in-depth interviews with the grade 1 teachers that were teaching at the sampled schools that received the structured phonics intervention programme.

5.3.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Phase 2 of the research included seven semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers teaching in English submersion classrooms. Interviews were done concurrently, in the same time frame as the quasi-experiment, to gain more insight into the classrooms where the phonics programme was implemented. The researcher's aim was to answer some of the research questions by conducting the interviews. The three emerging themes from the semi-structured interviews were identified and are displayed in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12. Themes and subthemes identified in phase 2 of the research

Theme	Sub-Themes
Theme 1 Home environment of learners	• Family structures • Academic support from the home environment
Theme 2 English as the language of learning and teaching of the English submersion classroom	• Level of English when starting Grade 1 • Teachers' strategies on teaching learners English • Social interaction in English submersion schools and classrooms
Theme 3 Teachers' perspectives on the reading requirements of the CAPS for English Home Language	• Time allocations in the CAPS for English Home Language with regard to listening and speaking as well as phonics and shared reading • Efficiency of the reading materials provided to ELLs and the CAPS for English Home Language • Efficiency of instruction on reading in the CAPS for English Home Language • Workload expectation in the CAPS for English Home Language with regard to reading • Teachers' perspectives on learners being ready to move on from three letter words like "cat" to words with diagraphs such as "chip" in term 3 • Teachers' perspectives on the content and sequencing of the CAPS for English Home Language • Challenges that teachers experience when teaching grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms • Motivating ELLs to read

5.3.2.1 Home Environment of ELLs

The first relevant theme that the researcher noticed during the interviews with the teachers was the home environment of the Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms. The environment plays an important role in English language learning as indicated in the theoretical part of the study. The importance of the home environment

of the learner was highlighted in sections 1.7.2.3.3 and 3.3.3.3. A sub-topic that was discussed regarding the home environment of the learners was the family structures of the ELLs.

5.3.2.1.1 Family structures

The family structures and its influence on learning are important when investigating the social context of learners in English submersion classrooms as indicated in the theoretical framework of the study.

Teachers at schools A and B indicated that there were some learners that lived with both parents, although the interviews indicated that many learners came from single-parent families. Some learners were living with both or only one grandparent. At school C, teachers indicated that the learners' home environment varied. While there are more learners in this school that have structured families, some indicated that there is a lack of support and structure at home which reflects in the English submersion classroom.

School A

Participant 1

> "*Some of the learners comes from better families, you know, there is a mom and a dad and more of a complete family structure, but some of them live with single parents or grandparents and I suppose the granny can't talk English and read and write so that is also a problem that I have".*

School B

Participant 3

> *"They are very poor because this is a no fee school. They eat at school, 80% of learners are part of the feeding scheme at the school. There is a lot of learners who do not have parents and are staying with their aunts or a child acting as a parent. It's very bad. No stable family structures".*

School C

Participant 7

> *"Learners are in a normal house where there is electricity and water and families are living together, mother and father are married. But also, other situations, learners are living in the townships where electricity is a luxury and some of the parents are divorced and some stay with grandparents so it is a very different or wide variety of socio-economic structures…Yes, I would actually say at our school we have quite okay families; I would say more than half come from a proper house where the families are all together, but in many cases there's only a mom or a dad where the parents are divorced, so I would say 70/30".*

Participant 5

> *"I am shocked at the number of learners who stay with grandparents. Almost half of the children in my class stay with grandparents. Out of the 26 learners, only six have parents that are married and there are five to six learners that stay with single moms and one boy who only stays with a single dad – his mom passed away last year"*.

From these interviews, we get a better understanding of the learners' home environment. It is clear that there are many unstructured families and difficult home environments that present itself in schools A and B (lower socio-economic status), although it also presents itself in school C (higher socio-economic status). Teachers' perspectives on the support learners receive from home helped the researcher to understand the home environment of the ELLs.

5.3.2.1.2 Academic support from home environment

The componential model to reading (cf. sections 1.2.2.3 and 3.3.3) formed the educational perspective on teaching reading of this study. The theory indicates that learners' socio-economic status has an influence on their academic learning and reading acquisition (Chen *et al*., 2018). In a study by Chiu *et al*. (2012) ecological factors account for as much as 91% of reading variance.

The following quotes give a clear description of the teachers' perspectives on how parents support learning in English submersion schools.

Schools A and B

Participant 1

"*Sometimes there is no backup at home…The parents are not speaking English at home…So that is sometimes our biggest problem, there is no support at home, is what we struggle with".*

Participant 3

"There won't be any support from home because the parents can't read either and they can't speak English…Another challenge involves the grandmother not understanding English too well and cannot support the child with English".

Participant 1

"Strengthening, I would say, is watching TV; they pick up the language, that is the only strengthening I can really see".

School C

Participant 5

"Learners that stay with grandparents that can't really speak English themselves they are really struggling, so I do believe that the home environment affects the way they speak English and that the parents that are able to help their learners…that their learners read better…learners that stay with grandparents, they really struggle, because some of the grandparents can't even read themselves".

Participant 7

"And most of them, the parents or the guardians, are employed or self-employed and if the children need any assistance they can help and support the children if it is necessary".

Participant 8

"No, I don't think most of the learners have support at home; 40-50% of parents send their children to an aftercare to help support them with their homework and reading. 10 to 15% will send their children for extra reading classes and 30

to 40% of learners will go home after school and stay with an aunt, grandmother, or even an older sibling because the parents work the whole day. The problem with these children is the aunt or grandmother struggles with the pronouncing of the different phonics and words. They teach them ABC and not "a-b-k" and this is the most important part of teaching a learner how to read. Another challenge is that the guardians don't understand English very well and this makes it difficult for them to support the learner with reading".

Participant 7

"I think the learners do have support in some cases…more than 70% have support in learning English as a home language or as a language, but in that 30% cases the teaching of English as a language is difficult because the grandparents are not familiar with the language so they can't really assist with reading homework or anything like that".

Participant 9

"Yes, most of the learners have technology like Wi-Fi at their homes. They can use the resources like YouTube and they have nice educational shows on Netflix. I encourage the parents to buy children's books to read to them and especially stories for bedtime. I also encourage parents to speak English at home with the children".

At schools A and B (lower socio-economic status) the teachers held the view that there were very little support coming from the home environment regarding the learners' school work and specifically the learning of English as a subject. Learners that lived with grandparents were really disadvantaged, due to the grandparents being unable to help them with any schoolwork because of a lack of literacy skills. The only support teachers noticed in these schools was the English that learners picked up from the television. Some of the participants at school C (higher socio-economic status) indicated that they have the conviction that the parents support the learners by speaking English to them at home, reading them stories, and investing in aftercare for the learners. Overall, challenges as observed by teachers are family structures that do not provide stability, as well as a lack of support from home regarding school work and the learning of English as a language.

5.3.2.2 English as the Language of Learning and Teaching in the Grade 1 Submersion Classroom

Another challenge that the researcher observed when doing interviews with the Grade 1 teachers is the fact that English is utilised as the LoLT in English submersion schools. Since learners with an African mother tongue have to learn how to read in English in these classrooms from Grade 1 onward, the researcher experienced a need to further explore the subject.

Teachers held the view that learners did not always get enough support from their home environment (cf. section 5.3.2.1.1). The teachers narrated that learning was complicated due to learners coming from poor families or the absence of stable family structures. The same was true when the learners had to learn English in order to be educated in it as the LoLT, though they had a different mother tongue.

Learning English as a language is essential if learners have to start reading in it as a second language (cf. sections 3.3.3.1 and 3.3.3.1.1). The researcher further explored English as a language by looking at how the teachers observed the Grade 1 learners' oral fluency when they entered Grade 1 at the beginning of the school year. From the responses it was obvious that most learners struggled with English as a language at the three sampled schools throughout different socio-economic statuses.

Table 5.13. Teachers' perception of English language learners' language skills when entering Grade 1 as well as the strategies that teachers follow to teach English as a language

	Level of English when Starting Grade 1	**Teachers' Strategies on Teaching Learners English**
School A	Participant 1 *"But here you have got some children that can't talk English and that never really have the opportunity and the exposure. So that is our problem".*	Participant 1 *"We repeat the things over and over. I call the Zulu speaking Grade R teacher – she usually comes and translates. I call them to repeat it for me in isiZulu and I got a very basic isiZulu understanding/vocabulary. So, I can sometimes repeat the word in isiZulu, but we work from the known to the unknown so*

	Level of English when Starting Grade 1	Teachers' Strategies on Teaching Learners English
		we have to go back to their language just to explain it to them. So I often use the EA's, the cleaners, anybody around that can explain it to them".
School B	Participant 3 *"No skills whatsoever. The Grade R and RR teachers are supposed to start with English in their classes, but they don't…so they think it is best to teach in IsiZulu and speak Zulu and then the learners understand them…It would be better if those teachers can start speaking English".*	Participant 3 *"They understand it better when I explain things in Zulu and then translate it to English what I have said. It's an ideal situation for me to be able to speak both languages. When I did the Grade 5 and 6 maths as well. Their English is also very poor. As they go up, the English is still a problem".*
School C	Participant 8 *"When they started at grade1 it was a real shock to realise how little English they really knew. It was a struggle for them to communicate well in English because their sentence construction was not very good, and this made it difficult to understand some of the learners. But with a lot of encouragement, they really tried to focus on what they are trying to say in English. It was a struggle in the beginning. Like they know words but don't know how to explain to you what they are trying to say".* Participant 9	Participant 9 *"When they are playing, and they come and tell us stories, sometimes the way they talk isn't right then we will help them. For example, if the bell rang and they come to us and they ask, 'Teacher, did the bell just rang?' And then I will say, 'No the bell didn't ring' or 'Yes, the bell rang please go to class', just that they can hear how you must say it. I model the correct English to them".* Participant 5 *"I love picture discussions because I feel they enjoy looking at pictures and I think that is an easy way to*

	Level of English when Starting Grade 1	Teachers' Strategies on Teaching Learners English
	"*When they come to Grade 1 it is not that good, they can talk with us but only small words and when we talk to them, we try not to talk too much and not to give too much information because then they are going to get confused and not going to follow the instructions or the work is going to be wrong, so we keep it simple. As soon as it gets more information it's not going to work with them and when you look at the learners and explaining to them you can see on their faces they are getting confused and that's when I stop and ask. 'Do you understand? Please come and ask me if you don't understand'".* Participant 5 *"So, the learners that can speak English well it was easy for them to adapt. They just started school and they are the ones that are performing well and they are the ones who adjusted well, but the learners that couldn't really speak English it was very hard for me to communicate with them at first because they didn't know how to express themselves. They couldn't ask if they needed help and there is five of them – I know exactly who they are – the ones that couldn't speak English at all or they could barely speak English because they are still struggling".*	*get them involved in building a vocabulary, seeing things. So, picture discussions. I also enjoy doing stories with them because then they see the pictures again and they sort of create a picture in their minds. So, we do lots of stories, rhymes, songs, and I also enjoy asking them daily news. So, in the morning when they come to school, I ask all of them, I give each learner an opportunity to tell me something. What I like about that as well is then everybody had a chance to tell me something and if I compare the daily news to the beginning of the year up to now it is now much more interesting, at first they all just copied what the previous one said but now I can really see what happens at home or what happens in the afternoons or what affects them. They start to put more emotion into their daily news…Well the language of learning and teaching is English, so all our teachings are English the whole day. We only speak English in the class. We communicate in English on the playground, so the learners are only exposed to English at our school, so they don't have the opportunity to speak their home languages. So, we communicate in English, ask questions and they must answer in English, give instructions and so forth".*

From the above responses it is clear that most learners that enter Grade 1 English submersion classrooms are still struggling with acquiring English as a language. This was how the teachers in the three sampled schools perceived the learners at the beginning of Grade 1. Teachers were concerned about the ELLs' level of understanding of the English language. They held the view that the Grade R teachers did not focus enough on teaching English as a language. This can complicate reading acquisition in English.

Since some of the learners in English submersion classrooms learn English mostly at school, it was important for the researcher to see what strategies the teachers use to promote English as a language in the classroom. When the researcher asked the participants to elaborate on how they teach English as a language to the learners or how they promote English language learning, teachers responded with different strategies. Two of the participants did not elaborate on English as a language but only referred to teaching phonics. This can be an indication that the teachers do not understand that although language and phonics integrate when acquiring reading, the learning of the language in which the learner should read is a separate skill (cf. section 3.3.3.1.1).

From the interviews it seemed as if schools A and B relied more on the strategy of translanguaging (cf. section 2.2.1) to help the learners to learn the new language. Translanguaging indicates the process of using one language (the mother tongue) to reinforce the other language to be learned (second language) by integrating the languages (Conteh, 2018). This promotes a deeper understanding of content and can also lead to the development of the weaker language in relation to the dominant language (García & Li, 2015).

School C did not make any reference to translanguaging or using the learners' home language to help them learn the new language. This school made use of modelling English to the learners. According to the social cognitive theory (cf. sections 1.4.1 and 3.3.1.1), the required language use can be modelled to learners and is called direct modelling (Johnson, 2019). This is often the type of modelling that happens in classrooms where teachers and learners interact with each other.

The schools also had different strategies to encourage learners to speak English socially (cf. sections 1.7.2.1 and 3.3.1). In recent literature on SLL it is emphasised that learning should not only focus on the cognitive processes of learning a language but also on the social context in which it occurs (Mitchell *et al*., 2019). According to Vygotsky, the knowledge that learners have can be expanded in social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Social engagement is important in the learning process, according to the SCT (MacBlain, 2018).

Table 5.14. Social interaction in English submersion schools and classrooms

	Social Communication in English
School A	Participant 1 *"[I]f they talk to us and to their friends in the class, we want them to talk in English. Some of them can do it, others will carry on in Zulu. I don't think they have ability…No, we as grown-ups we talk in our mother language if we are talking to one another so you can't take it away from them completely. I thought that is not totally right. Maybe if there are one or two children coming into a totally English school then it can be, but I mean these kids if they come out of the schoolyard they talk Zulu in any case, you can't really isolate them from that".*
School B	Participant 3 *"They don't speak English socially at all. Most of them, although they are from various cultural groups, they all speak IsiZulu".*
School C	Participant 5 *"I think the fact that they have to speak English to each other even when they are playing definitely helps them to build a vocabulary because they are forced to speak English and the best way to learn is to do it".*
	Participant 6 *"The school encourages learning by letting them only speak English or Afrikaans which is our two languages of learning and teaching – that really helps a lot".*

Schools A and B indicated that learners mostly engaged in their home languages during breaks and socially while school C narrated that they encourage the learners to also engage in English when engaging socially.

According to the SCT, learning can be achieved through observation within a social context (Frey, 2018; Johnson, 2019). This was highlighted in section 3.3.1. What makes English language learning difficult in a social context is the complexity of the situation as described by the CDST (cf. section 3.3.2). A good arrangement in some English submersion schools is preserving the learners' mother tongue while learning a new language (English) in the school setting. The protection of the learners' mother tongue is important because it protects the learners' culture and gives them a sense of belonging (Stoop, 2017). Learning English in submersion classrooms are therefore complex since the goal is for learners to learn English as efficiently as possible. This can be difficult because the learners' mother tongue is closely linked to the learners' culture and identity (Yadav, 2014).

An important topic related to English submersion classrooms is the curriculum that the learners have to follow in these classrooms.

5.3.2.3 Teachers' Perspectives on the Reading Requirements of the English Home Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

The schools that were sampled for this study were schools that have English as the LoLT from Grade 1 onward and therefore they use the English Home Language curriculum. However, the learners in these schools have a different mother tongue than English. These learners are called ELLs throughout the study. The current CAPS for English Home Language does not give any guidance to support the teachers, or any deviation plan on tempo or content when it comes to ELLs in English submersion classrooms in South Africa (cf. sections 1.2, 1.3, 3.2.2, and 3.2.4.3).

According to the curriculum design diagram suggested by Macalister and Nation (2010), a curriculum needs to focus on three important factors (cf. section 3.4.1), which are *needs analysis, environmental analysis,* and *the principles* on which the curriculum was designed. The content and sequencing of the curriculum are also important aspects to consider (Nation & Macalister, 2020). The researcher was interested to evaluate the CAPS for English Home Language against the curriculum design diagram by comparing the teachers' responses to the different factors suggested by the model.

The interviews with the Grade 1 teachers indicated some challenges that they experienced with the English Home Language curriculum, especially in the case of ELLs.

The first issue that arose from the interviews was the time allocation for listening and speaking and the learning of phonics. The time allocations as set out in the CAPS for English Home Language, are a direct reflection of the ELLs' needs, specifically with regard to learning to read in English. There is consensus that learning a new language requires a lot of time and even if following the current guidelines, it seems as if there is not enough focus on literacy (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

A study on best practices in the classroom that was conducted in six states in the USA and involved Grade 1 and Grade 4 learners, in regard to reading, indicated that successful teachers (regarding the teaching of learners to read) were reading and writing in their classes for as much as half of the school day, instead of following curriculum requirements (Allington, 2002). This raises interesting questions regarding the current time allocation in the CAPS when it comes to reading.

Table 5.15. Time allocations for listening and speaking and phonics, according to the CAPS for English Home Language

Topic	Time per Day	Time per Week
Listening and speaking	15 minutes per day for three days.	45 minutes per week.
Reading and phonics	Phonics: 15 minutes per day for five days. Shared reading: 15 minutes per day for three days.	1 hour and 15 minutes 45 minutes

The teachers were of the view that the 15 minutes prescribed for listening and speaking was enough on the one hand, due to the fact that this time allocation was only used for listening and speaking. Some teachers indicated that the listening and speaking time were not the only time where learners could practise English, as this was integrated throughout the whole day, even when doing other subjects. Teachers sensed that they could also build vocabulary and teach English as a language when doing other subjects.

Other teachers thought that the 15 minutes per day for three days a week are not enough, especially because learners are still acquiring the language in English submersion classrooms (cf. the quotes in Table 5.16). When asked how much time the teachers actually spend on phonics and shared reading per day, a variety of answers were provided. From the answers it is clear that much more than the allocated 15 minutes per day are spent on phonics and 15 minutes a day on shared reading as suggested by the CAPS. The CMR suggests that reading is the product of decoding and listening comprehension (cf. section 3.3.3). From the time being spent on learning and practising phonics it is clear that teachers hold the view that this is an important aspect when teaching learners how to read.

The implication of the guidelines in the CAPS for English Home Language regarding the time allocation of phonics and shared reading may be that teachers who follow the guidelines may not spend enough time on phonics or shared reading in English submersion classrooms.

More than half of South African learners do not know the letters of the alphabet by the end of Grade 1: "We argue that it is clear they are not receiving efficient phonics instruction, and furthermore that this is the one thing that they need to first access the code and then read with fluency in order to go on and read for meaning" (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022:15). The question that needs to be explored further is therefore not only the amount of time spent on phonics, but also what the quality of phonics instructions in the class is.

Table 5.16. Discussion of the time allocations in the CAPS for English Home Language for listening and speaking as well as phonics and shared reading

School	Teachers' Perceptions on the Time Allocation for Listening and Speaking	Teachers' Perceptions on the Time Allocation for Phonics and Shared Reading
A	Participant 1 *"I always feel these things are integrated; they are in maths, life skills, in English so…it looks nice on paper, 15 minutes but it is woven in all the stuff we are doing so*	Participant 1 *Phonics is not just doing that lesson when they are reading. We are sounding the words because I have got slower learners and faster learners, so we sound all the time. I*

School	Teachers' Perceptions on the Time Allocation for Listening and Speaking	Teachers' Perceptions on the Time Allocation for Phonics and Shared Reading
	we are doing it for the whole day, listening and speaking".	*can't say it's just 15 minutes its prepped through the day".*
B	Participant 3 *"I don't think 15 minutes are enough at all. Maybe an hour".* Participant 8 *"No, I don't think that is enough, there should be little lessons for 15 minutes but three times a day even if its singing and nursery rhymes or listening a short story and answering questions about the story, but it should be implemented more during school time and specific times allocated to it".* Participant 9 *"No, I don't think that is enough. We talk English the whole day and 15 minutes is a very small time to practise the language especially as it can be their second or third language. I do it much longer than 15 minutes a day".* Participant 5 *"Yes and no. Why I say yes is, I think it forces you for 15 minutes to do it intensely, and no, it's not enough because I think the best way to learn English is to listen and speak. But in the same sense I feel as if the whole day is listening and speaking. So, 15 minutes should be enough, because in all the subjects they speak English".*	Participant 3 *"One and a half hour per day for phonics".* Participant 8 *"I spend at least 35 to 50 minutes per day on phonics during the morning".* Participant 9 *"For the whole day I will say an hour and a half with the reading file for the workbooks and the English CAPS books we have discussions and I do it on the board as well".* Participant 6 *"I don't think it's possible for a child, especially if it's not their home language that it can stay at 15 minutes...At least an hour in the morning but we do phonics awareness throughout the entire day. It's not bound to only 15 minutes"*.

One can conclude from the teachers' reactions that the ELLs in the English submersion classroom have a need for more intensive language learning time (to practise vocabulary and grammar), as well as more time to practise phonics and shared reading. Teachers spend much more time on these activities when teaching Grade 1 ELLs how to read. The teachers indicated what amount of time they spend on phonics and shared reading in a day. A summary of the teachers' answers can be viewed in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17. Teachers' indications on time spent on phonics and shared reading per day

Participant	Time Spent on Phonics and Reading per Day	Per Week	CAPS Suggestions
1	Throughout the day		
2	Did not participate in interviews		
3	90 minutes	450 min per week	120 min per week
4	Did not participate in interviews		
5	Throughout the day		
6	At least an hour	300 min per week	120 min per week
7	60 minutes	300 min per week	120 min per week
8	50 minutes	250 min per week	120 min per week
9	90 minutes	450 min per week	120 min per week

Table 5.17 makes it clear that the teachers that participated in the study spend much more practical time in the English submersion classroom on phonics and shared reading than suggested by the CAPS for English Home Language.

All the participants agreed that the reading resources provided by the DBE are (partially) insufficient for ELLs that have to learn how to read in English submersion classrooms (cf. their responses in Table 5.18). The main resource that is available to the teachers is the English Home Language workbook (cf. section 3.2.4.5.2; DBE, 2019). Teachers held the view that the workbook did not provide enough reading material for the Grade 1 ELLs to practise their phonics and reading (cf. their responses in Table 5.18).

The curriculum design diagram (cf. section 3.2.3) indicates the importance of an environmental analysis when designing a language curriculum. This includes human resources, physical resources (reading materials), the educational environment, as well as social and political factors.

The focus for this part of the study included human resources as well as physical resources. Human resources refer to the teachers that are teaching the curriculum. Do these teachers feel guided by the curriculum on how to teach ELLs to read? The second aspect is reading resources. How sufficient are the reading resources available to the teachers in assisting ELLs to acquire reading skills in Grade 1?

Table 5.18 indicates the teachers' responses to these questions during the interviews.

Table 5.18. Efficiency of the reading materials provided to ELLs and the efficiency of the instructions on reading in the CAPS for English Home Language

School	Efficiency of Reading Material in the English Submersion Classroom	Efficiency of Instruction on Reading in the CAPS for English Home Language
A	Participant 1 *"No, we need extra readers and more suitable readers…That is a big problem; we are stuck…that is why we make our own plans in this school because we really need it and we haven't got enough resources".*	Participant 1 *"I think some of these things come with experience; you can't put it on paper. And even putting the textbook knowledge into practice without experience is going to be difficult even if you read it there, but it is not really making sense; then it will still be difficult. You need someone to guide you".*
B	Participant 3 *"For Grade 1 it is partially sufficient, but we do additional reading as well from worksheets".*	Participant 3 *"Not at all".*

School	Efficiency of Reading Material in the English Submersion Classroom	Efficiency of Instruction on Reading in the CAPS for English Home Language
C	Participant 8 *"No, the departmental books make use of sentences and pictures. I think it's important to read longer stories and not just discuss the pictures, but the DBE books can be used as extra reading aids, but one cannot only make use of them to widen the learners' reading skills or vocabulary".* Participant 9 *"No, the more different materials you have the better it is for them. You cannot use the same thing over and over because I feel the learners are going to get bored and then it's not going to motivate them".* Participant 7 *"I don't, especially because it's not their home language, so they need a lot of exposure to reading and that is why we also have extra resources into teaching reading".* Participant 6 *"No, I don't think so. I think it is important for a child to read stories and not just sentences or words".*	Participant 9 *"No, I don't think they do, no, I think we can have more of it".* Participant 5 *"No, I don't think so. And I went to university. I was actually active at university. I didn't study through the post and when I started, I didn't know what to do. So, no, not enough".* Participant 6 *"No, if the steps are not written clearly or you don't know what the steps are. That is big problem. You can know your CAPS but you won't know how to do it or take the specific steps".*

Teachers at the three sampled schools agreed that they do not have enough reading resources. They were of the view that they needed more guidance on how to teach ELLs to read. Teachers thought that the curriculum could provide them with more guidance on how to teach reading (step by step instructions).

The teachers also affirmed that they lacked support in the area of “environment” (Macalister & Nation, 2010; cf. section 3.2.4.2). They argued that they lacked support in the following areas:

- Reading books.
- Story books.
- Readers at different reading levels.
- More phonics activities.
- Word building activities.
- Extra afternoon reading lessons.
- More schools so that classes are not overcrowded.

From the above interviews it seems like one of the main concerns that teachers in English submersion classrooms have, is the lack of reading resources for ELLs. Although reading resources is not the only predictor of reading success, it does play an important role in reading performance (Spaull & Taylor, 2022). When there are limited resources (like reading books and story books) available to teachers teaching ELLs to read, it influences reading performance in a negative way.

5.3.2.4 Teachers’ Perspectives on the Content and Sequencing of the CAPS for English Home Language

Another theme that arose from the interviews was the teachers’ expectations of the CAPS for English Home Language regarding reading. From the interviews it was clear that there were many teachers who were of the view that the workload of the CAPS for English Home Language was strenuous for the ELLs. The teachers just wanted to focus on the core concepts of reading and writing. The basics of reading could not always be covered due to a high demand in other areas.

The teachers also shared their views on the pacing of phonics in the CAPS for English language. According to Macalister and Nation (2010), the curriculum should include content and sequencing for subjects taught and more specifically include sequencing and pacing for teaching reading (cf. section 3.2.4.4). The content and the sequencing of the subject should take into account the needs, the environment, and the principles

that the language curriculum was built on (cf. section 3.2.4.4 for a full description of the content and sequencing as set out in the CAPS for English Home Language).

Teachers held the view that because learners were still learning English as a language the pace of phonics in the CAPS for English Home Language was too fast and that they would have liked to spend a little more time on revising the phonics as well as three letter words, before moving on to the blends like “ch” and “th” in term three (cf. section 3.2.4.4).

Table 5.19. Teachers’ perspectives on the workload and pace in regard to the reading expectations in the CAPS for English Home Language

School	Workload Expectation in the CAPS for English Home Language Regarding Reading	Teachers’ Perspectives on Learners Being Ready to Move on from Three Letter Words like “cat” to Words with Diagraphs such as “chip” in Term Three.
A	Participant 1 *“They put so much flesh on the things – that is what is bothering me. I think we must just stick to the core and work with the core. These other things they can learn it later in life. They need the basics and they need to get it well into their heads and not fly over it. Rather stand still for a longer time with that and make sure that they have it before moving on to the next thing. They are pushing you. You are not gaining anything, but you are losing by doing that”.*	Participant 1 *“About a third of the learners can cope with the pace. The others I see they pick it up but I must tell you classes differ from year to year*”.
B	*Participant 3* *“Yes, the learners are much slower, and they are not used to English at all, just from TV.*	*Participant 3* *“I hope that there is now a lot of them that can go on. We will see”.*

School	Workload Expectation in the CAPS for English Home Language Regarding Reading	Teachers' Perspectives on Learners Being Ready to Move on from Three Letter Words like "cat" to Words with Diagraphs such as "chip" in Term Three.
	Now they must read; listening is not reading. You should do writing as well and you are not familiar with the language and the sounds".	
C	Participant 9 *"…because the content coverage is so much and sometimes you have to rush to get all the work done to cover the content of everything and then you struggle to do what you wanted to do with the children in regards to the reading. And I feel there's a gap between the content and the practising and the reading. And I like to do extra work with my children and if I want to take out the reading files and start with next week's story there is not always enough time to do it".* Participant 6 *"I would recommend more time for reading so that we don't need to rush to get through the curriculum and they also need to give more resources like big books and story books. We are in a position that we can copy stories for the reading file, but I know that if there's schools that don't have the money for*	Participant 9 *"I must say the learners that do practise to speak English at home they are ready, but the ones that are not, is still struggling (the majority in the class). I feel as if I'm forced to continue with work which the learners are not ready for".* Participant 1 *"80% is ready to move on and 20% need more practice".* Participant 6 *"I think that six months are fine for children that get it quickly but the children that struggle are the problem. Now they get these sounds that are blended, and they can't do the three letter words and then there is not enough time to go back and make sure that the other foundation is laid. I think some of the things can get taken out of the curriculum. Or maybe more revision for the learners that is struggling so they can still get the practice with the three letter words while the rest is continuing".* Participant 7 *"It's a bit early for them for Grade 1 especially as some of the learners still don't know the phonics. Even in the third term*

School	Workload Expectation in the CAPS for English Home Language Regarding Reading	Teachers' Perspectives on Learners Being Ready to Move on from Three Letter Words like "cat" to Words with Diagraphs such as "chip" in Term Three.
	that I can't think that it would be possible. What are they going to read then? They are only going to have the departmental books which in my opinion is not enough. They must give more time. It takes longer for the foundation to be laid".	*with our handwriting lessons we go back to one letter, the "t" for instance, and take "t" and we only do three letter words…we do a lot of revision and still there's learners that don't know those sounds by now. You need to start blending them and that creates a whole new level of confusion because they know "t" and "h" separately and now they need to put them together and now it makes two sounds, it's a hard sound ('that') and a soft sound ('think') and they are confused".*

From the above quotes it is clear that the pace of the CAPS for English Home Language is too fast for some ELLs. It also seems like the curriculum is expecting these learners to read at the pace of home language learners. Although they are doing English on home language level, it is not their mother tongue (DBE, 2016).

Apart from the expected content when teaching ELLs to read and the set pace in the CAPS for English Home Language, the teachers also raised other challenges when teaching ELLs to read, as discussed below.

5.3.2.5 Challenges that Teachers Experience when Teaching Grade 1 Learners in English Submersion Classrooms

Another theme that emerged from the data regarding teaching ELLs how to read in Grade 1 submersion classrooms is the Grade R year. Grade R is currently the year before formal schooling in South Africa begins in Grade 1 (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022). One of the biggest challenges mentioned by almost all of the participants was issues surrounding Grade R. In one of the schools, a teacher mentioned that learners could still not speak or understand English after a full year in an English Grade R class. These frustrations were mentioned by the teachers at schools A and B.

School A

Participant 1

> *"No, I even made a little course for the Grade R teachers...and I explained to them the necessity of teaching them in that way, even the pencil grips and the letter pronunciation. I know if that is not in place, we struggle in Grade 1. So, I made a course, I think I have it in my file".*

School B

Participant 3

> *"We read the worksheets in class and they must repeat it at home – short stories and poems. They enjoy it. They don't understand it, but I explain it to them in IsiZulu because they don't understand. They were so bored even though it's a children story and I was shocked because they didn't understand a word. It wasn't a difficult story, but they didn't understand it. 'Three pigs' was supposed to be read to them during the Grade R year. I feel there's challenges about the Grade R year. If they don't read to them and speak to them in English and teach them the language, they won't grasp it in Grade 1. When they come to Grade 1 they are supposed to know the language so that they can start reading but they don't...Our Grade R teacher is not very supportive so that is a problem, she talks Zulu to them in the class".*

Another obstacle that was observed by many of the teachers was that both the parents and Grade R teachers educated learners to identify the letter names as "Ai-Bee-Cee" and not as the phonics sounds as they are supposed to be able to, meaning "a" for apple, "b" for ball, and "c" for cat.

School A

Participant 1

> *"The biggest challenge I have is that the parents teach the children the alphabet for example a, b, c before they are comfortable with the phonetic alphabet – the a, b, k sounds".*

School B

Participant 3

> *"If they don't know the word and cannot recognise the phonics alphabet but knows the normal alphabet, that is a big problem…The biggest challenge is the pronunciation of the phonics and the words".*

School C

Participant 9

> *"What makes it difficult is when the parents try to teach the children that is not the same as my way because it confuses the children, for example the phonics. I teach them 'a' for apple, 'b' for ball, and the parents will go and teach them 'ai, bee, cee, dee' and when they get to class it is very confusing for them".*

From the above responses it can be argued that Grade R teachers should be educated better on how to teach learners the correct way to pronounce phonics sounds (cf. section 2.4). Grade R teachers need to understand the importance of language and phonics to be able to teach effectively. Teachers should teach reading by making use of explicit and systematic phonics (Armstrong & Squires, 2015). Parent involvement and educating parents early on can also be beneficial.

Research on reading in South Africa suggests that some children that enter Grade 1 have poor phonetic knowledge while others know as few as five to six letter-sound relations after having spent a year in Grade R (Ardington & Meiring, 2020). Spaull and Pretorius (2022) suggest that the Grade R year could be used more productively to give children an earlier start to some basic alphabetic knowledge before Grade 1, without imposing heavy formal instruction in Grade R.

Below is a summary of other challenges as experienced by Grade 1 teachers in English submersion classrooms:

- Comprehension is a big concern, as some of the learners who can blend the phonics together, do not always comprehend what they read.
- There is too much content that needs to be covered and not enough time for revision.

- The Grade 1 teachers are teaching learners that have different achievement levels.
- Some teachers are experiencing an overcrowding of classrooms.

Although the interviews with the Grade 1 teachers have indicated numerous challenges in English submersion classrooms, the breadth of these challenges falls beyond the scope of this study. Another theme that emerged from the interviews was strategies that schools used to keep learners motivated to learn how to read in English.

5.3.2.6 Motivating ELLs to Read

The last aspect that the researcher explored during the interviews was how the teachers motivated ELLs to read. The SCT (cf. sections 1.7.2.1 and 3.3.1) suggests that learning is achieved through motivation (Frey, 2018; Johnson, 2019). The researcher was therefore interested in what the teachers would argue, has motivated the learners to read in English submersion classroom. From the semi-structured interviews, the teachers indicated that the English submersion school use the following strategies to motivate learners to read:

- Learners that read well get an opportunity to read at assembly.
- Some schools have a merit system.
- Rewards like sweets, stickers.
- The teachers praise the learners for efforts made.
- Making stories fun.
- Songs to make it fun.
- Motivational speeches.

From the data gathered through the semi-structured interviews the researcher observed that although the teachers seemed motivated and positive to teach ELLs to read, there were also many challenges that made this task more difficult.

The semi-structured interviews concluded the data gathering for phase 2 of the study.

5.4 PHASE 3

Phase 3 of the research concluded the data gathering for this research study. This phase consisted of qualitative data only and entailed a questionnaire that was completed by the seven teachers who participated in the qualitative data gathering of the study. The research concluded with post-interviews with six of the seven teachers that formed part of phase 2 of the study.

The questionnaires were sent to participants via e-mail and answers was captured by making use of Google Forms.

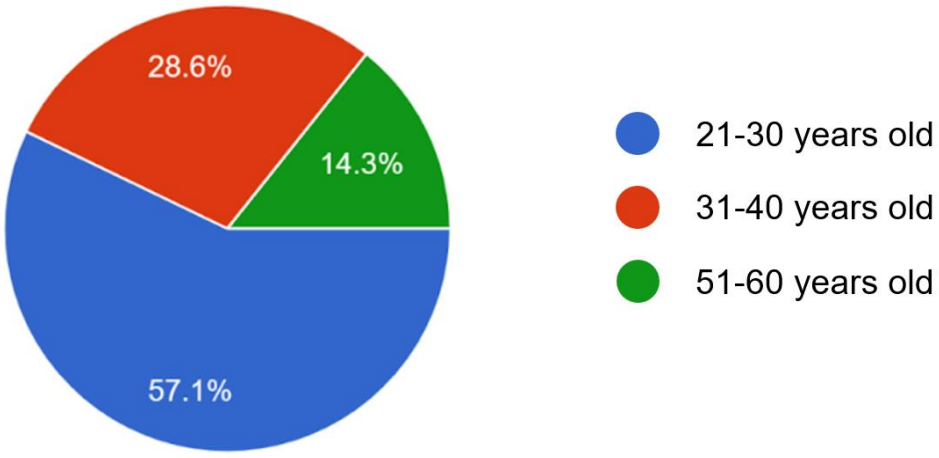
5.4.1 Answers to the Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained biographical information about the teachers that formed part of the qualitative data gathering. The focus of the questionnaire was on the teachers' perception of the intervention. The questionnaire could be answered anonymously which provided the participants with confidentiality and freedom to answer honestly. The questions and answers of the questionnaire will be discussed first, followed by the post-interviews.

Question 1. How old are you?

All the Grade 1 teachers were female. The chart indicates that out of the seven participating teachers 57.1% were between 20 to 30 years old, 28.6% were between 31 and 40, and 14.3% were between 51 and 60.

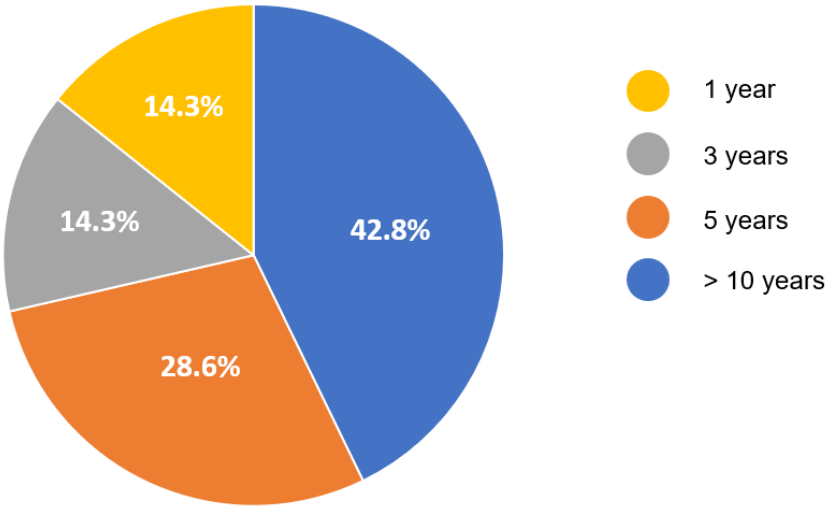
Figure 5.7. Age of the participants for the questionnaire



Question 2. How long have you been teaching Grade 1 learners?

42.9% of the teachers indicated that they have been teaching Grade 1 learners for longer than 10 years; 28.6% of the teachers indicated that they have been teaching Grade 1 learners for five years; 14,3% were teaching for three years; and 14,3% were teaching for 1 year.

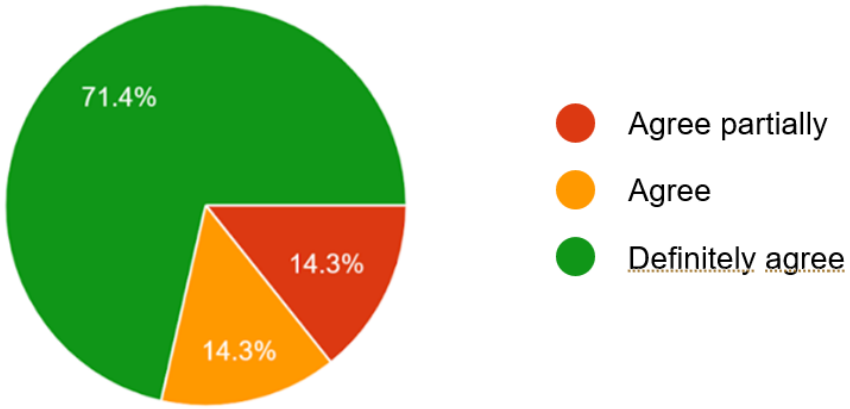
Figure 5.8. Number of years of experience of participating teachers



Question 3. Do you think the phonics programme could assist Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms with reading?

The chart specifies that 71,4% of the teachers *definitely agreed* that the structured phonics intervention programme could be beneficial to teach reading in English submersion classrooms, 14,3% *agreed* while 14,3% *agreed partially*. None of the teachers felt that they *did not agree* that the structured phonics intervention programme could be beneficial in English submersion classrooms.

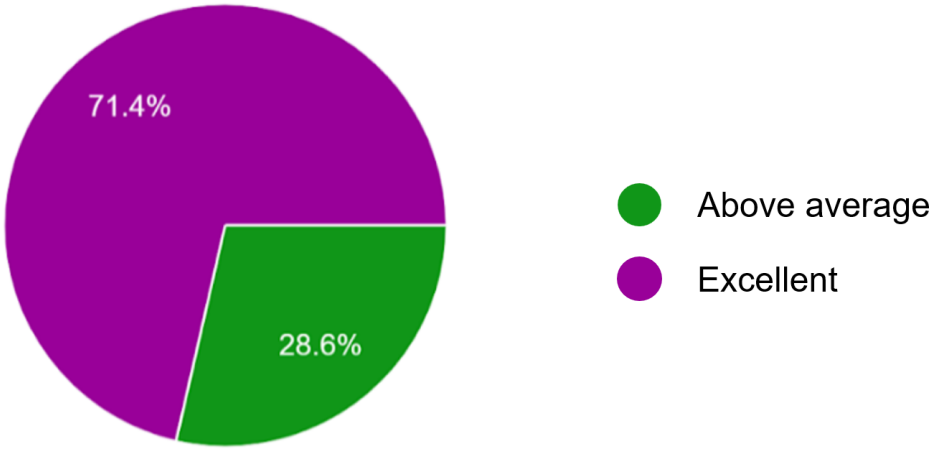
Figure 5.9. Teachers' perception on the efficiency of the structured phonics intervention programme



Question 4. Please indicate to what degree the phonics intervention assisted you as a teacher with teaching reading in the Grade 1 classroom.

The majority of the teachers who participated in the study (71,4%) indicated that the programme assisted them as teachers in the category of *excellent*, whereas 28,6% narrated that the programme assisted them *above average*. None of the teachers indicated that they felt that the programme was *average* or *below average.*

Figure 5.10. The degree to which the structured phonics programme assisted the teachers with teaching reading in the class

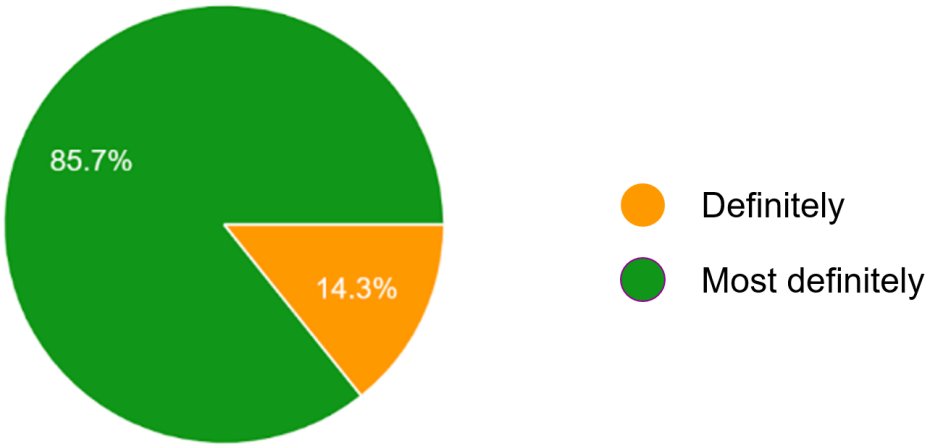


Question 5. Please indicate to what extent you will use the phonics programme in your class if available.

The teachers who participated in the research and who indicated that they would *most definitely* make use of the phonics programme in the class were 85,7% while 14,3% stated that they would *definitely* make use of the programme. None of the teachers

indicated that they would *maybe* make use of the programme and none indicate *not at all.*

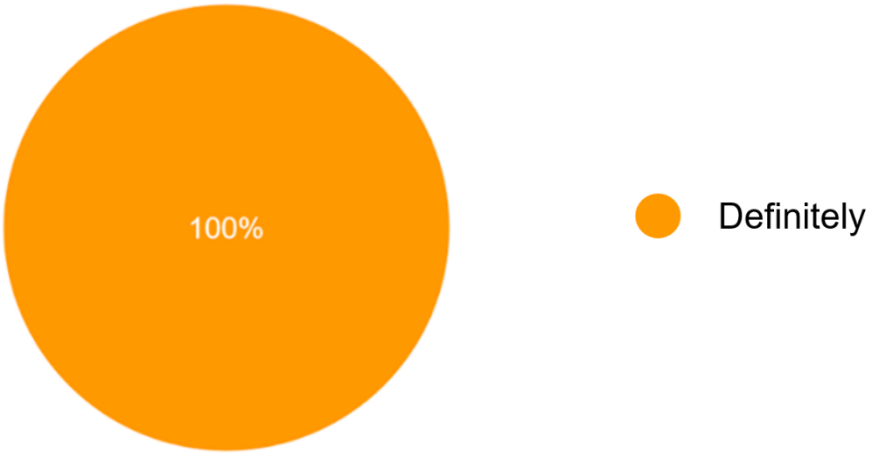
Figure 5.11. Teachers' indication of whether they will use the structured phonics programme in the class if available to them



Question 6. Do you feel that the phonics programme worked well in combination with the English Home Language workbook provided by the Department of Education?

All the teachers held the view that the structured phonics intervention programme worked well in combination with the English Home Language workbook provided by the Department of Education. None of the teachers felt that it worked *partially* and *not at all.*

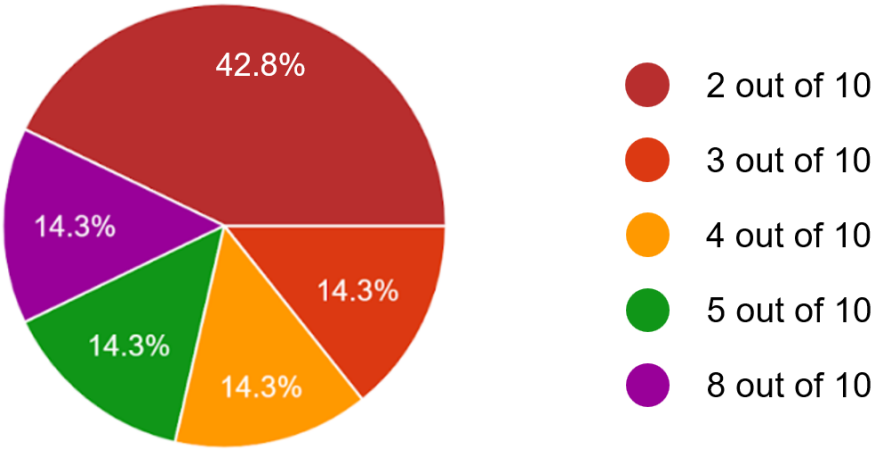
Figure 5.12. Efficiency of the structured phonics workbook when used with the English Home Language workbook



Question 7. Indicate on a scale from 1 to 10 if you think the reading provided in the Departmental Grade 1 Home Language book is enough to teach learners to read (1 being not enough at all and 10 being more than enough).

42.8 % scored the sufficiency of the English Home Language workbook in connection with reading acquisition at 2, 14.3% scored it at 3, 14,3% scored it at 4, 14,3% scored it at 5 while 14.3 scored it at 8. These ratings indicate that most of the teachers held the view that the Home Language workbook was not sufficient enough to teach reading to learners in English submersion classrooms. This could have a negative effect on reading performance since learners do not get sufficient exposure to reading materials.

Figure 5.13. Indication of the sufficiency of the English Home Language workbook in regard to reading



Question 8. What do you think are the three biggest challenges for learners that are battling with reading in Grade 1?

This question consists of answers submitted via the questionnaire in the form short typed text. A summary of the responses to question 8 are listed below:

- Trouble sounding out words and recognising words out of context.
- Confusion between letters and the sounds they represent.
- Reading comprehension difficulties.
- Not enough help from home.
- Not using the given language outside the classroom.
- Not enough repetition.
- Vocabulary.
- Phonics awareness.

- More time to work on a love for reading by reading stories and songs and rhymes.
- Phonetic awareness.
- Whole word recognition.
- Technology: Phones and tablets are supplied to learners to keep them busy.
- Story books are expensive.
- Some parents do not give the necessary assistance to help their children to read or learn phonics.
- Struggle to recognise phonics sounds.
- Parents pronouncing phonics sounds incorrectly.
- Not enough assistance after school with reading and phonics activities.

The questionnaire gave the researcher valuable insight into the teachers' perceptions of the structured phonics intervention programme as well as their opinion on the sufficiency of the English Home Language workbook and the challenges experienced by teachers teaching in submersion classrooms.

5.4.2 Post-Interviews

The post-interviews were conducted after phase 2 of the research was concluded and data for this phase were analysed. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on the teachers' perceptions on the four-week phonetic intervention that the teachers implemented in their classes.

The post-interviews will be discussed according to arising themes that emerged which included positive feedback about the programme, struggling learners and the English Home Language workbook, as well as recommendations to improve the programme.

Table 5.20. Themes identified in phase 3 of the research

Themes: Post-Interviews
Positive feedback about the programme
Struggling learners
The English Home Language workbook
Suggestions for or challenges with the programme

5.4.2.1 Positive Feedback about the Programme

Most of the participating teachers gave positive feedback regarding the structured phonics intervention programme as can be observed in the following quotations.

Participant 7

> *"A good part of the programme was the building of vocabulary at the beginning of each lesson that we did in the DBE books…so we will talk about the picture and that will just give them an idea of what was going on and also the part that they really enjoyed was the fact that they could read the sentences at the end of the shared pages and the reading segments that was built around the words that they learned in that specific lesson. It was words that they were frequently seeing so it was repeated in the blue book (DBE book) and the workbook. They didn't have to decode them, and they could recognise them. It increased their fluency and boosted their confidence because they could see that they could do the difficult words…It will give a teacher more structure while teaching children to read and help with the planning of your timing in the class because with the DBE books, there are good activities but it's not as effective with time management".*

Participant 1

> *"What I found, the sentences with the numbers next to them were very nice, they could read it".*

Participant 5

> *"Well, the reading programme was very exciting for me as well as my children. I think it made them excited to read again. I love the pictures and the story that fit with the pictures. It made them actually talk about the picture more…and I think understood the reading as a whole more...for example if they read the story and saw the picture it was nice for them to talk about and to communicate about this".*

Participant 6

> *"I really liked the programme and loved the fact that is goes with the DBE books…and what I liked is that it started with small, shorter sentences and it*

grew bigger and bigger and each sentence gets build out a bit. So it's not just a simple sentence, it gets bigger and longer".

Participant 8

"The phonics recognition worked very well and the repetition of the words in each story for example 'I see the cat', 'I see the pig' and later on it wasn't even necessary for me to teach them the words because there was a lot of repetition".

Participant 9

"What I enjoyed about the programme was the font. It was significant to Grade 1 of what was used in the book, and the words were in line with what they had to learn that term…and the repetition of the words…they didn't have to sound anymore. The learners enjoyed it because it was on their level. It was not too much work and the pictures were very cute…They would tell me, 'Teacher, look at this' or 'Look at that'".

To summarise the positive feedback of the teachers about the structured phonics reading intervention:

- Teachers were of the view that the programme assisted learners with building their English vocabulary.
- Teachers claimed that the programme provided the learners with a lot of repetition to practise the phonics learned.
- The programme provided the teachers with structure and guidance on how to teach ELLs to read in Grade 1.

Another theme that arose from post-interviews was learners that struggled to read.

5.4.2.2 Struggling Learners

From the post-interviews with the Grade 1 teachers, it seems as if the programme could also assist learners that were struggling with learning to read.

Participant 7

> *"Even the weaker learners because of the repetition of certain words, they could also build some confidence. There will still be some learners, like in my class 2 children that were struggling a little bit but at the end of the programme I could see that they also gained a little bit of confidence, and the sentences build around the words that they have learned so they didn't have to go and decode them again to recognise them".*

Participant 1

> *"The very poor ones, they can at least sound it now, but can't always say the word. They can't put it together in the end but at least they know their letters".*

Participant 5

> *"Yes, especially for the ones struggling with reading. I think it made it easier for them as well and I also saw that because it is a book, a lot of them went on with the reading before I even got to the lesson…It felt that the stronger learners could go on by themselves without even asking any questions, but the children that struggled, it was very nice for them as well and they can understand. I felt it was on their level".*

From the above responses it seems clear that the programme assisted some of the learners that were struggling to show progress in their reading. Another theme that the teachers discussed in the post-interviews was the English Home Language book (DBE, 2019).

5.4.2.3 The English Home Language Workbook

The participants elaborated on what they thought about the suggested reading in the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019).

Participant 7

> *"They just read four sentences as a class and then it takes like two minutes and it is not in-depth reading. There is no introduction to the words. There are three to four sight words at the top of the page…so this reading was more…and the sentences in the DBE book are not related to each other. It doesn't have a story*

line through it…they don't understand the sentences either but they enjoyed the stories in the programme…they enjoyed building a story around the words that they could recognise".

Participant 5

"The reading in the departmental books it is there but it is not really a story…so I think it is important for them to rather have a big story than six sentences to read, which they are going to copy or just read quickly".

These responses indicate that some teachers were of the view that the sentences provided in the workbook were not enough for learners to practise their reading. They sensed that the stories in the structured phonics intervention programme provided good reading experiences for ELLs to practise the phonics learned.

The participants also had suggestions on how to improve the programme.

5.4.2.4 Suggestions for or Challenges with the Phonics Programme

Some of the participants had suggestions on ways to improve the programme.

Participant 7

"The programme can aid in comprehension in the future. I would recommend at the end of your stories, maybe just add one or two questions about the stories so they can start practising comprehension. Maybe in term four…I would also add just a few basics questions".

Participant 1

"The problem came in with the paragraph...they are still struggling with it; they lose their place...so this is still a bit above their level at this stage".

Participant 5

"The challenges that I saw it was because we already had our curriculum and our planning was planned out that was a struggle to fit it into our day as I say luckily they saw that it was fun".

The recommendations received in regard with the programme can be summarised as follows:

- Questions can be added to stories to improve learners' comprehension from early on.
- Some learners struggled to keep their place and read the stories that were in paragraph form.
- The extra reading took a lot of time, and some teachers had the conviction that it was difficult to incorporate the programme into their already busy schedule.

Feedback on the structured reading programme concluded the data gathering for the study. The final step in discussing the data that were gathered in the study is to compare the quantitative and qualitative findings to each other.

5.5 INTEGRATING THE QUANTITATIVE AND THE QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSES

Table 5.21 depicts the quantitative and qualitative findings at school A as well as the interpretation to the findings. Although the school had small class sizes as well as extra reading resources made by the teachers, the learners still scored low on their pre-test as compared to the norms of the one minute reading test. The teachers made use of translanguaging at school A.

Table 5.22 depicts the quantitative and qualitative findings at school B as well as the interpretation to the findings. The school had bigger class sizes as well as very limited reading material. The learners scored very low on their pre-test as compared to the norms of the one minute reading test. The teachers made use of translanguaging at school B.

Table 5.23 depicts the quantitative and qualitative findings at school C as well as the interpretation to the findings. The school had small class sizes as well as sufficient reading material prepared by the teacher. The learners scored better on their pre-test when compared to school A and B. The teachers made use of modelling English at school C, without including learners' home language.

Table 5.21. Integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings at school A

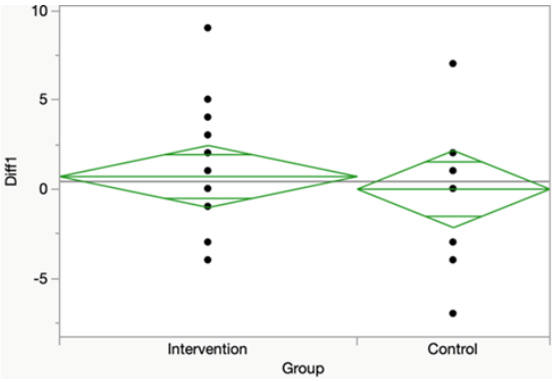
<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">School A</th></tr>
<tr><th>Quantitative Data</th><th>Qualitative Data</th><th>Interpretation</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>


Figure 5.14. Diamond box plot: School A (difference in mean change score between the intervention and control groups)

The intervention group showed a mean change score of 0.79 as opposed to the control group that showed a mean change score of 0. The independent t-test calculated a p-value of 0.61 which indicated that the difference between the mean change score of the intervention and control group was not significant.

Cohen’s D effect size 0.21 small effect.
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Mean Raw Score Pre-Test</th><th>Mean Raw Score Post-Test</th><th>Mean Change Score</th></tr>
<tr><td>Intervention</td><td>10.41</td><td>11.2</td><td>0.79</td></tr>
<tr><td>Control</td><td>12.64</td><td>12.64</td><td>0</td></tr>
</table>
</td>
<td>
Small class sizes of 28 learners per class.

Many reading resources are available.

Quintile 2 school: School is located in a semi-rural area, lower socio-economic status.

Teachers’ responses on why the intervention group did not show a significant improvement

“The level of effectiveness is influenced by the area in which the school is, what their social status is, and how the programme is implemented in the class”.

“Our biggest problem is learners that don’t understand English”.

“Our biggest need is with our Grade R teachers…if they can teach them the language then they make it easier for us”.
</td>
<td>
School A is situated in a semi-rural area. The school is very neat, classes are small (28 learners per class), the teachers are well prepared, and reading resources are available.

On the pre-test of the learners in the experimental and control groups at school A, the raw mean score data of 11.53 WPM indicated that the learners read below the standardised benchmark. The one minute reading test starts at 31 WPM which is equal to an age of six years and six months. This means that the learners pre-reading scores tested very low at school A.

Family SES has a direct influence on academic learning and reading acquisition (Chen et al., 2018; Chiu et al., 2012).

The experiment was done in the third term of the year, where the learners already started to learn blends (cf. section 3.2.4.4). It seems like learners at school A still struggled with basic phonics though.
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Table 5.21. Integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings at school B

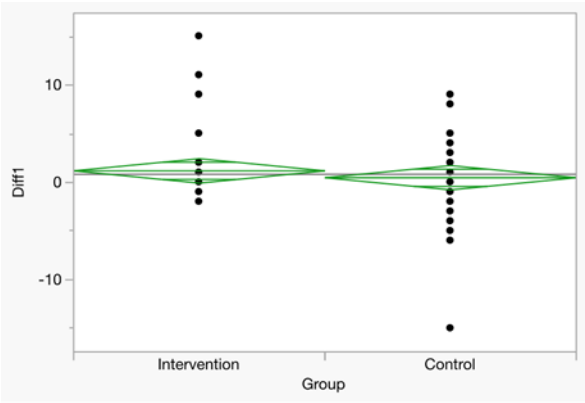
<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">School B</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Quantitative Data</th><th>Qualitative Data</th><th>Interpretation</th></tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2"> 

Figure 5.15. Diamond box plot: School B (difference in mean change score between the intervention and control groups)

The intervention group showed a mean change score of 1.55 as opposed to the control group that showed a mean change score of 0.49.

The independent t-test calculated a p-value of 0.70 which indicated that the difference between the intervention and control group’s mean change score was not significant.

Cliff’s delta effect size 0.05 negligible effect.</td>
<td rowspan="2">Big class sizes of 48 learners per class.

No reading resources were available (besides the English Home Language workbook).

Quintile 1 school: Very poor socio-economic status.

Teachers’ responses on why the intervention group did not show a significant improvement

“Learners’ lack of understanding English makes learning to read more difficult”.</td>
<td rowspan="2">School B is situated in a rural area. The school is very big with classes having 48 learners per class. The teachers are well prepared, but there are very limited reading resources available.

On the pre-test of the learners in the experimental and control group at school A, the raw mean score of 4.44 WPM (intervention and control group combined) indicated that the learners read very slow and did not know basic phonetic sounds.

The socio-economic status of learners as well as their home environment has an influence on academic learning and reading acquisition (cf. section 3.3.3. and 3.3.3.3).

Teachers felt that learners did not understand English as a language at the beginning of Grade1, this combined with very full classes, made learning to read difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Mean Raw Score Pre-Test</th><th>Mean Raw Score Post Test</th><th>Difference in Pre- and Post-Test Scores</th></tr>
<tr><td>Intervention</td><td>3.73</td><td>4.92</td><td>1.55</td></tr>
<tr><td>Control</td><td>5.16</td><td>5.65</td><td>0.49</td></tr>
</table>
</td>
</tr>
</table>

Table 5.23. Integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings at school C

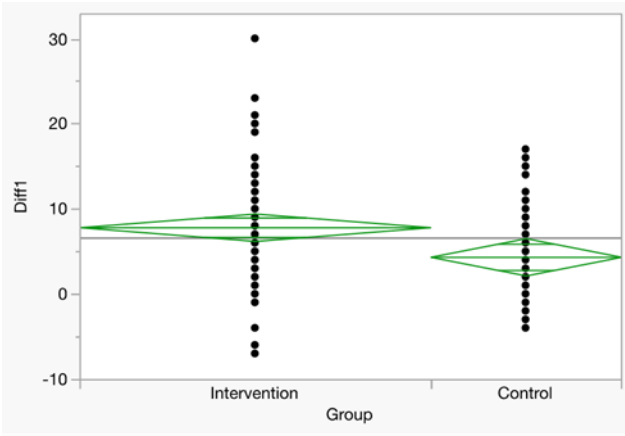
<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">School C</th></tr>
<tr><th>Quantitative Data</th><th>Qualitative Data</th><th>Interpretation</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>


Figure 5.16. Diamond box plot: School C (difference in mean change score between the intervention and control groups)

The intervention group showed a mean change score of 7.86 as opposed to the control group that showed a mean change score of 4.4. The independent t-test calculated a p-value of 0.0128 which indicated that the difference between the intervention and control group’s mean change score was significant.

Cohen’s D effect size 0.52 medium effect.
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Mean Raw Score Pre-Test</th><th>Mean Raw Score Post-Test</th><th>Difference between Pre- and Post-Test Score</th></tr>
<tr><td>Intervention</td><td>22.5</td><td>30.36</td><td>7.86</td></tr>
<tr><td>Control</td><td>22.5</td><td>26.4</td><td>4.4</td></tr>
</table>
</td>
<td>
Small class sizes of 28 learners per class.

Many reading resources are available.

Quintile 5 school: Better socio-economic status.

Teachers’ responses on the structured intervention programme.

“The learners enjoyed learning with the new book because it was very interesting for them! It made reading and learning phonics sounds fun”.

“It is focused on helping the learners to learn their phonics. It is revision of sounds and words”.

“The programme worked because it repeats and drills in sounds and words that have been taught. It also gives sentences to read and stories which are on Grade 1 level. The fact that it is worked out to go with the DBE books makes it user friendly and learners experience the constant sense of accomplishment when completing work on their own!”
</td>
<td>
School C is situated in an urban area. The school is very neat, classes are small (28 learners per class), the teachers are well prepared, and reading resources are available.

On the pre-test of the learners in the experimental and control groups at school C, the raw mean score data of 22.25 WPM indicated that the learners still read below the standardised benchmarks, but the reading scores were much better when compared to the schools from pool A.

The learners could already read some words in English, the programme could therefor support reading because it was not too difficult.

The quantitative and qualitative data indicates that the structured phonic intervention could aid in supporting
</td>
</tr>
</table>

	"I think the programme worked well because it worked on vocabulary and was cleverly written in accordance with the departmental books. Phonics were drilled and stories were written on the level of the children – with plenty of repetition".	reading in Grade 1, English submersion classes.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 5 contained a detailed description of the data gathered in the three phases of the intervention mixed method study design. The chapter started with a description of the qualitative data that were gathered in phase 1 of the research. The three interviews with reading experts shed light on the planned structured phonics reading intervention. The researcher gained insight in the challenges of ELLs in English submersion classrooms and gathered tips on how to improve the suggested intervention programme. The reading experts gave their opinion on what needs to be improved in the programme as well as their perception on the programme. The first phase of the study prepared the researcher for the second phase of the study.

The second phase of the study consisted of quantitative and qualitative data gathering that were collected concurrently. For the quantitative phase of the study the researcher conducted a quasi-experiment in three schools in Mpumalanga. The schools constituted a total of nine classes out of which five classes formed part of the experimental group and four formed part of the control group. The total number of participants (Grade 1 learners) added up to 207.

For the quasi-experiment the researcher used a standardised one minute reading test to record the WPM of learners before the experiment started (pre-test). After the pre-tests were concluded a structured phonics reading intervention was implemented in the experimental classes for a duration of four weeks. After the intervention the same standardised one minute reading test was conducted again with each participant. A change score was then calculated for each participant by subtracting the pre-test

(WPM) from the post-test (WPM) score. A mean change score was calculated for each intervention and control group at schools A, B, and C separately. The mean change score for the intervention and control groups per school was compared by making use of an independent t-test. Schools A and B indicated that the difference between the control and intervention groups was not statistically significant. The difference between the intervention and control groups at school C was statistically significant. The effect size of the experimental group tested as a “small effect” at school A. The effect size was regarded as negligible at school B. The effect size as calculated by Cohen’s D tested at “medium effect” at school C.

For the qualitative data that were gathered at phase 2 the researcher conducted seven semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers. The interviews centred around four themes. Theme 1 was the home environment of the ELLs in the submersion classrooms. Theme 2 centred around English as the LoLT in English submersion classrooms and the effect that the new language has on how ELLs learn to read. Theme 3 centred around the English Home Language curriculum that is followed in the English submersion classrooms. The teachers elaborated on their expectations of the curriculum as well as the set pace in the curriculum regarding reading acquisition.

Phase 3 of the study commenced after all the data for phase 2 were gathered and analysed. This phase of the research included questionnaires that were completed anonymously and online by the seven Grade 1 teachers that participated in phase 2 of the study. The main purpose of the questionnaires was to get feedback from the teachers regarding the structured phonics intervention programme. The final step in the data gathering process was six post-interviews with the Grade 1 teachers to elaborate on and clarify the findings found in phase 2 of the study. Most teachers indicated that they found the programme helpful and also commented on some challenges that they experienced while using the programme.

The next chapter will discuss the recommendations and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The study presented research in the field of English submersion schools in South Africa. English submersion schools educate learners in “English only” from as early as Grade 1. These learners’ mother tongue is not English. The focus of the study was specifically on how Grade 1 learners learn to read in English submersion classrooms.

The study followed a MMR approach called an intervention MMR design to gather comprehensive data throughout the three set phases in the research process. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered to further explore reading in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

Learning to read in a second language is more difficult than learning to read in one’s mother tongue, especially when it comes to understanding what one reads (Melby-Lervåg & Lervåg, 2014). It was thus important to focus on teaching ELLs the oral language in which they have to learn, as well as to make sure that they know how to decode the words to get to the primary goal of reading, namely, to comprehend what they are reading (Lervåg *et al*., 2017).

The initial reading material for learners that are learning to read in a language other than their mother tongue should be more controlled than reading aimed at English Home Language learners (Nation & Macalister, 2020). In order to be able to practise the phonics that learners learned in class, appropriate texts that are decodable should be available (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

The study investigated the impact of a structured phonics intervention programme to assist in reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms. The aim of the research was also to investigate teachers’ perspectives on the effectiveness of the CAPS for English Home Language in relation to reading acquisition in the English submersion classroom.

In the previous chapter, the research findings were discussed. The gathered data were presented by describing the findings in each phase of the study. Findings were explained and associated to the theoretical framework of the study. Findings were also discussed by comparing the quantitative and the qualitative findings with each other.

6.2 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the findings of this study. The main findings for each research question will be discussed separately.

6.2.1 Research Question: How does a Structured Phonics Programme Impact the Reading Acquisition of Grade 1 Learners in English Submersion Classrooms?

Research question 1 was the main research question presented in the study and could be formulated as a hypothesis:

"A structured phonics programme will assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms".

6.2.1.1 Quantitative Data Gathering

To summarise the finding of the quantitative data, the learners at the poorest environment, the quintile 1 school (school B) had the poorest reading score before the start of the intervention. The intervention was done in term 3 of the learners' Grade 1 year, which means that learners were supposed to know all the sounds of the alphabet and also be able to read three letter words (DBE, 2011). The words presented in the one minute reading test were simple words with only two letter combinations, for example "on" and three letter combinations, for example "run". The fact that learners only read 3.49 WPM (intervention group) and 4.12 WPM (control group) is reason for concern.

The learners at the quintile 2 school read more WPM on the pre-test with the intervention group reading 10.4 WPM and the control reading 12.64 WPM. These mean reading scores do still not reach the lowest point on the standardised norms of the reading tests. The minimum WPM should be 31 for a learner aged six years and six months. The average age of the learners at the schools was seven years and four months.

The learners at the quintile 5 school (highest socio-economic status) read the most words at the pre-test in comparison with the other two schools. The intervention group read 22 WPM and the control group read 22.5 WPM. These reading scores are much better when compared to the reading scores of school A and B, but still shows room for improvement.

6.2.1.2 Qualitative Data Gathering

To answer the main research question and suggested hypothesis, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with Grade 1 teachers to hear their perspectives on the intervention programme. The teachers also completed an anonymous online questionnaire to gather rich data concerning the programme.

In the questionnaires the teachers agreed that the intervention assisted them in the class with teaching of reading above average and on an excellent level. All the teachers indicated that they would use the phonics programme to assist them with teaching reading, if available. The teachers also revealed that the intervention worked well with the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019). They agreed that the reading provided in the English Home Language workbook was not enough to teach learners how to read.

The teachers gave specific reasons as to why they regarded the intervention programme as beneficial in an English submersion classroom. The reasons can be summarised as follows:

- The programme helped to break up the steps for learning to read.
- The programme provided more structure to the teacher when teaching learners to read.
- The programme would also aid the teachers with time management.
- The leaners enjoyed the programme because they could read the sentences independently.
- The programme was a repetition on work learned in the class and therefore it helped to aid in fluency and boosted the learners' confidence.
- It focused on expanding the learners' vocabulary.

- It worked well because it was synced with the English Home Language book.
- The stories were on the level of the learners.
- The learners enjoyed the pictures in the reading book; these pictures also provided an opportunity for class discussions.
- Even the learners that struggled with reading, gained confidence throughout the programme.
- It made reading fun.

6.2.1.3 Combining the Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The quasi-experiment's results revealed that the intervention did not seem to make a difference in schools A and B. The learners in these schools were already far behind in regard to reading fluency (as was observed by their pre-test scores) by the time the four-week intervention was implemented in these classrooms. This is proof that reading is a complex phenomenon that cannot be studied in isolation. The low test scores for the schools that were located in rural areas can be explained by the ecological domain as suggested by the CMR. The ecological domain in which learners have to read has a direct influence on learners reading acquisition (Kilpatrick et al. 2019). Learners in lower socio-economic areas find learning to read difficult (Crouch et al. 2021). To expose a positive improvement in reading in these schools, materials that are suitable for English submersion classrooms should be available from the beginning of the academic year.

The intervention, however, seemingly made a difference at school C, where the learners could read better at the start of the intervention. This is in line with recent literature that found that intervention programmes that focus on explicit and systematic phonics improve reading acquisition in classrooms where English is learners' second language (Buckingham, 2020; Cheung & Slavin, 2012; Huo & Wang, 2017).

The teachers agreed that the intervention was beneficial to them as educators and assisted in teaching ELLs to read. They indicated that would definitely make use of the programme if available in the class. Teachers play an important role in teaching reading in the classroom and their attitude towards reading can influence the way they

teach (Ramadiro & Porteus, 2017). The structured phonics intervention programme had a positive effect and aided in teaching reading.

To answer the main research question, it can be argued that the intervention may improve the reading acquisition of Grade 1 learners in schools with a higher socio-economic status, where learners are more exposed to English as a language and where the learners receive more support from parents. In school with a lower socio-economic status the effects of the programme should be studied over a longer period of time, starting at the beginning of the academic year. It may also assist teachers in teaching reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms by providing phonetic reading material that corresponds with the English Home Language curriculum (please see recommendation letter from reading expert attached as Appendix L).

6.2.2 Research Sub-Question 1: How does the Home and Class Environment of Grade 1 ELLs in Submersion Schools Look and how does it influence Reading Acquisition?

According to all three theories that underpinned the study, the environment in which learners find themselves has an impact on their learning (cf. sections 3.3.1.3.3 and 3.3.3). The home and school environments are important microsystems that shape learning and developmental outcomes (O'Malley, Voight, Renshaw, & Eklund, 2015). For a child, family is the first social and educational environment (Porumbu & Necşoi, 2013).

The schools that formed part of the study, all followed the English Home Language curriculum. Although English was the LoLT in all three schools, school A and B had a more bilingual approach to teaching English in their classes whereas school C had a monolingual approach. According to the literature presented in this study the effectiveness of specific bilingual or monolingual frameworks (cf. section 2.2.4) depends on the environment in which it is implemented (Enever & Lindgren, 2017). Research also shows that there is a positive correlation between school quality and English instruction, which leads to English performance (Taylor & Von Fintel, 2016). In this study English only instruction was associated with better reading scores in English submersion classrooms.

From the interviews with the Grade 1 teachers, it is clear that in all three schools (ranging over different socio-economic statuses), the majority of learners were either living in single parent families or with grandparents. A major concern that teachers raised, not only in the schools that were located in rural areas, was that learners living with grandparents were challenged due to the fact that some of the grandparents could not understand or speak English themselves. This led to a lack of support to ELLs in their home environment. Overall, teachers were of the view that parents did not provide much support to learners academically (cf. section 5.3.2.1). The only support mentioned from home was that of the availability of television, YouTube, and Netflix that teachers claimed could help to broaden learners' English vocabulary. Teachers do, however, motivate parents to buy English books and read to their children.

The schools that formed part of the study were located in different socio-economic geographical areas. The schools were classified by the department of education into different quintiles. The quintile ranking indicates the poverty rating of a school and depends on the unemployment rate of the households as well as the level of education in the community (Van Dyk & White, 2019). Three schools from different quintiles were included in the study. School A was classified as a quintile 2 school (second lowest socio-economic status), school B was classified as quintile 1 (lowest socio-economic status), and school C was classified as quintile 5 (highest socio-economic status). Ecological factors like socio-economic status often have an impact on how well learners read (Li *et al*., 2020).

The teachers mentioned that learners in schools A and B came from very poor families and also received meals at the school. The school and class environment looked different at each school. School A had 28 learners per class and the classes had a lot of educational material against the walls. The teachers were creative in adjusting reading materials to make it easier for ELLs to read and understand. School B had 48 learners in a class with very limited educational material against the walls. Reading resources were also very limited and the English Home Language workbook (DBE, 2019) provided the main source of reading material in the class. School C had 28 learners per class. Each classroom had colourful educational material on the walls and the learners had access to a variety of reading materials (although teachers argued that they still did not have enough reading resources for each learner).

It could be observed from the research that the school and home environment does have an influence on reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms (cf. section 5.5). The home and classroom environments provided the researcher with a better understanding of the context in which the ELLs learn to read in English submersion classrooms.

From the data gathered the researcher found that Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms had a better reading score where smaller class sizes present. Classroom environments that included additional reading materials associated with better reading scores. Teachers felt more positive about teaching reading in schools with smaller class sizes and where they had access to adequate reading resources.

6.2.3 Research Sub-Question 2: What role does language play in reading acquisition in English submersion classrooms?

Language is an important element that affects international communication activities (Ahmadi, 2018). In South Africa many learners are schooled in “English only” from as early as Grade R. The learners that participated in the study have a different mother tongue and were referred to as ELLs throughout the study.

The interviews that were conducted in the second part of the research shed some light on what strategies Grade 1 teachers in English submersion classrooms use to promote English as a language. The teachers indicated that learners normally come to Grade 1 with very poor language skills. The reasons that the teachers listed for learners’ poor language skills were a lack of exposure to the language at home, as well as Grade R teachers that communicate with learners in their mother tongue rather than in English. Schools that has English as the LoLT start with English on Home Langauge level in Grade R (DBE, 2011). Teachers noticed that learners’ language skills were poor because of their lack of understanding and being able to carry out instructions in English. The learners could also not communicate well in English and had poor sentence construction. Teachers indicated that they kept instructions in English simple at the beginning of the year, until they were sure that learners could understand them better.

The teachers at schools A and B indicated that although the learners are enrolled in an “English only” school and are doing English on Home Language level, they hold the view that the best way to help learners to learn in English is by explaining the concepts to them in their mother tongue (especially if they discover that learners do not understand what they are conveying to them). This method of language education can be described as translanguaging (cf. section 2.2.1).

Teachers at school C mentioned different strategies to teach English to ELLs. None of them referred to making use of the learner’s mother tongue to promote English language learning. Instead, the different strategies listed by the teachers that they use in their classrooms are the following:

- Picture discussions.
- Reading stories to the learners in English.
- Poems, rhymes, and songs.
- The daily news.
- All instructions and teaching are done in English and learners are expected to communicate in English with the teachers throughout the day.

At school C the teachers made use of modelling the correct language to the learners while making use of the abovementioned strategies.

It can help learners to acquire a new language if learners engage with the language on a social level (Saville-Troike, 2017). According to the social cognitive theory, learners are social beings who learn through social interaction (cf. sections 1.7.2.1 and 3.3.1.1).

The teachers at schools A and B indicated that the learners in their classes do not communicate in English in a social context where they interact in their mother tongue (cf. section 5.3.2.2). At school C learners are encouraged to engage with each other in English on the playground and socially. The teachers claim that this helps the learners to expand their vocabulary and practise the language by speaking it.

The benefits of modelling English as the LoLT can be observed at school A where the learners that were educated in English-only had better pre-reading scores and learners reading acquisition also improved by using the structured phonics intervention programme. Observing a model can cause learners to imitate the observed behaviour (Johnson, 2019; Zhou & Brown, 2017). Learners imitate the actions observed by others in their environment and by identifying with the person they observe, and they assimilate learning into already existing concepts (MacBlain, 2018). At schools A and B teachers made use of translanguaging. Teachers need to understand the potential benefits of bilingual teaching. Bilingual education models promote a deeper understanding of content (García & Li, 2015). A lot of benefits can be observed where translanguaging is used in the bilingual classroom (Conteh, 2018).

Although this is an interesting observation in regard to strategies to use when teaching learners to read in a new language, more research is needed to investigate the long term results of using these approaches on reading performance in the classrooms to teach English as language submersion classrooms in Grade 1.

6.2.4 Research Sub-Question 3: What are teachers' beliefs about the suitability of the requirements for the English Home Language curriculum in terms of reading acquisition for Grade 1 learners in English submersion classrooms?

ELLs follow the English Home Language curriculum since the language of learning and teaching is English. English Home Language does in fact not refer to the learners' mother tongue but rather to a level of proficiency that is expected (DBE, 2016). However, the English Home Language curriculum (DBE, 2011) does not refer to the scenario of ELLs (cf. section 3.2.4.3). Language forms the foundation for listening and speaking, as well as reading and writing (Ahmadi, 2018). It is therefore important to include research on language teaching when deciding on the principles that will be included in the language curriculum (Nation & Macalister, 2020).

In the semi-structured interviews with the Grade 1 teachers, aspects of the curriculum and how the teachers perceive it came to light. The teachers argued that the 15 minutes per day for three days per week were not enough for listening and speaking. They did, however, reason that listening and speaking occurs throughout the whole

school day and therefore the time allocation was sufficient. The teachers all agreed that they spend more time on phonics in their classrooms than the 15 minutes per day for five days per week as suggested by the curriculum. Time allocation ranged between 50 and 90 minutes per day that teachers allocated to teaching phonics and shared reading to enhance the phonics learned. Phonics is an important aspect of emergent reading, and it is important for the learners to be able to decode words (cf. sections 1.7.2.3.1, 2.5.3.1, and 3.3.3.1.2).

The teachers agreed that the reading resources in Grade 1 submersion classrooms are not enough and not always suitable (cf. Table 5.18). Teachers argued that extra attention should be given to reading resources for ELLs due to the fact that English is not their first language. Teachers also held the view that the instructions provided on reading acquisition in the CAPS for English Home Language was not always clear and detected a need for clear steps to be taken when teaching reading to ELLs. It is important to ensure that teachers have up to date training and knowledge on the curriculum, as well as the most recent information on teaching reading as they cannot teach what they do not know (Spaull & Jansen, 2019)

The final topics that were discussed as part of the CAPS for English Home Language was the amount of content expected from learners in regard to reading as well as the set pace in the curriculum.

Teachers reasoned that the CAPS for English Home Language had too much “flesh” and that ELLs should learn the core skills of reading, until they are familiar with it and ready to move on to more complex work.

Teachers argued that the ELLs learn to read slower because English is not their first language and that the curriculum designers cannot expect the same outcomes from ELLs than that of English Home Language learners. This is in line with to the theoretical framework of this study (as presented in the simple view of reading) that state that learners need to understand the language in which they have to read to master reading as a skill (Kilpatrick et al. 2019).

Teachers held the view that they have to rush to get through the curriculum and that there is not enough time to practise reading skills taught (cf. Table 5.19). This aids to recent research conducted in South Africa where teachers felt that the curriculum were not adequate in terms of pacing and assessment (Gouws, 2017; Govender & Hugo, 2019; Spaul & Pretorius, 2022).

Teachers were also of the view that some of the ELLs could cope with the suggested pace for learning new phonics as set out in the CAPS for English Home Language (cf. section 3.2.4). They were concerned that struggling learners were not familiar with single phonics sounds or three letter words (for example c-a-t) at the end of term 2. The expectation of the CAPS for English Home Language is that learners should move on to diagraphs like “ch” and “th” at the beginning of term 3. Teachers reasoned that they are forced to continue with new work when some learners are not ready for new content (cf. Table 5.19). According to the simple view to reading, it will be difficult to master the skill of reading if learners are not thoroughly familiar with the phonetic sounds of the alphabet, which could lead to problems with reading speed and comprehension in the future. Reading comprehension is achieved by oral language skills and word recognition (Yeung *et al*., 2016). If learners are forced by the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) to move to more complex decoding, before having mastered the basic phonic sounds, it can be problematic. Learners should be able to decode a written text to such an extent that it is done automatically, so that more time can be spent on understanding the context of the text (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

Other challenges that teachers voiced when teaching ELLs to read is the fact that parents and maybe Grade R teachers, teach learners the “ai-bee-cee” alphabet instead of the phonetic sounds of each letter. This confuses Grade 1 learners when they start to sound out words and blend them together. According to the teachers who were interviewed, the Grade R teachers also do not focus enough on teaching learners English as a language. This means that learners come to Grade 1 without a basic knowledge of English, which could complicate learning to read (Rohde, 2015; Suggate et al. 2018; Manten et al. 2020).

6.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD OF READING ACQUISITION

6.3.1 Structured Phonics Programme

The teacher's guide as well as the reading book that constituted the structured phonics reading intervention are attached as embedded files in the margin on page 119. This programme may assist teachers at English submersion schools if implemented with the English Home Language workbook in the Grade 1 submersion classroom. It may assist teachers by

- helping them to structure their day-to-day instructional practices by providing instructions on what is expected in the CAPS for English Home Language;
- assisting ELLs with reading fluency, providing them with decodable stories; and
- providing an additional reading resource in the English submersion classroom.

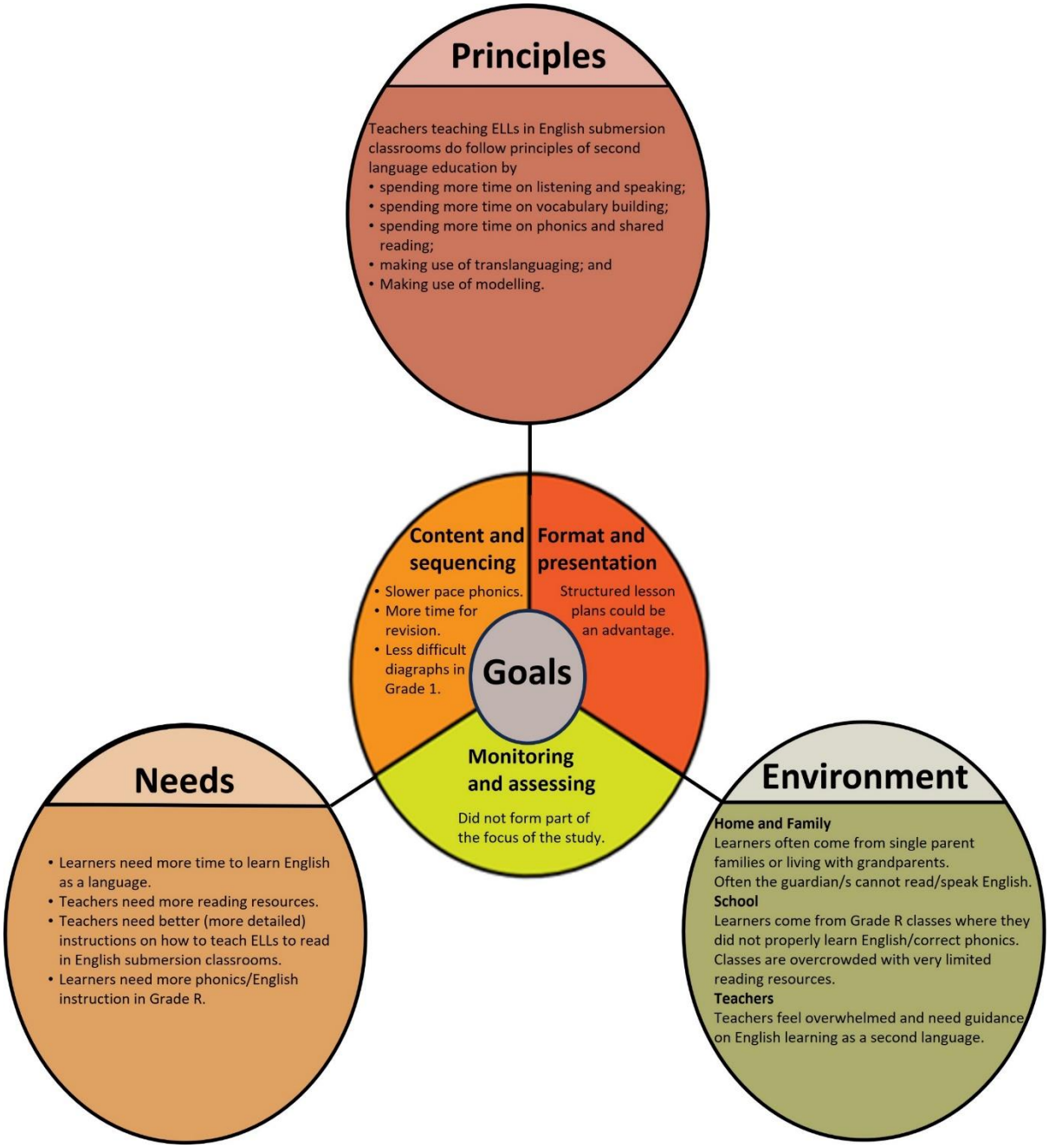
The phonics programme was designed to fill a gap in the Grade 1 English submersion classroom and follows the same sequence and pace as the English Home Language workbook.

6.3.2 Model-Curriculum-English Submersion Classrooms

From the research presented it is evident that there are no special instructions/guidelines to follow in the CAPS for English Home Language when teaching ELLs. Learners that are learning in "English only" from Grade 1 onward follow the English Home Language curriculum. The researcher would like to contribute a model to consider when adjusting the curriculum to accommodate ELLs. The model is built on the language curriculum design as suggested by Macalister & Nation (2010).

Figure 6.1 is a graphical representation of the model suggested. The three goals of the language curriculum are *content and sequencing*, *format and presentation*, and *monitoring and assessment.* The suggestions under each heading will be discussed separately.

Figure 6.1. Model suggested for the English Home Language curriculum and how to improve it for ELLs



6.3.2.1 Content and Sequencing

Section 3.2.4.4 explored the English Home Language curriculum in relation to the requirements for reading in Grade 1. In the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011), the alphabet is introduced in the first two terms, after which diagraphs are introduced in term three and four. A slower pace in learning the phonetic sounds may be an advantage in the English submersion classroom to make sure that the basic alphabetic code is mastered before moving on to more difficult diagraphs.

6.3.2.2 Format and Presentation

Lesson plans may be an advantage in the English submersion classroom to structure teachers' day-to-day activities in regard to reading. A structured phonics programme may also assist teachers to be informed on how to teach reading and to provide teachers with resources that are on the learners' level.

6.3.2.3 Monitoring and Assessment

Although monitoring and assessment did not form part of the focus of this study, it may be an advantage to standardise benchmarks for reading in all languages and Grades (Spaull & Pretorius, 2022).

The outer pillars of the curriculum design diagram are *principles, needs*, and *environment.*

6.3.2.4 Principles

The English Home Language curriculum should include principles in the curriculum to explain the context of ELLs. The curriculum can be adjusted by including more time for learning the English language, more time and focus on vocabulary building, and more time on phonics and shared reading, also making use of translanguaging and modelling in the English submersion classroom and explaining the benefits of these theories in the curriculum.

6.3.2.5 Needs

Learners need more time to learn English as a language. More reading resources are needed in the English submersion classroom as well as reading resources that are developed specifically for learners that are learning in English as a second language.

Better instruction on the specific context of ELLs and how to teach reading in this context is needed in the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011). More phonics instruction in Grade R can be an advantage as to introduce learners to some of the phonetic sounds but, without imposing formal instruction in Grade R (Pretorius, 2022).

6.3.2.6 Environment

The environment of the learners in English submersion classrooms should be taken into account. Often learners are living with grandparents who are unable to assist them in learning English as a language. Added to this, learners come from Grade R classes where they did not properly learn English as a language while basic phonics were not taught. Teachers feel overwhelmed with the teaching of ELLs. The curriculum should provide enough support for these teachers.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited because it only included one school from quintiles 4 and 5, and therefore the quantitative results were limited. The results of qualitative data cannot be generalised to the other contexts. The effectiveness of the CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) on reading acquisition was only explored from the perception of Grade 1 teachers. The study was also limited to English submersion classrooms and focused on reading acquisition only. Reading comprehension was not included.

Future research could include a longitudinal study with the same learners, that focuses on more aspects of reading than fluency. Future research could also include other Grade 1 classes, but where structured phonics intervention programme is implemented for the whole of the Grade 1 year.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The data gathered by the researcher indicate the following recommendations to be considered:

- The Department of Education should consider a structured phonics reading programme with a teacher's guide and a reading book in addition to the English Home Language workbook to provide suitable reading material for ELLs in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms.

- The English Home Language curriculum should be revised and include adjustments for the context of English submersion learners (cf. the model suggested in Figure 6.1).
- Grade R teachers should be trained in developing English as a language for ELLs as well as teaching the correct and structured phonics as required in the Grade R year.

6.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study explored the effectiveness of a structured phonics reading intervention programme in English submersion classrooms. Learners that have to read in English from Grade 1 onward, face many challenges of which understanding English as language is a main concern. There is a need for reading resources in English submersion classrooms that are on the learners' reading level. The CAPS for English Home Language (DBE, 2011) could be adjusted to accommodate teachers and ELLs regarding reading acquisition.

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APPENDIX A

ETHICAL CLEARANCE FORM

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/09/08

Ref: **2021/09/08/35288663/33/AM**
Name: Ms A Gouws
Student No.: 35288663

Dear Ms A Gouws

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2021/09/08 to 2026/09/08

Researcher(s): Name: Ms A Gouws
E-mail address: Annalize.gouws@gmail.com
Telephone: 084 600 8994

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof AM Dicker
E-mail address: annemaridicker@gmail.com
Telephone: 0834574208

Title of research:

EVALUATING A PHONETIC CURRICULUM INTERVENTION TO ASSIST IN READING ACQUISTION IN ENGLISH SUBMERSION CLASSROOMS

Qualification: PhD Curriculum studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/09/08 to 2026/09/08.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/09/08 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

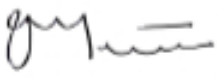
University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/09/08**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2021/09/08/35288663/33/AM** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof PM Sebate
EXECUTIVE DEAN
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APPENDIX B

PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ikhamanga Building, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200.
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umnyango we Fundo | Departement van Onderwys | Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Ms A Gouws
UNISA
Cell: 084 600 8994
Email: annalize.gouws@gmail.com

RE: EVALUATING A PHONETIC CURRICULUMN INTERVENTION TO ASSIST IN READING ACQUISITION IN ENGLISH SUBMISSION CLASSROOMS

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The tittle of your research project reads: **"Evaluating a phonetic curriculum intervention to assist in reading acquisition in English submission classrooms".** I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university's research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants and COVID -19 regulations to observed. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments' annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department's research unit @ 013 766 5124/5148 0r n.madihlaba@mpuedu.gov.za
The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

Moyane

MRS LH MOYANE
HEAD: EDUCATION

17 / 03 / 2022
DATE

MPUMALANGA
THE PLACE OF THE RISING SUN

APPENDIX C

ONE MINUTE READING TEST

Instructions to child

"Read the words for me across the page out loud. When you finish a line, go down to the next one. Read carefully but as quickly as you can. I'll stop you in a minute. Off you go."

Score

Number of words read correctly in one minute.

Norms

The norms, though of unknown provenance, are for English speaking children and offer "reading age" equivalents for reading speeds ranging from 2 to 0.5 seconds per word. These 158 words are all of one syllable and, not being connected in sentences, impose a strategy of one fixation per word. Though artificial, this provides a useful standard format for measurement purposes.

See, also, the norms appended for university students based on data collected by Michael Ock, consulting psychologist, and contributed by him to the Dyslexia Institute Psychologists e-group. They remain unpublished.

Source

Transvaal Education Department, April 1987.

Martin Turner
Head of Psychology
Dyslexia Institute
14th March 2001

One-Minute Reading Test

Score		Score		Score	
31	6:6	61	8:7	91	10:11
32	6:7	62	8:7	92	11:0
33	6:9	63	8:8	93	11:1
34	6:11	64	8:8	94	11:2
35	7:0	65	8:9	95	11:4
36	7:2	66	8:10	96	11:5
37	7:4	67	8:10	97	11:6
38	7:5	68	8:11	98	11:7
39	7:6	69	8:11	99	11:8
40	7:6	70	9:0	100	11:10
41	7:7	71	9:1	101	11:11
42	7:7	72	9:2	102	12:0
43	7:8	73	9:4	103	12:1
44	7:8	74	9:5	104	12:2
45	7:9	75	9:6	105	12:3
46	7:10	76	9:7	106	12:4
47	7:10	77	9:8	107	12:5
48	7:11	78	9:10	108	12:6
49	7:11	79	9:11	109	12:7
50	8:0	80	10:1	110	12:8
51	8:1	81	10:1	111	12:8
52	8:1	82	10:2	112	12:9
53	8:2	83	10:3	113	12:10
54	8:2	84	10:4	114	12:11
55	8:3	85	10:5	115	13:0
56	8:4	86	10:6	116	13:2
57	8:4	87	10:7	117	13:4
58	8:5	88	10:8	118	13:6
59	8:5	89	10:9	119	13:8
60	8:6	90	10:10	120	13:10

ONE-MINUTE READING TEST

is	me	on	at	by	so	us	7
an	it	or	be	to	as	he	14
of	in	go	up	am	if	no	21
we	my	ox	do	the	and	for	28
but	him	are	can	she	dog	let	35
you	not	was	out	try	see	mix	42
cat	now	boy	saw	bit	met	top	49
run	man	pet	lot	get	dig	van	56
bad	red	cup	bee	lit	pin	had	63
ran	pen	nut	big	old	yet	rob	70
gun	leg	fun	lip	new	fog	has	77
sit	sly	wig	mud	box	ink	sat	84
end	cut	pay	fed	who	six	lad	91
met	dry	cow	his	peg	tin	say	98
eat	any	far	set	bud	kid	pup	105
fox	ask	egg	cab	ill	use	jam	112
all	pit	got	sad	tea	sky	one	119
yes	fur	act	toe	her	own	ten	126
arm	rock	gone	feel	that	rich		132
till	long	flat	this	part	foot		138
maid	upon	came	mile	back			143
sand	time	said	then	wall			148
into	were	done	walk	much			153
loss	seen	went	with	come			158

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM: PRINCIPAL

25 July 2022

Dear Principal

I, Annalize Gouws, am doing research under supervision of Anne-Mari Dicker, a professor in the Department of Education at the University of South Africa, towards a PhD. We are inviting you to participate in a study titled

EVALUATION OF A STRUCTURED PHONICS PROGRAMME TO ASSIST WITH READING ACQUISITION IN GRADE 1 ENGLISH SUBMERSION CLASSROOMS

The aim of the study is to evaluate the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English Home Language regarding reading for second language learners.

Your school has been selected because of the valuable data that can be retrieved from the Foundation Phase teachers at your school regarding teaching reading to second language learners.

The study will entail interviews with teachers. The study will also include a phonics intervention programme to be implemented by teachers and schools that are willing to participate in the research.

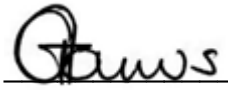
The benefits of this study are a better understanding of the efficiency of the CAPS for English Home Language regarding reading guidelines for second language learners.

There are no potential risks that are foreseen. Ethical clearance has been obtained from the ethics committee of UNISA (Reference number: 2021/09/08/35288663/33/AM).

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail an emailed report on request.

Yours sincerely


_____ (Annalize Gouws)

_____

Hereby, I, _____ principal of _____ give consent that the researcher of this study can do research at my school.

Signed _____ at _____on _____

APPENDIX E
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET:
INTERVIEWS AND CLASS VISITS

21 July 2022

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Annalize Gouws and I am doing research under the supervision of Anne-Marie Dicker, a professor in the Department of Education at the University of South Africa, towards a PhD. We are inviting you to participate in a study titled

EVALUATION OF A STRUCTURED PHONICS PROGRAMME TO ASSIST WITH READING ACQUISITION IN GRADE 1 ENGLISH SUBMERSION CLASSROOMS

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could help to evaluate the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English in the Foundation Phase on reading acquisition for second language learners.

"WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?"

You are invited because you are a Foundation Phase teacher that is teaching second language learners through an "English only" approach. I obtained your contact details from your principal. Nine teachers from different schools will be interviewed and observed for the research project.

"WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?"

The study involves more than one interview as well as class visits to the participant teachers' class. Interviews with teachers will be semi-structured and audio recorded. Class visits will take approximately one to two school days.

"CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?"

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to give your consent to participation. 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.

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

There are no compensation or reimbursements for participants participating in the study. The study may give more insight into reading as part of the CAPS for English.

"ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?"

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in the study. The only discomfort resulting from the study will be time sacrificed to do interviews and opening your classroom for a once-off observation.

"WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?"

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you have given. Your answers will be provided with a 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.

Data will be transcribed by a professional scriber and confidentiality will be maintained by signing a confidentiality agreement. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that this research was done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee of UNISA. 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.

The data obtained from the study will be kept anonymous and may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles, and/or conference proceedings. No names of participants or schools will be mentioned in these applications or data.

“HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?”

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the researcher’s office 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.

“HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?”

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

“HOW WILL I BE INFORMED ABOUT THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?”

If you would like to be informed about the final research findings, please contact Annalize Gouws on 017-200-0992 or e-mail annalize.gouws@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for one year after the study has been concluded. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Annalize Gouws on the number above.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof AM. Dicker on 012-429-4630.

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

Thank you.

_____

Annalize Gouws

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or the researcher has explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time. I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications, and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the audio recording of the interviews and class visits. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

_____

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

Researcher's name and surname (please print)

Annalize Gouws

_____ _____

Researcher's signature Date

APPENDIX F
PARENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent

Your child is invited to participate in a study titled

EVALUATION OF A STRUCTURED PHONICS PROGRAMME TO ASSIST WITH READING ACQUISITION IN GRADE 1 ENGLISH SUBMERSION CLASSROOMS

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to investigate how teachers teach reading in English. The possible benefits of the study are the improvement of the curriculum for English second language learners. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because I would like to visit his/her class for observation. I expect to have 400 other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate in the study, they will participate in an intervention phonics programme designed as a reading intervention that will be incorporated into class work in school time.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will also receive no direct benefit from participating in the study. However, the possible benefits to education are a better understanding of reading in English as a second language. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. He/She may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available for your child.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he/she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

If you have questions about this study, please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof. AM. Dicker, Department of Early Childhood Education, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 017-200-0992 and my e-mail address is annalize.gouws@gmail.com. The e-mail address of my supervisor is annemaridicker@gmail.com. Permission for the study has already been obtained from the Department of Education and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA (Reference number: 2021/09/08/35288663/33/AM).

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below will indicate that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him/her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:

_____

_____ _____

Parent's/guardian's name (print) Parent's/guardian's signature

_____

Date

Sincerely

Annalize Gouws 

_____ _____ _____

Researcher's name (print) Researcher's signature Date

APPENDIX G

LEARNER ASSENT FORM

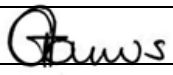
My name is Teacher Annalize and I would like to ask you if I can come and watch you learn in class. I am trying to learn more about how children read and speak English in the class. If you say YES to do this, I will bring some extra work to help you learn how to read.

I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will be fine with me. Remember, you can say YES or you can say NO and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you later have a question that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

Please speak to Mommy or Daddy about taking part before you sign this letter. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards

Teacher Annalize

Your Name	**Yes I will take part** 	**No I don't want to take part** 
Name of the researcher	**Annalize Gouws**	
Date		
Witness		

APPENDIX H
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Semi-structured interviews:

1. What language do the learners in your class speak at home?

2. Please describe the home environment from which the learners are coming that you are teaching in your class? Please elaborate on family structures and socio-economic status.

3. In your opinion, do you think most learners will have support at home to learn English as a language or support to learn how to read in English? You can also give examples of where home environment strengthened and supported the learner's reading achievement and where you feel it may make learning more difficult.

4. Please elaborate on the learners in your class' English language skills when starting Grade 1 at the beginning of the year. Focus on their level of understanding and communication skills.

5. Do you have a language test with the learners before admitting them to the school to see if they have a basic understanding of English?

6. What strategies do you use to teach the learners English as a language in the class?

7. Tell me more about English learning in other subjects like life skills? Do you feel that other subjects can contribute to English language learning?

8. Do you feel that learners are able to communicate well in English in your class at this present time?

9. What does the school do to encourage English learning on the playgrounds and socially?

10. Do you feel that 15 minutes per day as set out in CAPS are enough for these learners to listen and speak in English?

11. Please tell me more of your experience as a Grade 1 teacher specifically related to teaching reading in Grade 1. Start at your first year and describe how you felt in the beginning and how experience has taught you what you know now.

12. Do you as a teacher feel that you follow a different approach when teaching these learners to read as you would have when teaching learners to read that have English as a home language? If yes, how do your approach differ?

13. Do you have any phonological awareness activities during your phonics lessons? For example, do you verbally sound out words or ask learners with what sounds a word starts? Do you sing songs and learn rhymes? Do you ask learners to repeat the word without the beginning/end sounds?

14. Do you match the word cards to the words in the sentences in the departmental book?

15. Do you feel that the reading in the departmental book is enough practice for the new phonics taught?

16. How much time do you spend on teaching phonics per day?

17. Do you feel the curriculum provides enough guidance regarding reading?

18. Do you feel that the department of education gives enough support to learners with a different home language that are learning to read English as a home language? What would you recommend to the department in this regard?

19. What are your concerns and challenges regarding reading in the Grade 1 classroom?

20. Do you feel that you had to adapt in certain situations or when some of your strategies did not work? Or do you find it difficult to adapt? Explain how your adaptability could have benefited the learners in your class when learning English and how to read in English if relevant?

21. How do you as a teacher and you as a school motivate learners to read?

APPENDIX I

EXAMPLE OF A TRANSCRIPTION OF AN INTERVIEW

Interview with Participant 3

Interviewer Good morning, Ma'am, thank you for agreeing to doing this interview.

Interviewee You're welcome!

Interviewer What language do the learners in your class speak at home?

Interviewee Many learners do speak English, but mostly IsiZulu. We also have Sepedi learners, Sotho, and a Venda learner.

Interviewer Please explain the home environment from which the learners are coming that you are teaching in your class. Please elaborate on family structures and socio-economic status.

Interviewee I am shocked at the number of learners who stay with grandparents. Almost half of the children in my class stay with grandparents. Out of the 26 learners only six have parents that are married and then five to six learners who stay with single moms and one boy who only stays with a single dad – his mom passed away last year. So, I have a very interesting socio-economic class. I also have parents that are very well-off and then also learners that really struggle financially. I have a wide spectrum of everything.

Interviewer In your opinion will most learners have support at home to learn English as a language or support to learn how to read in English? You can also give examples of where home environments strengthened and supported the learner's reading achievement and where you feel it may make learning more difficult.

Interviewee I must say I have experienced that the learners that do come from English homes where they do speak English read better, they can speak and it's much easier for them and they are also the learners that have the best marks in all their subjects in my class. Learners that stay with their grandparents that can't really speak English themselves they are really struggling, so I do believe that the home environment affects the way they speak English and that parents that are able to help their

children, that these learners read and speak English better. The support that the learners get who stay with their grandparents – they really struggle because some of the grandparents can't even read themselves, and how do you help someone if you can't do the language yourself? I do think it definitely plays a role.

Interviewer Please elaborate on the English language skills of the learners in your class when starting Grade 1 at the beginning of the year. Focus on the level of understanding and communication skills.

Interviewee The learners whose home language is English (even though they do speak other languages), the parents prefer to speak English at home specifically to help them with school. I also know that these learners have brothers and sisters that are older, so I think they have learned from experience that it benefits the children if they speak English at home.

Interviewer So then they also learn the language from a young age before coming to school. Then they are used to hearing it and speaking it at home.

Interviewee So the learners that can speak English well, it was easy for them to adapt. They just started school and they are the ones that are achieving well and they are the ones who adjusted well but the learners that couldn't really speak English, it was very hard for me to communicate with them at first because they didn't know how to express themselves. They couldn't ask if they needed help and there are five of them – I know exactly who they are – the ones that couldn't speak English at all or they could barely speak English and they are still struggling.

Interviewer If I could add, are these five also struggling with reading?

Interviewee Yes, they are struggling very badly.

Interviewer Do you perform a language test with the learners before admitting them to the school to see if they have a basic understanding of English?

Interviewee Yes, I know the school does it, I haven't done it before but I know the school does it.

Interviewer What strategies do you use to teach the learners English as a language in the class?

Interviewee I love picture discussions because I feel they enjoy looking at pictures and I think that is an easy way to get them involved in building a vocabulary, seeing things. So, picture discussions. I also enjoy doing stories with them because then they see the pictures again and they sort of create a picture in their minds. So we do lots of stories, rhymes, songs, and I also enjoy asking them daily news. So, in the morning when they come to school, I ask all of them, I give each learner an opportunity to tell me something. What I like about that as well is then everybody had a chance to tell me something and if I compare the daily news to the beginning of the year up to now it is now much more interesting. At first they all just copied what the previous one said but now I can really see what happens at home or what happens in the afternoons or what affects them. They start to put more emotion into their daily news.

Interviewer Tell me more about English learning in other subjects like life skills. Do you feel the other subjects can contribute to English language learning?

Interviewee Definitely I think specifically with life skills it helps to build vocabulary because you take different topics, and you must discuss it and it forces the learners to learn new vocabulary. With life skills specifically there's lots of pictures involved, there are lots of things that they must physically do with their bodies, and I believe a Grade 1 learner should be physically active when they learn, so because of that they learn new skills, they learn new words and different themes.

Interviewer Do you feel that learners are able to communicate well in English in you class at this present time?

Interviewee Not all of them but most of them are.

Interviewer What does the school do to encourage English learning on the playground and socially?

Interviewee I think the fact that they have to speak English to each other even when they are playing definitely helps them to build a vocabulary because they are forced to speak English and the best way to learn is to do it.

Interviewer And do they actually do that, or do you think they only do it when they see a teacher?

Interviewee No I like walking around and sometimes they are playing actively so they don't see you coming, and you can hear they are speaking English.

Interviewer Do you feel that 15 minutes a day as set out in CAPS are enough for these learners to do listening and speaking?

Interviewee Yes and no. Why I say yes is I think it forces you for 15 minutes to do it intensely, and no it's not enough because I think the best way to learn English is to listen and speak. But in the same sense I feel as if the whole day is listening and speaking. So, 15 minutes should be enough because in all the subjects they speak English.

Interviewer Please tell me more of your experience as a Grade 1 teacher, specifically related to teaching reading in Grade 1? Start with your 1st year and describe how you felt in the beginning and how experience has taught you what you know now.

Interviewee If I think back at the first year that I taught Grade 1's, I can't imagine how they started reading. I am very thankful that they started though. I'm very thankful that reading is actually something I realised in my first year that when a child is ready to learn it comes naturally if you teach phonics. I think I became a better teacher over the years.

Interviewer Did you feel lost in the beginning?

Interviewee Yes definitely.

Interviewer And then, how did you gain experience? Just give me a few examples.

Interviewee I did a lot of reading myself to try to improve myself and my own skills. I did a few extra courses because I didn't know exactly what is expected of me as a teacher. But with all the courses I realised phonics, learners must be able to speak, and writing is also important but for reading they must first be able to read before they can start to write. Then eventually comprehension so that they can understand what they are reading. Word building, adding pictures to the words, I think vocabulary and phonics are the most important things I've learned.

Interviewer Do you as a teacher feel that you follow a different approach learning this learner to read as you would have when you were teaching learners to read that have English as a home language? If yes, how do your approach differ?

Interviewee I think I do try to do it differently especially when I see a learner is struggling. The first thing I do is try and build a vocabulary. If they don't have a vocabulary, they can't express themselves, they won't understand what they are doing, and then eventually vocabulary helps with comprehension.

Interviewer Do you do any phonological awareness activities during a phonics lesson, for example do you sound out words verbally, ask learners what sounds a word starts with? Do you sing songs that mention that, and do you ask learners to repeat the word without the beginning or end sound?

Interviewee Yes, I do. I love sounding out words, specifically when it is a word that they want to know how to spell. I like to sound out words not just in my phonics lessons throughout the day, maybe when we are doing life skills and we are learning a new word we do it for fun. We also have an active word wall in our class where if they see a word that they don't know or that somebody wants to know how to spell we stop the whole class and we put it on the word wall and you sound it out. Then we love changing beginning and ending sounds, specifically if we do the "b" sound then I will let all the learners' names start with a "b" for example if it's Sinetemba I will call her Binetemba. It adds some humour in the class and we love changing the ending sound as well and then I don't do this enough that I know but we do sometime change the middle sound or listen to the middle sounds. I love rhyming so doing nursery rhymes and then changing the rhyming words to different words, so we make our own rhymes, sing lots of songs, we like doing actions with words or letters building the letters with our bodies. I also enjoy it when we write things to different surfaces because I also think that helps. Sometimes we write on the walls and other times on the table or chalk outside.

Interviewer Do you match the word cards to the words in the sentences in the departmental book?

Interviewee I have done it but not with all the words. It depends on how much time we have, but we colour the words every day. They must colour the different colours and read it. We don't read it in the order it is given. The words we don't paste we put in our reading files and then they must write sentences. They use them to build their own sentences.

Interviewer Do you feel that the reading in the departmental book is enough practice for the new phonics stage?

Interviewee No. I don't think it's enough.

Interviewer How much time do you spend on teaching phonics per day?

Interviewee I can't really add a specific time to it because I think we do it throughout the day.

Interviewer Do you feel the curriculum provides enough guidance in regard to reading?

Interviewee No I don't think so.

Interviewer Because it's like you said when you started out you were lost, and the curriculum was there.

Interviewee And I went to university. I was actually active at university. I didn't study through the post and when I started, I didn't know what to do. So, no not enough.

Interviewer Do you feel that the department of education gives enough support to learners with a different home language that are learning to read in English as a home language? What would you recommend to the department in this regard?

Interviewee No I don't think they give enough support. What I would recommend is more phonics activities and more word building regarding vocabulary.

Interviewer So in the first six months they learn all the single sounds and they make three letter words and they read it, and you are now busy in terms there with the "ch" and all of those? Do you feel your learners are ready for these blends or would you have liked to continue with the three letter words?

Interviewee I must say the learners that do speak English at home they are ready but the ones that are not are still struggling (the majority in the class). I feel as if I'm forced to continue with work which the learners are not ready for.

Interviewer Do you feel that you had to adapt in certain situations or when some of your strategies did not work, or do you find it difficult to adapt? Explain how your adaptability could have benefitted the learners in your class when learning English and how to read in English if relevant.

Interviewee I think I'm very adaptable. So if I realise they are struggling I would leave all my other work and do more extra activities to try and assist them and then later plan to catch up my other work because I feel they can't carry on with new work if they haven't mastered the previous work.

Interviewer So you have to kind off juggle with the content?

Interviewee Yes.

Interviewer And there are a lot of outside factors that also have an influence where you must adapt in your class, like the department?

Interviewee Yes definitely. I also think the emotions of Grade 1 learners affect your adaptability as well. Some days they are fine to learn and other days they are not. Especially what happened before school: Sometimes there was a fight on the way to school in the car and then that one is so upset, they don't learn anything for the day.

Interviewer How do you as a teacher and a school motivate learners to read?

Interviewee I think we motivate them by making a big fuss about it, for example once the little Grade 1 girl could read so well, we asked her to read in front of the whole school in the hall. I know that was great motivation for my learners in my class. In our class what we do is we love reading stories because I believe stories create a love for reading, and by showing them how much fun reading could be they want to take part in it. I always tell them, "When you read a story you can travel so you can go to different places without leaving your chair or your table and you can experience new things". That is a big motivation to them. Also, songs and rhymes are a fun thing for children.

Interviewer Maybe the department should include rhymes and songs in the curriculum just to give a foundation?

Interviewee At our school to motivate them is to actively involving them in the songs and rhymes and in the stories and make it fun. Something else we do that I've seen worked is when they read a good book at home to come tell us about it at school or to come and show the book or bring a book from home and read it at the end of the day.

Interviewer Thank you very much.

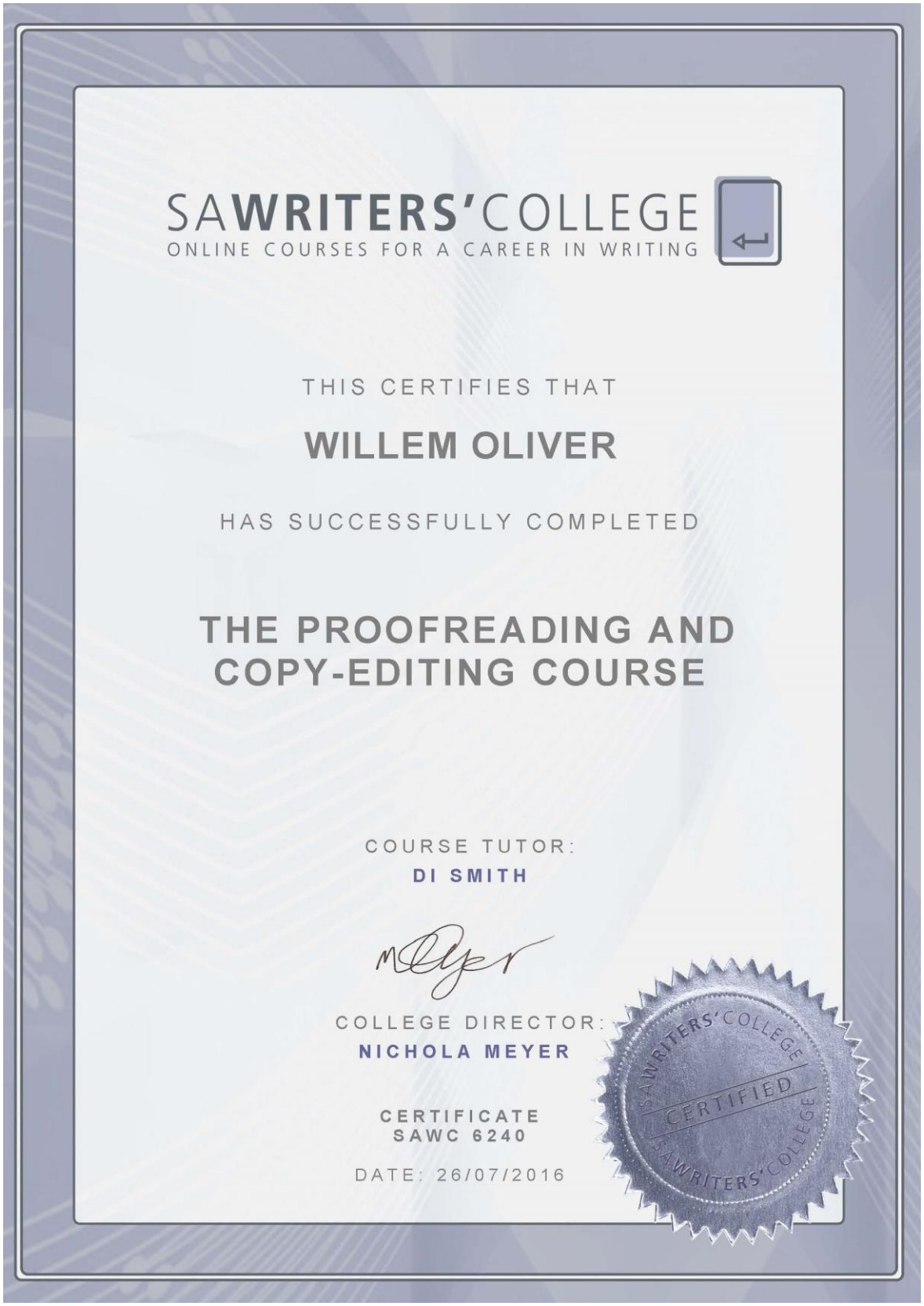
APPENDIX J

EXAMPLE OF DAILY CHECKLIST

Date	Regular English Lesson	Oral Language Development	Phonological Awareness Activities	Phonics: Reading Activities	Phonics: Writing Activities	Signature

APPENDIX K

LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE



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DI SMITH

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DATE: 26/07/2016

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APPENDIX L

LETTER FROM READING EXPERT

Arléne Bothma

Lees en Leerkliniek

Reading Therapy ● Brainyblox
● Study Methods
● School Readiness Program

13 December 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great excitement that I am writing this letter of strong recommendation for this program. I am the owner and reading therapist for the Reading and Learning Clinic in [redacted] for the past 15 years. I am working with children from different backgrounds, intellectual abilities, emotional status as well as physical abilities. Consequently, their attitude towards reading differs. Being part of Annalize's program is a privilege, and as such, I strongly recommend its implementation.

Annalize gives attention to detail pertaining to reading development as well as each child's development and the speed they are working with. Her phonics approach is thoroughly researched, and learners need to have an understanding of the language in order to be effective in it. What I appreciate most is that sentences and stories only incorporate phonetic sounds that learners have already mastered. The foundation for reading is well formed, which will ensure not only a love for reading but also correct spelling.

The program is based on phonological awareness which makes it easier for the learner to hear the word and be able to read it. The learner's vocabulary, phonics skills, fluency, and comprehension will not only be positively impacted but also foster a genuine love for learning.

This reading program is an excellent fit for any school seeking implementation. I wholeheartedly recommend it without any hesitation.

Sincerely,

Arléne Bothma
Reading and Learning Clinic
Managing Director

APPENDIX M

LETTER FROM READING EXPERT 2

26 July 2022

Mrs A Gouws

After reviewing your materials for this phonics programme, I am very excited to see what results it will produce in the classroom. The programme seems user friendly and iis in line with our CAPS curriculum.

I believe that it has the potential to change the way that educators look at the DBE books and it is helpful because it repeats vocabulary and sight words that are introduced in the DBE books. I have no doubt that learners will memorize sight words and high frequency words much faster because, it is revised and practised in more than one place.

The programme is logical and follows our method of teaching reading in the foundation phase where we start with sound recognition and later move on to building and decoding words and segmenting phrases.

I am pleased to see that the difficulty level of reading increases. It is well structured and ensures that learners gain confidence in reading but also leaves room for differentiating different levels of reading in the class.

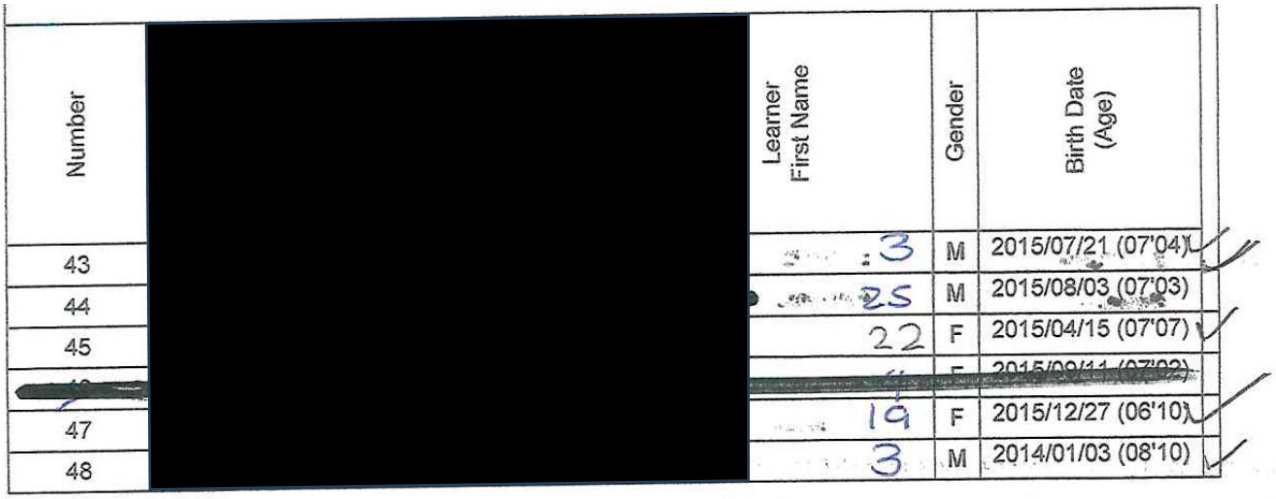
In my opinion, as an experienced teacher, I do recommend that this programme move to the next phase of the research.

Kind Regards

APPENDIX N

CLASS LIST

Number	Accession Number	Learner Surname	Learner First Name	Gender	Birth Date (Age)
1	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	F	2015/08/03 (07'03)
[redacted]					
[redacted]					
4				F	2015/02/25 (07'08)
[redacted]				M	2014/04/25 (08'06)
6				F	2015/10/27 (06'12)
7				F	2015/01/27 (07'09)
8				M	2015/06/29 (07'04)
[redacted]				M	2014/12/21 (07'10)
[redacted]					
11				F	2015/12/11 (06'11)
[redacted]					
13				M	2015/03/19 (07'08)
[redacted]					
[redacted]					
16				F	2015/08/04 (07'03)
[redacted]				F	2015/09/19 (07'02)
[redacted]				F	2015/01/12 (07'10)
19				F	2015/06/05 (07'05)
20				F	2015/03/02 (07'08)
[redacted]					
22				M	2015/04/08 (07'07)
23				M	2015/01/03 (07'10)
24				F	2015/06/12 (07'05)
25				M	2015/12/09 (06'11)
26				M	2015/12/22 (06'10)
27				F	2015/05/03 (07'06)
28				F	2015/08/19 (07'03)
[redacted]					
30				F	2015/02/11 (07'09)
31				M	2015/08/19 (07'03)
32				M	2015/01/02 (07'10)
[redacted]					
34				M	2015/09/21 (07'01)
35				M	2015/10/07 (07'01)
36				M	2015/01/17 (07'10)
37				M	2015/11/23 (06'11)
38				F	2014/09/13 (08'02)
39				M	2015/02/09 (07'09)
40				M	2015/06/05 (07'05)
41				M	2015/04/08 (07'07)
42				F	2015/05/08 (07'06)



Number	[redacted]	Learner First Name	Gender	Birth Date (Age)
43		3	M	2015/07/21 (07'04)
44		25	M	2015/08/03 (07'03)
45		22	F	2015/04/15 (07'07)
[redacted]		[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
47		19	F	2015/12/27 (06'10)
48		3	M	2014/01/03 (08'10)

APPENDIX O

TURNITIN REPORT

Evaluation of a structured phonics programme to assist with reading acquisition in Grade 1 English submersion classrooms

ORIGINALITY REPORT

26%	22%	18%	11%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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