

**An investigation of the development of listening and speaking skills in the
Foundation Phase: A case of two primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit,
Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.**

By

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Declaration

I, Semono Tshwenyego Benny declare that the dissertation titled “*An investigation of the development of listening and speaking skills in the Foundation Phase: A case of two primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit, Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.*” hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Education in School of Education (Languages Education) has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Semono TB

16 July 2021

.....
Semono Tshwenyego Benny

.....
Date

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the Semono family, particularly my mother Thabo Sannah Semono and my younger sister Lebogang Dembe Semono. This work further goes to my tremendously beloved daughter Theto Semono. It is a token of appreciation for their love and tenderness. I truly admire the support they have given me throughout the journey of this study.

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Abbreviations

ADHD- Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder

ANA- Annual National Assessments

BICS- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

CALL- Computer Assisted Language Learning

CALP- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CAPS- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CD- Compact Disc

CEA- Centre for Evaluation and Assessment

CLA- Communicative Language Approach

CLT- Communicative Language Teaching

DBE- Department of Basic Education

DoE- Department of Education

DVD- Digital Versatile Disc

ECD- Early Childhood Development

EFAL- English First Additional Language

ESL/FL- English as Second Language or Foreign Language

FAL- First Additional Language

GET- General Education and Training

HL- Home Language

HREC- Human Research Ethics Committee

LiEP- Language in Education Policy

LoLT- Language of Learning and Teaching

MKO- More Knowledgeable Others

NCS- National Curriculum Statement

NECT- National Education Collaboration Trust

NEEDU- National Education Evaluation and Development Unit

NQF- National Qualification Framework

PIRLS- Progress in International Reading Literacy Survey

RNCS- Revised National Curriculum Statement

SACMEQ- Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SES- Socio-Economic Status

TIMSS- Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

UL-TREC- University of Limpopo-Turfloop Research Ethics Committee

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

ZPD- Zone of Proximal Development

Abstract

The Foundation Phase Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement's objective is to equip children from Grade R to Grade 3 with the necessary and relevant knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to become productive, as well as functional participants in the Intermediate and Senior Phases of formal schooling as well as in global societies. However, literacy surveys at both national and international levels continue to demonstrate results that position South Africa at the least achieving levels. This signals that CAPS does not achieve its desired goals regarding learners' performance and educational development. Given this background, there is a rise in the need for a research of this nature to explore better strategies of equipping learners with rich vocabulary for ease of language learning. This study investigates the development of oral skills (listening and speaking) in two receptive grades in rural foundation phases. The study is a phenomenological case-study which adopts a mixed methodological lens of enquiry to collect and analyse data. Data collection procedures include classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. This investigation found that listening and speaking skills are not sufficiently developed in the investigated schools. An intensive exploration of the processes, activities, approaches and resources used for developing listening and speaking skills in both schools demonstrated that teachers lack knowledge and skills for administering activities, applying appropriate approaches and using the available literacy resources to develop listening and speaking skills. The study discussed the contributory factors to the above findings and, therefore, recommends that the Department of Education should provide Grade R teachers with in-service training and support programs. The programs should be intended to acquaint teachers with skills to use materials and to apply strategies in different ways to help all learners develop listening and speaking skills through understandable oral participation.

Key words: *Listening, Speaking, Literacy, Development, and Learning and Teaching*

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Chapter one

General introduction of the study

1.1. Introduction

The foundation phase has generally been excluded in broader South African discussions about primary education and curricular reform, despite its relative significance. This is still the case despite emerging research showing that many in-service practitioners in South African schools, particularly in the foundation phase, lack basic skills to teach literacy, and are thus unable to support children coming from impoverished backgrounds (Lenyai, 2011). Furthermore, a large body of literature from research based on South African township schools showed that much of learning and teaching involves a significant amount of repetition, memorization, and choring which may not be sufficient for children coming into school with limited proficiency in Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). The works of Spaul (2011) also show that there is little or no reflective speaking, reading, writing and listening taking place, and when learners do the above practices, such practices may involve one-word answer, dictation, and answering narrative comprehension texts which are cognitively undemanding. Consequently, there is little prospect for helping children coming from impoverished literacy backgrounds to transition from 'learning to read' toward 'reading to learn'.

Various studies on the quality of learning and teaching in South Africa have consistently reaffirmed that the state of education in South African is in crisis. This state of being in a crisis is reflected in a variety of performance indicators and systemic evaluations such as TIMSS, SACMEQ, ANA and PIRLS studies. Gustafsson and Kotzé (2016) also confirm that majority of learners in the schooling system are unable to speak, read and write fluently compared to children of the same age in different nations. The challenges from which these shortfalls arise are limitedly expressed in research and thus give rise to the question; what influences the challenges of poor literacy development? It is in this context that the current study explores how listening and speaking are developed and encouraged to exist in the classroom as pertinent media for language skills development and knowledge dissemination. It is anticipated that this study will contribute to a wider rethinking of the curriculum, pedagogies,

language policies, and practices in ways that mainstream foundation phase as central to wider improvement of the schooling system in South Africa.

1.2. Background and Motivation

The Foundation Phase Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) desires to equip children from Grade R to Grade 3 with the necessary and relevant knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to become productive, as well as functional participants in the Intermediate and Senior Phases of formal schooling. CAPS (2011) claims that these goals can be achieved when children are given a strong educational foundation which develops the skills that are predictors of success in formal learning contexts, particularly in the Intermediate Phase. For this reason, the CAPS (2011) has introduced English First Additional Language (EFAL) learning and teaching in the Foundation Phase (but from Grade 1 to Grade 3) in an endeavour to confront language barriers children encounter in Intermediate and Senior Phases, which pertain to using English Language as a Medium of Instruction—and thus result in poor learning and development.

This implementation was made under the motive that children must be able to read and write for comprehension in both their Home Languages (HL) and their First Additional Languages (FAL) by the end of Grade 3 (Zimmerman, Howie & Smit, 2012). The CAPS' adjustment of the additional language in learning and teaching from the Intermediate Phase to the Foundation Phase gives rise to a number of questions and implications in children's learning. For instance, this might imply that children should begin school with some levels of listening and speaking competence that will make language learning a comprehensible process (Lenyai, 2011). Thus, children in Grade R might not understand the importance and the process of learning to read and write if what they read and write does not link with what is already in their existing language repertoire. Therefore, the question that follows is: how does Grade R develop the children's listening and speaking skills that they need to function effectively in both languages from Grade one henceforth?

The National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2013) argues that for children to flourish in formal learning setups, it is important to take advantage of

their early years as opportunities to equip them with the skills that are relevant to the stipulations of the Education Policies and the existing curriculum. CAPS (2011) stipulates that the most crucial strategy to ensure that the education system is able to produce functional learners is by nurturing children's emerging literacy skills and providing them (children) with a sturdy literacy foundation from an early age. This curriculum values the production of literates who can "...identify and solve problems as well as those who can make decisions using critical and creative thinking skills" (CAPS, 2011: 5).

The above-mentioned skills are high knowledge skills that require effective listening, speaking, reading and writing language proficiencies for children to be able to critically collect, analyse, organise and evaluate information. All the listening, speaking, reading, writing, communicating, thinking, collecting and analysing information skills require adequate language use. It thus becomes imperative that language skills be developed in the Foundation Phase for the effectiveness of children's comprehension during later formal learning stages. Wardle (2003) encourages that learning should begin at birth and should involve a child learning in four basic areas; listening, speaking, reading and writing all at the same time. However, this study focuses on investigating the development of listening and speaking skills in Grade R. Lenyai (2011) claims that children's lack of listening and speaking skills holds back efficient reading and writing skills from developing because speaking should develop before reading.

Keun (2013) claims that the Foundation Phase is essential for children's overall development. However, listening and speaking skills are principal to all learning (Zimmerman, Howie & Smit, 2012). Therefore, "It is important that such skills are effectively developed early in a child's academic life" (CAPS, 2011: 10). In line with the given background, this study considers Grade R as an important entry level into the formal learning environment and also as safe haven for children's preliminary formal language skills development. Hence, the study deems it relevant and important to investigate the development of oral language skills in Grade R in consideration of the Department of Basic Education's claim that "...children must be provided with many opportunities to use language to develop speaking skills [in the Foundation Phase]" (DBE, 2010: 10). In that regard, investigating rural schools is relevant for this

study, given the background that most children from rural areas do not receive efficient literacy foundations in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres (Ashley-Cooper, van Niekerk & Atmore, 2019). Hence, their incapacities to function at age-appropriate levels in the Foundation and Intermediate Phases as compared to their international peers.

1.3. Research problem

This study is set out to investigate factors that interact to impact on children's poor performance in literacy, with much focus on factors that hinder effective listening and speaking development. The problem of this study is that majority of children are not able to listen, speak, read and write effectively in both their Home Languages (HL) and First Additional Languages (FAL), particularly those in villages and rural areas. This is evident in international comparative studies such as Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2006 & 2016) of Howie, Venter, van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Dutoit and Archer (2007) and Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena and Palane (2017). Howie et al. (2007) and Howie et al. (2017) claim that out of the 40 PIRLS literacy countries, South Africa achieved last positions in both Home Language and English Language assessments. These reports all substantiate details of poor literacy performance in South Africa basing data on performance of South African children in standardised tests. Vividly substantiated details of poor literacy performance in South Africa are discussed after the next paragraph. While these results suggest that teaching is not effectively taking place—and may thus point to poor teaching of listening, speaking, reading and writing, research is still needed to examine other contributory factors towards these results.

There are however other factors that impinge on learning, such as poor home literacy, Socio-Economic Status (SES, finance, health and deficiency relating to genetical inheritance) and school conditions such as poor teacher content knowledge, language differences and lack of learning and teaching resources. However, due to the limited scope of this study, the current researcher focuses on factors that are only pedagogic in nature. That is, this study explores the children's poor performance in reading and writing in the context of poor or lack of basic communicative (listening and speaking) skills. This is because the literacy shortfalls can emerge as a result of lack of

coherence between what children read and write, and what is already in their existing language repertoires.

In their summary of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2006), Howie et al. (2007) claim that Grade 4 and 5 learners in South Africa as compared with learners of other countries, show the lowest performance in terms of reading and writing even in their Home Languages. The summary report illustrates that of the fixed international average of 500 points, South African Grade 4 learners achieved an average of 253 points, whereas the Grade 5 achieved an average of 302. The South African PIRLS 2016 results illustrate that the South African Grade 4 reading and writing achievements, as compared with those of other PIRLS literacy countries, position South Africa at the least achieving levels with 320 of 600 average points (Howie et al., 2017). A comparison of the 2006 South African PIRLS results (summarised by Howie et al., 2007) with that of 2016 summarised by (Howie et al., 2017) demonstrates results that portray South African learners' performance in literacy still scoring significantly below the PIRLS benchmark of 500 points. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality report (SACMEQ, 2010) documented that 49% and 60.6% of Grade 6 learners in Limpopo Province are considered as non-literate and non-numerate respectfully. Additionally, Van der Berg, Spaull, Willis, Gustafsson and Kotzé (2016) aver that 60% of South African children complete Grade 3 without the ability to read and write for meaning in any language, and neither do they learn to read for meaning by the end of Grade 3.

This study explores these results in the context of poor listening and speaking skills development in the foundation phase or lack thereof. The schools (Grade Rs) which are investigated might also be affected by the learners' poor performance because of their rurality, children's dysfunctional ECD backgrounds and the children's ineffective listening and speaking skills. Hence, this study focuses on investigating the development of listening and speaking skills in Grade R. Research which focuses on examining the conundrum at this level (Grade R) might culminate in the emergence of preventative measures from early ages rather than an attempt to address the language problems at the levels in which they are extremely detrimental.

1.4. Preliminary literature review

Early language learning provides children with preliminary language skills and foundations which enable effective language study in more formal school levels. It develops children's overall literacy skills and it strengthens their literacy-related capabilities that are transferable across all learning areas (Barry, 2017). In other words, early language learning in the Foundation Phase is paramount to the feasibility of effective language command in the Intermediate and Senior Phases of learning. Children in Grade R are believed to be in their Early Childhood Developmental stages. "Early Childhood Development (ECD) is the process by which children from birth to nine years of age grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially" (Atmore, Van Niekerk & Cooper, 2012: 1). This is the process by which children who are within their early developmental stages grow and acquire knowledge and language that help them to learn, understand, communicate and interpret the social activities in their surrounding environments. Thus, it is crucial according to CAPS (2011) that sufficient attention be given to the development of children's listening and speaking skills throughout the Foundation Phase.

1.4.1. The role of the Foundation Phase in developing listening and speaking skills.

It is mandatory that the Foundation Phases develop the needs of young children and prepare them to enter into more formal and complex intermediate educational settings (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO, 2014). In agreement, Barry (2017) claims that there is much that can be done within the Grade R educational programs to foster language learning in young children. The best way to equip children with language skills is to advance their little existing knowledge and to build on their experiences, rather than fostering the development of a new language without acknowledging the importance of children's pre-existing language skills. Stretch (2013) claims that children learn more effectively when they have pre-existing knowledge about a content area. The same is true with respect to early language learning in the sense that children learn to construct new words, new meanings and new information by linking them with what is already in their background knowledge. Thus, oral language learning in the Foundation Phase can create foundations upon which written language knowledge and comprehension can be constructed.

1.4.2. How educators can effectively develop listening and speaking skills

To enable functional learning to take place in and outside classrooms, Freire (1996: 54) claims that teachers need to refrain from attitudes and practices in which: a). “the teacher teaches, and the learners are taught; b). the teacher knows everything, and the learners know nothing; c). the teacher thinks, and the learners are thought for and about; d). the teacher talks, and the learners listen passively and idly; and e). the teacher enforces his ideas and decisions to learners and they uncritically comply.” Although these suggestions were spoken in the context of higher learning, they are also relevant and applicable in the context of the Foundation Phase. Children can construct their own knowledge through experiencing things and later reflecting on those experiences to make sense of the new encounters (Vygotsky, 1978). This implies that children learn to listen and to speak best by authentically using language to interact with others through the expression and interpretation of thoughts, emotions and meanings (Kilfoil & van der Walt, 1997). This, therefore, dismisses the widely held misconception that children need to be taught language discretely by breaking it into smaller digestible pieces for it to make sense. Language learning in the Foundation Phase should not be concerned with the drilling forms, systems and rules of a language because these do not encourage effective listening and speaking skills. Rather, the focus should be highly placed on teaching children to use language as a tool for meaning making and cognitive development, and this will enhance their oral and aural language skills.

In summation, children’s access to quality educational foundation is a crucial determinant of their success in the formal stages of learning. However, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2014) claims that access is not the only crisis in education, but poor quality also holds back learning to transpire even for those who have access. That is, regardless of the numeral availability and accessibility of Foundation Phase facilities (ECDs, Pre-schools and Grade Rs) in rural areas, children continue to miss opportunities to develop functional language skills and basic literacy skills to function in Intermediate Phases. Hence the spoken and written language shortfalls in formal stages of learning. Therefore, this gives grounds for the need to base this study in rural schools to study how listening

and speaking skills are developed for children who are within their Foundation Phases of learning.

1.5. Role of theory in the study

This study uses constructivist and social theories to draw claims on how listening and speaking skills are developed through classroom interactions. This study employs, as primary theories, Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Constructivism theory and the Communicative Learning Approach (CLA) theory.

1.5.1. Vygotsky's socio-cultural constructivism (1978)

Vygotsky's (1978) theory defies the conservative strategies of language learning and teaching in which children are propelled to memorise and reproduce what they have received from the agentive educator. Vygotsky (1978) highlights that an environment has a huge impact on the development of children's cognitive and language skills, especially for children who are within their early developmental stages. Thus, this theory is used to investigate the prevalence of decontextualized oral interactions between children and teachers, and to study how they contribute to the children's oral language skills development. The theory is, furthermore, used to examine the role of the teachers as the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) in the children's development of the listening and speaking skills.

1.5.2. Littlewood's Communicative Language Teaching (1981)

The theory of Littlewood (1981) acknowledges the cooperative nature of language acquisition. The theory views language development as a process in which children develop the skills to use language to make meaning. That is, children learn to use language as a tool for thinking, questioning, communicating and constructing knowledge by authentically using the language in their social settings. Basta (2011) claims that language learning [in Grade R] should not focus on the pragmatic linguistic and grammatical rules that guide speech, words and sentences formations. The view is that grammar and rules can be acquired through interactions with adults and can be indirectly taught through language use other than explicit classroom instruction (Kilfoil & van der Walt, 1997). Thus, with the view of the process of learning and teaching as an attempt to construct knowledge between the teacher and the learners, this theory

becomes contextual in this study because learning to listen and to speak with understanding is central to this investigation. Thus, the Communicative Learning Approach theory guides this study to identify activities, discourses and conversational interactions in the investigated schools that can be utilised to develop children's listening and speaking skills.

1.6. Purpose of the study and the research questions

1.6.1. Purpose of the study

This study investigates the development of listening and speaking skills among learners in two primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit.

1.6.2. Research questions

In investigating the above matter, the researcher uses the following questions to address the main objective of this study and to guide the selection of data collection methods:

The main question of this study is:

- How are listening and speaking skills being developed and encouraged to exist in Grade R in the two primary schools under investigation?

The sub-questions are:

- What are strategies and approaches that Grade R teachers apply to nurture oral language skills development (listening and speaking) in Grade R?
- What literacy resources are available in Grade R and how are (or can) such resources be exploited to improve children's oral and aural language skills?

1.7. Research methodology

Creswell (2014) claims that research methodology signifies a process of identifying and selecting relevant approaches, strategies and methods that can be applied in a study to enable the researcher to gather the relevant information regarding a phenomenon under investigation. This study employs a mixed methodological approach to collect and analyse data. However, the most dominant methodology of

this study is the qualitative methodology. This methodology is dominantly preferable because in Schutt's terms (2012), it enables the researcher to deal with texts that represent the participants' experiences and social settings out of which answers for the prolonged questions of a study can be deduced. The methodology is used to query documents, images, video transcriptions, voice transcriptions and field notes of this study. Additionally, this methodology is deemed relevant for dominance in this investigation because it gives the researcher the leverage to focus on a phenomenon in its authentic settings.

The quantitative methodology is used specifically for collecting and analysing data from the observational checklists. The researcher uses the checklists to enquire the quantity of activities that are used to promote the development of listening and speaking skills. Additionally, the methodology is used to evaluate the quantity of resources that are predominantly used for developing listening and speaking skills.

Underpinning this methodology (mixed method) in this study, in Creswell's (1999) terms enables the researcher to ask open questions to unveil the depth understanding and complexities that exist in a selected research area pertaining to the phenomenon of listening and speaking skills development in Grade R. This methodology also enables the researcher to explore the number of activities and resources that are used, and extents to which they are used to develop listening and speaking skills.

1.7.1. Research design

Within the mixed methodology, the dominant methodology is the qualitative method. Thus, through the qualitative methodology, this study adopts a phenomenological *case study* paradigm as a design for the investigation. This design is deemed applicable in this study because it enables the researcher to explore the experiences of Grade R educators pertaining to how they develop children's listening and speaking skills. The design also yields depth information regarding teachers', principals' and administrators' perspectives on how listening and speaking skills could be effectively developed. Thus, the researcher investigates two primary schools as his case and to a greater depth, the phenomenon of listening and speaking skills development in the two selected Grade Rs.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) claim that phenomenological study attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. On the other hand, Bryman (2016) asserts that a case study is a paradigm that focuses on a group of participants in a specific community as the primary respondents who have the capability to yield relevant information into the study. Thus, a case in this study is used to refer to the two primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit that participate in this study. This design enables the researcher to study the participants in their authentic form and harvest the in-depth data in relation to oral language skills development in rural primary schools. It also helps the researcher in Bryman (2016) terms, to maintain focus even when using a diverse variety of data collection tools.

1.7.2. Sampling

The study is conducted in Maleboho-East Circuit, Capricorn District in Limpopo Province. This is because studies such as PIRLS (2016) report that Limpopo is the least achieving province among the nine South African provinces. Additionally, literacy achievements by school locations illustrate that children from remote rural areas and small town or villages perform extremely poor than their peers in townships, urban areas, sub-urbans and medium or large cities (Howie et al., 2017). Thus, majority of the schools in Maleboho-East Circuit are located in deep rural areas and may thus be experiencing literacy challenges. Hence, the choice of this geographical area is triggered by the passion to transform practices of early childhood education in rural schools, and to contribute to finding solutions to literacy challenges that children in rural schools experience. The geographical area of this study is conveniently selected because of its accessibility and proximity to the researcher.

The Maleboho-East Circuit comprises of 94 primary schools which are facilitated by approximately 938 teachers. Therefore, the researcher conveniently selects two primary schools from this circuit based on the proximity among them and the researcher. Furthermore, a non-probability purposive sampling is applied to select one principal (as the manager of the school) and one teacher (as the skills development facilitator) in each participating school, as well as two Foundation Phase practitioners in the Maleboho-East Circuit. The researcher correspondingly uses the criterion sampling to select 12 learners during observations. The study uses the following

criterion to select learner-participants in two primary schools: the researcher initially conducts class observations during which he uses three categories of learners (i.e. the highly participating, average participating and the below-average participating) to identify two learners out of the whole class for each category. This implies that there is a total of six learners selected from each school based on the criterion described above, thus making a total of 12 learners from both schools. The 12 learners are used to study the contributory factors to the gaps that exist between the learners regarding listening and speaking competence. They are further used to explore performance consistencies between their oral performance and writing performance in consideration of Lenyai's (2011) claim that poor oral performance impinges on reading and writing development.

This study comprises of an overall sample of 18 participants i.e. two Grade R educators, two school principals, two Foundation Phase practitioners in Maleboho-East Circuit and 12 learners. These participants are selected based on their non-probable capabilities to yield relevant and sufficient information into the questions of this study. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) claim that in non-probability sampling the researcher does not have a clue about the likelihood of having people he or she knows taking part as the participants. Thus, the participants are not selected to satisfy the hypothesis of the researcher, but the main purpose of the study.

1.7.3. Data collection

In this process, the researcher uses observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis as the primary approaches of collecting data. In addition, the researcher performs notes-taking during data collection. The application and use of the above approaches and tools are discussed below.

1.7.3.1. Observations

The researcher observes the daily classroom interactions for two consecutive days in each school (totalling in four days altogether) to capture the approaches that teachers use to engage learners into the listening and speaking activities. Creswell (2014) claims that observations are usually conducted to collect first-hand data. Therefore,

observations are conducted in Grade R classrooms settings in their naturalistic form to capture classroom interactions, learners' participation (learner to teacher and among learners), comprehension of concepts and the learners' performance in class. The researcher observes the prevalence of the above skills using Littlewoods' theory of the Communicative Learning Approach (1981).

During classroom observations, the researcher positions himself at the back of the class (behind the learners) and maintains the position of a non-participant observer. This might help to maintain children's attention and participation in class and to avoid threats to classroom authenticity in listening and speaking activities. Creswell (2014) claims that being a participant observer might be intrusive to the natural happenings in the environment within which the study is being conducted. Video shooting is performed during this process. Two video cameras are put at the front to capture classroom interactions that the researcher cannot perhaps see from the back. Although the presence of the researcher in the classroom and the use of video recording may jeopardise authenticity of classroom practices, Jewitt (2012) suggests that researchers can use "A fine-grained multimodal record" (P:6) to collect rich authentic data.

A fine-grained multimodal record connotes that the researcher pays attention, not only to the voices of the participants, but also to the details of facial expressions, gaze, body postures and gestures during interactions (Jewitt, 2012). The use of a fine-grained multimodal record enables the researcher to use "...video data to rigorously and systematically examine resources and practices through which participants in interaction build their social activities and how their talk, facial expression, gaze, gesture, and body elaborate one another" (Jewitt, 2012: 6). Field notes are taken throughout the observations to record the most insightful happenings that are in line with the questions of this study. An observation schedule is attached at the appendices to highlight all actions and steps that the researcher undertakes during the observations.

1.7.3.2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews imply that the contents, wording and order of questions might vary from interview to interview depending on participant's responses, but the researcher uses a guiding list of questions that the interviews seek to answer (Degu & Yigzaw, 2006). The semi-structured interviews additionally grant the respondents the opportunities to express their views about the matter under question to a greater depth and allow the researcher to guide responses to relevant questions through follow-up questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

The researcher engages the two school principals, the two Grade R teachers and the two Foundation Phase practitioners from Maleboho-East circuit into in-depth semi-structured interviews on an inquiry about how they develop the children's oral language skills. The in-depth interviews, in Rubin and Rubin's terms (2012), enable the researcher to ask open-ended questions, explore the experiences, motives, perceptions of the participants to acquire their knowledge and understanding regarding the problem in question. All the interviews and discussions are voice recorded. Field notes are also taken during the semi-structured interviews to capture most insightful responses the participants give.

The semi-structured interviews are based on the principles of the Socio-cultural constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978). The application of this theory in interviews yields in-depth responses on how the educators, principals and Foundation Phase practitioners develop children's listening and speaking skills as the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO).

1.7.3.3. Documents analysis

This study reviews the curricula documents of the two schools for the Foundation Phases. The study also reviews schools' policies pertaining to language development. The researcher reviews the children's reading, drawing and writing materials. This is to determine the availability of literacy resources and how they are exploited to improve the children's oral and aural language skills development. Photo shooting is performed during this process to capture eventful sections of the documents that

speak to the literacy practices of the Grade R learners in relation to listening and speaking development.

The document analysis is perused using Littlewood's (1981) CLT theory as the window for critiquing the prevalent practices in school in relation to what the documents recommend. Littlewood (1981) claims that people develop languages to function in social spaces. Thus, the theory is used to enquire on whether the contents of the reviewed documents are relevant to the classroom practices as well as to the development of children's listening and speaking skills.

1.7.4. Data analysis

Patton (2002) claims that data analysis is a process of transforming raw data into meaningful findings. It is a unique process that remains known only to the researcher, and to readers only when the researcher has arrived at (Schutt, 2012). The quantitative data is presented through graphs to demonstrate dominant activities, modalities and resources used for developing listening and speaking skills. On the other hand, the qualitative data is presented through a narrative discussion of emergent events. The data are later merged and analysed through a thematic lens. Thematic analysis gives the researcher the leverage to intensively study the collected data to reveal vigorous insights that can be integrated to create solid arguments (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009). That is, it acknowledges the interrelated nature of diverse research findings.

1.7.4.1. Data analysis from the observations

The data collected through observations include video recordings, field notes and observation checklists. Thus, the video recordings are transcribed for analysis. The video recordings and transcriptions are intensively studied during this stage to produce relevant themes that speak to the purpose and the questions of this study. With regard to the observation schedule, the researcher records the most prevalent events (which are marked with ticks) on the observation schedule. This is done to identify the common modes of communication and approaches of learning and teaching that teachers apply to develop children's listening and speaking skills. From the observation schedule, there are remarks (notetaking) from the various observed

activities. The researcher uses the notes to examine whether the teaching strategies enhance listening and speaking skills as well as learner's participation. Data analysis in this stage uses the main events that emerged during video recordings and transcriptions as well as in the observation checklists to create themes.

1.7.4.2. Data from semi-structured interviews

The audio recorded data from the semi-structured interviews are transcribed for analysis. For the school principals and teachers' interviews, the researcher intensively studies the transcriptions of their recordings and label the corresponding responses and contradicting ones in terms of how they relate to the curriculum and the classroom practices. For the two Foundation Phase practitioner's responses, the researcher studies their transcriptions and code the repeated responses and examine how they correspond with the ones of the educators and principals. Thereafter, the researcher discusses such important insights in relation to what has been observed, as well as to the stipulations of the curriculum regarding the initiatives the respondents take to develop the speaking and listening skills. The interview responses are analysed through the perspective of Vygotsky's (1978) theory on the role of the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) in developing children's language skills.

Thereafter, the researcher creates vigorous themes based on the correlating insights from all the coded responses of the principals, educators and the Foundation Phase practitioners. In other words, the corresponding events in this category and other categories will be linked and be used to formulate robust subthemes.

1.7.4.3. Data from document reviews

Data analysis under this procedure is intensively premised on a critical review of the stipulations of relevant documents in relation to the prevalent activities in the investigated schools. Critical arguments are raised on whether the classroom practices of the investigated cases respond to the stipulations of the reviewed documents. The themes are thus developed using 'A Step-by-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Analysis' by O'Connor and Gibson (2009).

1.8. Quality criteria

1.8.1. Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of a given study can be transferred to a different setting or be used with a different population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Transferability is addressed through clear definition and outline of the purpose of the study and appropriate citations and references. The researcher studies the collected data to the depth and applies relevant data analysis techniques to create an analysis that is open for re-analysis by other researchers.

1.8.2. Dependability

Dependability is the degree to which data change over time and alterations are made in the researcher's decisions during the analysis process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). This study avoids problems concerning dependability by in-depth reading of the findings and regular or intense usage of supervision guidance. The researcher works with the supervisor and the co-supervisor as co-analysts of the collected data to maintain consistency in the focus of the study, and thus promoting the dependability of the study.

1.8.3. Confirmability

Confirmability implies that the researcher demonstrates the findings that emerged from the data gathered, not his predisposition (Creswell, 2014). This study refrains from invading the research findings and falsification of the information for the suitability of the researcher's hypothesis. During data collection, the researcher refrains from probing leading questions. Participants are studied in their natural form.

1.9. Significance of the study

As this study seeks to highlight the importance of early oral and aural language skills development, its significance lies at the heart of transforming the rural primary schools

with a strong intention to outline the essential role that listening and speaking skills play in developing children's language and cognitive skills. This study lays emphasis on the importance of the early years as fundamental opportunities to nourish children's developmental and foundational skills necessary for formal education. Having language as the centre of people's everyday communication, this study encourages Foundation Phase practitioners to invest in the development of listening and speaking skills in their daily programs to equip the children with the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) necessary (Ntelioglou, Fannin, Montanera & Cummins, 2014). This may ease the children's process of acquiring the academic language skills and to acquire the reading and writing skills of both their HL and EFAL on later formal stages of learning.

1.10. Ethical Considerations

Punch (2013) and Creswell (2014) claim that when conducting a research that deals with people and involves people, "researchers need to protect their participants, develop trust with them, promote the integrity of the research, guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organisations or institutions and cope with new challenging problems" (Creswell, 2014: 93). To address the above-mentioned issues, the current researcher adheres to the following principles:

1.10.1. Ethicality and permissions

The researcher obtains the UL-TREC ethical clearance certificate that certifies the ethicality of the purpose of the study and the appropriateness of the questions of the study to the participants prior interactions with them. Before requesting for permission from the participants, the researcher requests for authorisation from the local Department of Basic Education (Maleboho-East Circuit) to conduct the study in the two selected primary schools. Thus, the researcher abides by all the rules or regulations the DBE assigned. Letters of request for permission to collect data are distributed to all participants prior data collection. The letters of request include request for permission to perform the observations, interviews and document analysis (children's activity books), as well as to do visual and audio recordings. The letter of request and assent form templates are attached in the appendices.

This study complies with the existing legislation regarding researching on the minors, particularly the Children's Act no. 38 of 2005, amended in 2007 by the Children's Amendment Act. For instance, the South African Children's Act (2007) regards children under the age of 18 years as minors who are not fully capable of making independent decisions. Therefore, with the consideration of the legislative age restriction policies such as Children's Act (2007, Chapter 2 and 3), the researcher obtains assent forms from parents or legal guardians to grant him permission to involve their children as participants in this study. The researcher respects the constitutional rights of all participants as enshrined in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the constitution of South Africa, 1996, Act 108). This includes ensuring that no learner is exposed to harm, traumatic experiences and/or anything violent in nature.

1.10.2. Informed consent

A clearly defined and detailed written consent is obtained from all participants for permission to proceed with the study. The researcher takes an initiative to fully inform the participants about the purpose of the study and their roles for participating in the study in their preferred languages for pure understanding. The participants are given research information sheets that vividly inform them of the purpose of the study and their role as participants. The information sheet template is attached in the appendices.

1.10.3. Confidentiality and anonymity

The security, confidentiality and protection of the participants' identity or declarations that may unveil their individuality and names are prioritised in this study and are thus rest assured to them. The researcher uses pseudonyms in this report to name the investigated schools and participants. The participants are treated with utmost respect, and their dignity is also valued in this study. Respect is addressed through the acknowledgement of their cultural and religious differences, as well as their knowledge, experiences and understanding regarding the phenomenon in question.

The researcher conducts himself mannerly to give respect to the dignity, privacy and the confidentiality of the participants.

1.10.4. Voluntary participation

The participants are informed that their participation is pure voluntary, which means that there is no remuneration for participating in the study. Participants are not propelled to partake in this study, and neither are they penalised, prosecuted nor interrogated for withdrawing from the study at any juncture. It is within their rights to suggest whether the information already collected about or through them should be used in the research report or not, and such declarations are respected.

1.10.5. Protection of the participants

The participants are not harmed in any manner. There are no corporal punishments, harassments, threats or any forms of abuse to the participants. The researcher protects, respects and upholds the participants' democratic rights during and after all interactions. Those who do not want to be video recorded are responded to positively.

1.11. Report layout

1.11.1. Chapter one

Chapter one presents a general introduction of this study. The discussion in this chapter outlines the study background, detailed problem statement, motivation, the aims and objectives of this study. This chapter further discusses the preliminary literature as well as relevant theories that are applied to obtain and analyse data for this study.

1.11.2. Chapter two

This chapter critiques the literature that is fundamental on listening and speaking skills development. Credible scholarly works and relevant sources are cited in this chapter to generate vivid insights on how listening and speaking skills are and should be developed. This chapter discusses the employable strategies, approaches and

activities for developing listening and speaking skills with much premise on what literature suggests.

1.11.3. Chapter three

Chapter three outlines the study methodology and design selected for this investigation. The chapter further offers detailed definitions and substantiations for choosing specific research tools and procedures for collecting and analysing data. Furthermore, the chapter discusses how such methods, designs and approaches are trustworthy of influencing the objectives of this study. The discussion of the processes undertaken during data collection, analysis and interpretation is put forth in this chapter.

1.11.4. Chapter four

This chapter presents, analyses and interprets the collected data. This chapter begins by narrating the important events that emerged during data collection and later integrates qualitative data with the quantitative data to develop insights for thematic analysis. In short, this is the chapter within which critiques are made as to whether there is efficient development of listening and speaking skills or not in the investigated schools.

1.11.5. Chapter five

This chapter presents a summative discussion of key findings that emanated from the data presented and analysed in Chapter four. This chapter further provides recommendations that yearn to assist practitioners in Grade R with guidelines on how to effectively develop learners' listening and speaking skills. At the end, this chapter spells out some of the limiting factors this study experienced and builds strong suggestions for future studies of this nature, either by the current researcher or other researchers.

1.12. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a general introduction of the study. It has highlighted the key factors which prompted this investigation as well as the problems of concern for this study. Preliminary literature review and discussion of methodology have also been conducted in this chapter. Finally, this chapter provided an overview of how chapters are structured in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the general introduction of this study and has outlined the background, motivation and the problem of this study in details. The chapter also presented pre-discussions on research methods that have been adopted in this study. Additionally, the previous chapter illustrated the summary of what is discussed in each chapter of this study. The current chapter, therefore, presents literature review. This chapter aims to generate and scrutinise the existing scholarly works regarding how listening and speaking skills are or must be developed in the Foundation Phase (Grade-R) and the challenges thereof.

There are wide scholarly views on what language literacy teaching entails and requires in Early Childhood Education. For instance, Wardle (2003) claims that language learning is a complex process that involves a child learning at four basic areas: language (speaking), listening, reading and writing all at the same time. However, Nombre, Alonso and de Junio (2012) claim that developing children's listening and speaking skills prior reading and writing is important because listening and speaking skills pave the way for the development of reading and writing skills. The juxtaposition of the above seemingly contradicting views urges the current researcher, in this chapter, to critique the literature that address the development of children's listening and speaking skills in the Foundation Phase, particularly in Grade R. Credible scholarly publications and relevant sources are cited in this chapter to generate firm arguments regarding the importance of developing listening and speaking skills and how they are developed in Grade R.

2.2. The background on the South African Foundation Phase.

The South African education system is categorised into three bands i.e. the General Education and Training (GET, Grade R-9), Further Education and Training (FET, Grade 10-12) and the Higher Education and Training. The GET and FET bands comprise of three successive phases namely, the Foundation Phase, Intermediate

Phase and Senior Phase. The breakdown of the phases per bands is illustrated in Table 1 below:

Bands	Phases	Grade categories
GET	Foundation Phase	Grade R to Grade 3
	Intermediate Phase	Grade 4 to Grade 6
	Senior Phase	Grade 7 to Grade 9
FET	Further Education and Training	Grade 10 to Grade 12

Table 1: A breakdown of grade categories per bands and phases

The focus of this study is on the Foundation Phase which, according to the National Qualification Framework (NQF, 2009), falls under the General Education and Training (GET) band. The need to focus on the GET band is motivated by the fact that the GET band constitutes a compulsory education in South Africa. It holds the responsibility of equipping children with quality education that would stimulate their learning interests which will last life-long after the compulsory education band (Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Du Toit, Scherman & Archer, 2007).

According to Singh (2010: 7) the “Foundation Phase refers to the lowest level of the General Education and Training band (GET)”. It is an entry level for children into formal educational system and is used to denote children’s first four years in four consecutive grades of formal schooling (i.e. Grade R, 1, 2 and 3). As indicated above, this phase comprises of four grades out of which this study focuses on one grade (Grade R). This is because the reception grade (Grade R) resembles reception year into the formal education system for many children. Therefore, it wields greater responsibility of equipping children with the sturdy literacy foundation which will enable effective learning in the upper grades and throughout the schooling systems.

The motive to focus on the development of listening and speaking skills in Grade R stems from Palmer’s (2014) claim that it is difficult for teachers to develop children’s reading and writing skills without initially enriching their oral language vocabularies. Additionally, most young children in South Africa live in deep rural conditions, and literacy practices, particularly reading and writing, are not part of their daily activities nor of their families (Bamgbose, 2000). As such, most of them begin formal schooling without experiences of interacting with texts at the basic levels, and majority without the abilities to listen, speak, read and write at the foundational or age-appropriate

levels (Bloch, 2000). Thus, it is vital that the Grade R focuses on developing the listening and speaking skills to enrich children's vocabularies and facilitate a smooth evolution of using the oral language skills to learn to read and write.

2.3. The kind of foundation children need in the Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) desires to equip children from Grade R to Grade 3 with the necessary and relevant knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to become productive, as well as functional participants in the Intermediate and Senior Phases of formal schooling. CAPS (2011) claims that these goals can be achieved when children are given a strong educational foundation which develops the skills that are predictors of success in formal learning contexts, particularly in the Intermediate Phase. For this reason, the CAPS (2011) considers language (literacy) as the primary area of development that the Grade R should develop to stimulate children's communicative competence. The decision to prioritise the development of language skills was triggered by the need to confront language barriers children encounter in Intermediate and Senior Phases, which result in poor learning and development (as reported by PIRLS, ANA, SACMEQ and NEEDU surveys, discussed on Page 49).

There is a general consensus that the primary focus of the Grade R should be on language development (Barry, 2017). This is because early language learning develops children's overall literacy skills and strengthens their literacy-related capabilities that are transferable across all learning areas (Barry, 2017). Thus, given the background that many children begin formal schooling without the ability to listen, speak, read and write, it is imperative that language learning in the Grade R focus on developing children's listening and speaking skills prior reading and writing. This is because it requires effective listening and speaking skills for a learner to grasp the reading and writing instructions in classroom (Palmer, 2014). The importance of developing the listening and speaking skills prior reading and writing can be well captured in the four definitions of language as cited by Husain's (2015: 1) below:

“A language is a system of **arbitrary vocal symbols** by means of which a social group operates (Block & Trager). Language is a means of **communicating thoughts** (Allen). Language is a set of human habits,

the purpose of which is to give **expression to thoughts and feelings** (O. Jespersen). Language is an **audible, articulate human speech** as produced by the actions of the **tongue and adjacent vocal organs** Webster” (Husains’s, 2015: 1).

Although it is not explicitly stated in the above quotes that the primary area of language development is oral language, an insight can be captured from the above definitions that the brain needs to acquire knowledge and understanding of different ways of producing meanings in a language. It is, therefore, arguable that due to children’s inabilities to read and write, the above-mentioned brain knowledge could be disseminated through speaking and listening. This implies that children need maximum exposure to the spoken form of a language to acquire good language skills. The bolded key phrases in the above definitions (**arbitrary vocal symbols, communicating thoughts, expression to thoughts and feelings** and **audible and articulate human speech**) are some of the basic skills children need to learn through oral conversations to acquaint their brains with basic grammar and vocabulary of particular languages. Thus, children in Grade R cannot learn such skills through reading and writing, and this affirms that the spoken language is the primary mode that could contribute immensely towards their vocabulary enrichment and thus the acquisition of the above-mentioned language skills. According to Bailey and Heritage (2008) the development of children’s oral language skills precedes the development of the reading and writing skills. This is because developing the reading and writing skills is not a mere process of making children just read and write, but a process of teaching them to produce and retrieve meanings in or through the symbolic linguistic representations of various languages (Palmer, 2014). In this regard, children will need to use their thinking skills and other communicative language skills enriched by their vocabulary to understand what is implied by what they read and write.

UNESCO (2014) claims that it is mandatory that the Foundation Phases (Grade R) develop the needs of young children and prepare them to enter into more formal and complex intermediate educational settings. This is because in Intermediate Phase children begin to experience prolonged conversations and texts as well as extended timetables. This means that the Foundation Phase needs to prepare them (in terms of language) at all the four basic areas of language i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing to enable effective participation in all of them. In agreement, Barry (2017)

claims that there is much that needs to be done within the Foundation Phase educational programs to foster language learning in young children especially when they have to make a switch to using EFAL as a Language of Learning Teaching (LoLT). Nevertheless, CAPS (2011) asserts that to achieve the functional language benchmarks and to enable executive functioning in the Intermediate Phase, the primary focus of the Foundation Phase should be on developing all the language skills, primarily the listening and speaking skills.

2.4. Language as a primary area of development in the Foundation Phase

According to Hoadley, Murray, Drew and Setati (2010) language is a tool that people use to express their inner-most thoughts and to share messages. In language, people use various communicative features that exist in their linguistic repertoires i.e. codes, signs, symbols, gestures and more to reach common understanding. Language also serves as "...an essential tool for the acquisition of literacy and numeracy because it is the foundation for speaking, reading, writing and spelling" (Wium & Louw, 2011: 87). Language is a socio-cultural tool that embodies unique socio-cultural symbols and patterns which people use to express and interpret messages in their varying socio-cultural contexts (Steinberg, 2007). The herein implied socio-cultural symbols are not limited to the written code of a specific standardised language. They go beyond to include the signs, gestures, facial or body expressions, tones, intonations and pitches that people produce during conversations to aid understanding. Sayers and Láncoş (2017) claim that languages differ cutting across various cultures, and they change overtime. Therefore, there will never be a parallel formula or recommendation for teaching languages. Hence, the Foundation Phase CAPS (2011) for languages is premised on the principles of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, in that it values language as a flexible tool for communication and access to information and knowledge development; not as a system of rules.

Van Staden and Bosker (2014) concur that the curriculum amendments from the RNCS to CAPS are aimed at transforming models of learning and teaching into learner-centred constructive paradigms. This implies that authentic dialogue is encouraged in classrooms because it is paramount to the feasibility of purposeful listening and speaking in and outside classroom. Authentic dialogue could enable educators to equip children with the contemporary language skills and communicative

competence through oral and aural activities than the ancient rule-based written language instructions. Therefore, language teaching and learning practices should refrain from approaches which focus much, if not only, on reading and writing. They should be orientated towards developing the children's communicative skills, which can be enhanced through effective listening and speaking skills development.

2.5. What are listening and speaking skills?

The listening and speaking skills are the integral components of verbal communication that are used in different discourses to share messages. Although the two skills are at times presented in isolation from one another as well as from the reading and writing skills, they are interrelated in nature and are amicably inseparable (Lloyd, Mann & Peers, 1998). However, learners spend much of their time in classroom listening and speaking to their teachers and peers to: develop knowledge; enhance their communicative competence and to learn to read and write. This means that listening and speaking skills are essential for facilitating the development of communication skills as well as for learning and teaching the reading and writing skills. Nevertheless, this does not imply that listening and speaking are the only measures of learning or modes of communication in classroom. Failure for this study to acknowledge that there are other modes of communication in classroom would give rise to the question of how the deaf or the hearing-impaired and the mute learners learn in classrooms. Hence, the listening and speaking skills addressed herein are confined to the classroom settings in which information is primarily shared through oral language. Gilakjani (2012) claims that listening is the effective mode of learning. Thus, his assertion recounts for Feyten's (1991) findings that 45% of the classroom time is spent on listening; whereas 30% is spent on speaking; 16% on reading; and 9% on writing. When teachers teach numeracy, life skills, languages and other subjects they normally disseminate information to learners through the spoken language than written language. Feyten (1991) suggests that priority in teaching should therefore be given to the development of listening and speaking skills because they have the potential of enhancing understanding.

Nombre, Alonso and de Junio (2012) assert that the listening and speaking skills are not skills one needs for international travel purposes only, but they are essential for communicative skills development, learning and for developing knowledge and

cognition. These skills enhance one's thinking and reasoning capacities, thus improving language fluency, proficiency and communication skills.

2.5.1. Listening

Listening can be defined as a process of receiving external sounds and spoken words to cause actions and reactions. According to Toboula (2017: 12) "Listening is not about being quiet when others speak. It is a process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or non-verbal messages." Hence listening is different from hearing in the sense that one could hear without listening, but one would not really understand the background, the context and the implied meaning beyond the literal utterances unless or until they pay attention (listen). This implies that listening is a deliberate mental process which requires different levels of attention for one to appropriately understand the conveyed messages and the intended meanings. For instance, listening in classroom is not the same as listening to public announcements, music, radio, TV shows etc. Listening in classroom revolves around listening to a teacher during lessons; trying to think about and understand instructions; to synthesise what has been said and to ask elaborative questions while also preparing response to any potential question (Lindsay & Knight, 2006).

Covey (2013) claims that the main purpose of listening is not to just hear what others say, but to understand what they are saying. Thus, it is through listening to what other people say that a good listener can understand and judge what other messages or words are not being said; or what meanings are intended beyond the literal utterances. The prerequisite to such skills in listening is the ability to pay attention to important aspects of communication during interactions. This, therefore, validates Cleary's (2008) claim that listening is a skill, and it nurtures good speaking skills if well developed. Nombre, Alonso and de Junio (2012) concur that listening is a skill that involves different levels of intensity, which are motivated by the initial purposes of the interactions. Hence, listening is different to speaking not only as a receptive process, but also as a process that happens at different stages (Nombre, Alonso & de Junio, 2012).

According to Nunan (2001) there are seven stages that constitute an effective listening process. However, prior the explication of the seven steps of listening, Nunan (2001)

elucidates that listening can be reciprocal or non-reciprocal. The reciprocal listening denotes an interactive process of communication in which the listeners have opportunities to ask questions to the speaker and to discuss contents of the interaction with the speaker. The non-reciprocal listening denotes a linear transfer of messages from the speaker to the listeners (Nunan, 2001). This could be exemplified by listening to radio, Tv and/or a formal lecture. According to Nombre, Alonso and de Junio (2012) the non-reciprocal listening is prevalent in most schools and does not encourage meaningful interactions between learners and teachers. Nonetheless, regardless of the nature within which listening occurs (reciprocal or non-reciprocal), Nunan (2001) claims that listening commonly integrates some (and sometimes all) of the following seven stages:

Stages of listening	Purposes of listening within the stage
Stage 1: Hearing	Receiving raw data
Stage 2: Selecting	Choosing Stimuli
Stage 3: Attending	Focusing attention
Stage 4: Understanding	Assigning meaning
Stage 5: Evaluating	Analysing and judging
Stage 6: Remembering	Drawing on memory
Stage 7: Responding	Giving Feedback

Table 2: Stages of listening and their descriptions.

The first stage of listening connotes a biological state of being able to sense sound waves. It involves hearing sounds without paying attention to them. This stage portrays majority of the educator’s perspectives towards listening skills development in that, majority of educators believe that teaching learners to listen means that learners should fold their arms, remove everything from their study desks and keep their fingers crossed to the closed lips to indicate that they are listening. Thereafter, the educators will prompt one-answer questions to examine the extent to which learners have heard instead of how much they understood. Palmer (2014) dejects this tradition in stating that it is not enough for educators to ask learners whether they understood and take their responses (chanting ‘yes’) as a confirmation that learners have understood. An indication that effective listening has taken place could be portrayed by learners’ ability to speak their minds on what they have been listening to. Learners need to raise questions in pursuit of clarity and better understanding. They should be able to

summarise what they have heard in their own words (vocabulary), and they need to answer short narrative questions to show understanding, other than one-answer question. It is therefore arguable that effective listening skills development for academic language and communicative proficiency begins at the second stage.

The classroom settings commonly require learners to listen at the levels of stage two to stage seven. This is because when, for instance, educators engage learners into a shared story reading their expectations are that: the learners should be able to select or identify important events from the story (stage two: selecting); the learners should pay attention not only to the reading, but also to the tones, intonations, gestures etc. that the reader uses to express certain ideas (stage three: attending); the learners need to take their listening beyond hearing the literal words as pronounced from the reading, and should be able pay attention to the hidden meanings (stage four: understanding); at a basic level, learners should be able to analyse the patterns of the story, i.e. who the story favours, what it is teaching and what are intended messages of the story (stage 5: evaluating). Listening at the sixth and seventh stages (remembering and responding) connotes that learners have internalised what they have learned and can now reach to their memory toolbox to prepare responses or summarise the events of the story and can move themselves from listening to speaking about their understanding.

2.5.2. Speaking

Rybold (2006: 2) states that “often, students learn to read and write in English before they practice their oral (speaking) skills”. On contrary, they first learn to speak in Home Languages before they learn to read and write. This could justify why majority of the learners are communicative in their Home Languages; but are unskilled of the communicative competence in English. This raises a question of whether this could have anything to do with the limited exposure of the spoken English that the English FAL learners struggle to develop the communicative skills of their FAL? Or could it be that the approaches used to develop the English communicative skills are misapplied or inappropriate for the cohort in question? Rybold (2006) holds the view that the impoverished communicative competence could be fuelled by lack of adequate exposure to the spoken or the oral form of any language.

Speaking can be defined as a process of making meaning through utterance of words, phrases and sentences in compliance with the common patterns of usage of a particular language. This is a process of communicating verbally, the purpose of which is to express ideas or to convey meaning. Harmer (2007: 29) claims that “when speaking, we construct words and phrases with individual sounds, and we also use pitch change, intonation, and stress to convey different meanings”. The main idea in Harmer’s argument is that speaking entails the ability to integrate different components of language and communication to produce messages. That could include the ability to use the linguistic and non-linguistic resources that exist in the appropriate repertoire of languages to convey verbal and vocal messages (Alonso, 2013). Similar to listening, speaking can also transpire at different levels, although the levels of speaking are confined to two: spoken production and spoken interaction.

The spoken production refers to the ability to produce sounds; the ability to produce and identify phrases in other spoken or written texts, and the ability to connect speech sounds to form words and to connect phrases to form sentences. This level is concerned with production of appropriate sounds and utterances in compliance with the complex rules of a language in spoken form. The spoken interaction, on the other hand, denotes a bidirectional process of meaning exchange between two or more people through oral language. This includes the ability to use everyday language and communication tools to begin conversations and to draw meanings out of other people’s spoken conversations. These two levels depict basic elements of Cummins’ philosophies of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in that, the first level of spoken language is centred around the development of formal and academic language proficiencies, whereas the second level seems to be concerned with communicative skills development. Rybold (2006) claims that the second level of speaking enriches one’s vocabulary, critical thinking skills and empowers the learners’ voices in classrooms. This implies that a learning environment that enhances children’s listening and speaking skills is characterised by the practicability of interactive learning and teaching, not the passivist approach.

2.6. How listening and speaking skills can be effectively developed

Although CAPS (2011) asserts that listening and speaking skills are the primary skills teachers need to develop in the Foundation Phase, it provides inadequate guidelines on how educators can facilitate the development of the listening and speaking skills. Van Der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2013: 123) concur that “the spoken language is not generally given enough space in current school curricula”. Additionally, there is limited research and literature within the South African context regarding the development of listening and speaking skills in the Foundation Phase (Grade R). Popular studies on developing listening and speaking skills are framed within the contexts of higher institutions of learning, teaching and learning English as a Second Language or a Foreign Language (ESL/FL) and the work environments. The previous claim contextualises the assertion of the Early Childhood Development in the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 that Early Childhood Education is an under researched area in the South African educational context. Given the above setbacks, this study draws largely on international studies’ suggestions and theories on how listening and speaking skills can be developed in early childhood education.

There are four contributory factors that significantly determine success in the development of listening and speaking skills which need to be given adequate consideration, namely: the learning environment, the activities for learning, approaches or methods of teaching and the resources used in learning and teaching. Purposeful communication in learning largely centres around the above-mentioned factors. Thus, discussions on how listening and speaking skills can be developed are drawn below under each factor.

2.6.1. Setting up a good environment for developing children’s listening and speaking skills.

According to Alexander (2010) the development of the listening and speaking skills requires a learning environment that is free and that encourages independent thinking. This is an environment that does not reject or narrow the children’s perspectives and thoughts. Alexander (2010) states that if teachers need children to learn to speak and speak to learn, what the learners say should be given significant attention. The above assertion resonates Freire’s claim (1996: 54) that to enable learning (listening and

speaking skills) development in and outside classrooms, teachers need to refrain from attitudes and practices in which: a). “the teacher teaches, and the learners are taught; b). the teacher knows everything, and the learners know nothing; c). the teacher thinks, and the learners are thought for and about; d). the teacher talks, and the learners listen passively and idly; and e). the teacher enforces his ideas and decisions to learners and they uncritically comply.” Although these suggestions were expressed in attempt to encourage interactive learning environment in higher learning, they are also relevant for the Foundation Phase. Vygotsky (1978) claims that children can construct their own knowledge through an environment that allows them to experience authentic interactions and later reflect on those experiences to make sense of the new encounters.

Children learn to listen and to speak best when they authentically use language to interact with others by expressing and interpreting thoughts, emotions and meanings (Kilfoil & van der Walt, 1997). This, therefore, dismisses the widely held misconception that children need to be taught language discretely by breaking it into smaller digestible pieces for it to make sense. Language learning in the Foundation Phase should not be concerned with the drilling forms, systems and rules of a language because these do not encourage effective listening and speaking skills development (Lenyai, 2010). Rather, the focus should be highly placed on teaching children to use language as a tool for meaning making and cognitive development, and this will enhance their oral and aural language skills.

According to O'Flaherty and Phillips (2015) the development of listening and speaking skills requires an intriguing environment of engagements and interactions in the classroom. They further state that effective listening and speaking skills development require an environment that triggers and challenges children's high order thinking. Hockings, Cooke, Yamashita, McGinty and Bowl (2008) aver that learners whose thinking is challenged in classroom are more interactive during actual classroom lessons and are able to reflect, question, evaluate and connect shared ideas. O'Flaherty and Phillips (2015) claim that the listening and speaking skills can be developed through vigorous classroom discussions and collaborative problem-solving activities. Therefore, the teachers have the responsibility to create learner centred, as well as inclusive environments of learning for authentic discussions to emerge.

The term environment is wider in meaning, especially when one contextualises it within the educational spectrum. Greenman (2005: 5) states that “An environment is a living, changing system. More than the physical space, it includes the way time is structured and the roles we are expected to play. It conditions how we feel, think and behave... the environment either works for us or against us as we conduct our lives.” This implies that educators must create an appropriate physical environment, adequate time and resourceful learning spaces within which maximum facilitation of skills in pursuit could occur. A learning environment must be equipped with the operational resources from which the goals of teaching and learning can be derived (Idsoe, 2016). Thus, the development of listening and speaking skills requires an environment that is equipped with the listening and speaking supporting resources.

2.6.2. Pertinent activities for developing the listening and speaking skills

Field (2009) claims that listening and speaking skills can be taught and practiced simultaneously, but this implies that the classroom activities need to portray the true nature of real-life interactions. Thus, the below activities are tailored at stimulating the children’s listening and speaking skills without eradicating the true sense of authenticity in classroom interactions.

2.6.2.1. Learning-enriched play

According to Greasser, Conley and Onley (2012) learning-enriched play is a mediated play which allows children to freely engage with the subject content through fun activities. With the consideration that children in Grade R are not yet acquainted with the reading and writing skills, Gibbons, Anderson, Smith, Field and Fischer (1986) as cited in Neuman and Dwyer (2011) suggest that effective listening and speaking skills can be developed through play and repeat or play and predict and recall activities. The Grade R comprises of minor children who rely heavily on fun activities to learn. Hence, Excell & Linington (2011) propose that the education system should adopt the *Pedagogy of play*. They refer to the *pedagogy of play* as a “**fundamental**” aspect of learning for the minors. This is the process in which children are taught the foundations of literacy through fun and learning-enriched play activities.

Through the use of play and repeat or play and predict and recall events, teachers can create enriched oral language teaching strategies which could be used before, during and after play or fun-story times. For instance, children can be encouraged to engage

in a decontextualized fun story reading, telling or listening in which; prior the story, they can be asked to assume what the story could be about, based on their pre-existing knowledge and experiences about the topic. “The greater the learner’s knowledge of the topic area, the greater will be her or his comprehension” (Van Der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2013: 125). During the story, they can be asked to predict what will happen; and after the story they can be asked to retell the story in their own words and also cite some of the interesting parts of the story they have enjoyed. In this regard, learners are encouraged to listen to grasp meaning and to speak to convey meaning. They learn to assign meaning to what they say as well as to search for meaning in what other people say. This is one among many effortless strategies that help teachers to develop co-learning attitudes among children. When children listen and speak to one another, they learn that there are various ways of using language to express one meaning. As a result, their vocabularies develop with ease.

Play incorporates activities such as role-play and characterisation. These activities allow learners to speak in portrayal of their favourite characters in shared stories and perhaps on television. The activities, thus, have the potential to advance children’s vocabulary to the effective standards and rates of proficiency in that, they encourage children to express feelings that are related to their own lives. This means that educators take the experiences, resources and the knowledge that learners have brought from home and use them as tools to advance skills development in classroom.

2.6.2.2. Dramatic play

Dramatic play involves both children and the educator participating in a shared activity of acting. This activity could be fruitful in exposing children to the wide range of accents that exist in a language. Van Der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2013) claim that it is beneficial for learners to be exposed to the accents of their everyday communication. This implies that allowing authentic talk in drama creates a room for learners to use their collections of accents and expressive talks to learn language. Drama exposes children to the rapid vocabularies of everyday conversations. In drama, children need not to revise play scripts or materials. Teachers can use the shared stories as guides for the dramatic play. However, this means that during the story reading the teacher needs to use various accents, be fluent and use appropriate facial expressions to role model the expectations of drama act, rather than emphasising words, being slow and

too pronounced. The latter do not give children motivation to listen for meaning. Instead, learners only focus on phonetic utterances. Additionally, there are huge differences between the demographic representations of the spoken language and the written language. The written language is rigid, while the spoken language is fluid. Thus, intensive or comprehensive story reading would not yield understanding. Van Der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2013) claim that when children do not understand the information they receive from the educator, the quality of listening degrades to hearing (passively sensing sound waves without interpretation).

2.6.2.3. Shared story reading

Teachers have the responsibility to select relevant and interesting materials for shared story activities. Using Krashen's (1982) notion of input+1 ($i + 1$) as cited in Schutz (2007), teachers are encouraged to select materials that are not too easy for the learners to comprehend nor too difficult to understand. This implies that educators need to be strategic in establishing the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD, Vygotsky: 1978) to select and develop neutral literacy resources. In addition, the teachers' awareness of the learners' ZPDs will enable them to select materials that are slightly above the learners' existing levels of knowledge. This would further capacitate them to narrow the distance between children's current knowledge and potential knowledge. Thus, shared story reading activities can serve as great opportunities for educators to acquaint children with *paralinguistic* expressions. The paralinguistic expressions refer to the non-verbal cues the speaker uses to elicit understanding, i.e. facial expressions, body motion, eye contacts etc) (Cleary, 2014). The paralinguistic features are not confined to the use of body expressions only. They involve the use of pictures, illustrations, paintings etc. to expand understanding during the story reading, which promotes a multimodal learning space.

The shared story reading is pertinent and bidimensional in that it promotes children's listening skills and simultaneously creates an awareness of print (reading). Thus, when the educator reads and make meaningful statements from the story, children become aware that books carry meaning. This, therefore, creates a simultaneous development of the receptive skills: the listening skills and the reading behaviour. Thus, children may aspire to play the role of an educator and mediate the story reading. This recounts for the promotion of the speaking skills. The shared story activity may be followed by

dramatic play of the story, group activities, question and answer sessions and role play to create a good balance of the grasp of both skills (listening and speaking). Moody, Justice and Cabell (2010: 15) claim that the shared story reading or telling activities are teacher-dominant because they are dominantly centralised on “children’s attentiveness to a storybook and their ability to sustain attention over time”. Although this may be a limiting factor for listening and speaking skills development, teachers can still create an interactive space in which, they elicit questions that require learners to express views not correct answers. Correct-answer questions will propel the teacher to give corrective feedback, and thus influence self-corrective talk and thinking among children. As a result, children will fear to participate in question and answer sessions of the shared story reading. The questions should not be asked with intent to assess and compare learners (at least not only, if so), but should aim to optimise learners’ interactions in classroom.

2.6.3. Fruitful classroom resources for developing the listening and speaking skills

2.6.3.1. Digital Technology

The use of technology is increasingly becoming a norm and is spreading across homes and schools. Children are becoming exposed to smart phones, televisions, DVDs, video games, computers, digital and interactive toys, electronic books and internet (Shamir, Korat & Heibal, 2013). Therefore, Nachoua (2012) claims that digital resources can feature as the most relevant resources for developing children’s listening and speaking skills. Nachoua (2012) urges educators to take advantage of technology as a technique for language development. She explored the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for improving students’ listening skills. Nachoua (2012) recommends the use of DVDs, CDs, recordings, Televisions, audio books and radios for developing the listening and speaking skills. Learners could be exposed to their favourite radio programs, movies and TV stories and later be engaged in the exploratory talk about the events that transpired in the viewed or heard stories. The *exploratory talk* is a non-cognitive talk that encourages open discussions, arguments and questions that are orientated towards knowledge construction. According to Shamir and Korat (2013) the 21st century cohorts begin school with enough exposure to different technological tools of communication. The shortfall is that from the home

environment, children are only aware of these technical devices as sources of entertainment. Thus, teachers may have difficulties with developing children's habits of using technology beyond the levels of entertainment (Shamir and Korat, 2013).

Among many digital and technological resources, the mostly recommended tools are the DVDs and TV programmes because they are both auditory and visual. Nachoua (2012: 1151) claims that "...more learning occurs when information is received in two perception modalities (vision and hearing) rather than a single one." This is true with regard to the attention span of the minors in the sense that, they need fascinating learning resources for them to engage in listening and speaking. Additionally, the above-mentioned digital techniques are nothing foreign to them from their home environments. Thus, children's visual contact to/with what they hear could help them to compare and contrast their versions of the stories (as depicted by predictions), with the ones presented to them. Children will therefore become aware of the different contexts of word usage. Additionally, this would facilitate a better understanding of what they hear, and would in turn, enrich their vocabulary through the search of meaning in what they see, hear and say.

Nachoua's (2012) suggestions are relevant considering that children need an exposure to digital literacy to function well in the 21st century global markets and the fourth industrial revolution. Palmer (2014: 5) concurs that communication in the contemporary workplace entails spending "9% of our time on writing, 16% on reading, 30% on talking, and 45% on listening." Palmer's notions of time spent in the work fields portrays a great similarity to the ones of Feyten (1991) illustrated on page 27 of this dissertation. This indicates that enormous time in communication (at school, home or work), is spent on listening and speaking than on reading and writing. Hence, Nachoua (2012) emphasises the need not only to promote communication proficiencies, but to do so through the media of modern technology to acquaint children with the 21st century skills.

Nachoua's (2012) recommendations may, however, not be practicable in majority of the South African rural schools given the low SES of the schools, parents and the communities. Oliver (2009) states that the Socio-Economic Status is commonly characterized by parents' or family income, occupation, educational levels of the elderly at home and in the society, levels of health and security, as well as the financial

status of the school. Thus, the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) might not be compatible with rural schools' budgets, teacher-skills and school populace in terms of all learners' access to the computer facilities.

2.6.3.2. Print literacy resources

Although oracy and print are often presented dichotomously, they have unique transparencies and capabilities of supporting each other. Thus, their interrelated nature is undefeatable. Palmer (2014) asserts that teaching occurs much often in spoken form than it does in written form; and oracy plays a vital role in acquainting learners with writing skills. One would argue, in this regard, that print can also be used for developing oral skills especially in contexts where children have limited or no access to digital technology. Teachers can use print resources such as story books, big story books, picture story books and flashcards to improve learner's listening and speaking skills. The story books can be used for shared reading and be followed by dramatic play of the shared stories, role play and characterisation. Children can be assigned different roles of the characters in the stories but act in ways they would have reacted to particular situations that emerged in the story.

On the other hand, teachers can use flashcards to prompt interactions among children. Flashcards are literacy teaching printed cards that either have pictures, words or numbers and are used across different subjects (Ruwe, McLaughlin, Derby & Johnson, 2011). In addition, Ruwe et al. (2011) claim that although flashcards are widely known as tools for teaching drill and mastery of words and sentences, they can be strategically deployed to facilitate interactions in classroom. Erbey, McLaughlin, Derby and Everson (2017) argue that in language teaching teachers commonly use vocabulary flashcards and question and answer flashcards—also known as the interaction flashcards. The vocabulary flashcards are designed to help learners to memorise vocabulary words, whereas the question and answer flashcards are designed to enhance interactions in classroom. Their application in classroom also differs in the sense that vocabulary flashcards are strongly associated with the direct instruction (drilling), whereas the question and answer flashcards are strongly associated with the communicative approaches to language teaching.

In one's perspective, both types of flashcards could be used to enhance the listening and speaking skills in that teachers need to create discursive environment of usage.

For instance, if one of the vocabulary flashcards has a picture of an animal at the front (e.g. lion) and at the back, it is written the name of the animal (lion), one learner can be asked to ask another learner what animal the picture displays; thereafter, the one who holds the card would turn it to show if the answer is correct or incorrect. If the answer is correct, the learner who gave the answer should tell a brief story about the animal and be asked if they have ever seen the animal, what they would do if they find it at home, so on. However, if the answer is wrong, the learner who was holding the flashcard must state the right answer or read it from the back of the flashcard, and thereafter give a sentence or tell a brief story about the animal. In this sense, learners become exposed to the drilling forms (as may be recommended by the curriculum and policy) and equally to the functional use of language. According to Urquijo (2012) the question and answer or interaction flashcards are practical and can be home made. They require an educator to design questions that suit the learners' backgrounds which will prompt interactive communication in the classroom.

2.6.4. Relevant approaches and/or strategies for developing listening and speaking skills.

2.6.4.1. Dialogic learning and the Communicative Language Approach

Although the discussion below is based on dialogic learning and communicative approach, a large proportion of it is based on dialogic learning. Prolonged discussions on the use of Communicative Language Approach to develop the listening and speaking skills are drawn in the theoretical discussions of this study on page 59.

Alexander (2010) claims that the listening and speaking skills can be enhanced through a dialogic learning process. Dialogic learning is the process in which teachers and learners engage in equal and joint act of meaning-making and knowledge construction. This approach demolishes the traditional learning and teaching methods which position learners at the back and the teacher at the front (Adi, 2012). It further dismisses the role of a teacher as the custodian of knowledge and children as casualties of the teacher's purposes. It encourages teachers to develop learner-centred classrooms than ones in which teachers enforce their ideas and knowledge through repetition, chanting, recall, recitation and reformulation of ideas.

Palmer (2014) claims that it is prevalent that in most pedagogic practices teachers spend a considerable amount of time either explaining or using highly abstract

language, and probe highly structured sequence of questions and answers. This becomes a limiting factor for most learners because their voices are not recognised, and their contributions are not acknowledged due to the probed one-fixed-answer questions. For the development of listening and speaking skills to emerge in classrooms, teachers should allow a dialogic process in which all learners share and build ideas through sustained talk (Reid, 2005). Thus, educators should shift from the role of sifting learner's responses towards a more scaffolding role that enables them to offer constructive feedback to the learner's responses.

Van Staden and Bosker (2014) claim that educator's responses to what children say in classroom have direct impacts on children's beliefs regarding their own understanding. Teacher's feedback could either hamper or increase learner's motivation to participate in classroom discussions. Thus, Alexander (2010) avers that children's contributions and ideas should not be undermined nor be discretely labelled as wrong. Instead, they should be reflected upon, discussed, debated and argued about in a constructive manner. In turn, this would create an environment in which children listen to one another, share ideas and build on each other's ideas. Learning to speak and to listen occurs much effectively in classrooms that are characterised by discussions, dialogue, debates, arguments, reasoning-gap activities, agreements and disagreements among many other communicative tasks (Gruegeon, 2010: Birbili 2013). However, children's communication (especially the, debates, arguments, agreements and disagreements) should be positively monitored and positively shaped by the teachers to avoid feelings of exclusion, rejection and being wrong. Practices should aim at creating an inclusive and supportive classroom.

2.6.4.2. The top-down and the bottom-up (formalist and functionalist) approaches

The top-down and the bottom-up approaches are two processes of language teaching that are commonly used in various subjects to develop the listening and speaking skills and other literacy skills. According to Van Der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2013) teaching oral skills through the top-down approach implies that the purpose of conversations in class is to share meaning. That is, one listens to get the gist of the expressed messages and/or speaks to express a complete thought. Whereas in bottom-up approach, listening involves paying attention to all the sounds produced in utterances

to make sense of each sound. In speaking, the bottom-up approach means to ensure that the words of the speaker are pronounced correctly, and the speaker's sentences follow a firm structure of sentence formation (syntax) of a specific language (Van Der Walt, Evans & Kilfoil, 2013).

These two concepts apply largely to listening as stated by Alonso (2013) that the top-down processing involves a general understanding of the direct or intended meaning of the listening section without paying attention to syntactical structures of a language. The bottom-up is a linguistic approach that focuses on the synthesis of a language from "phonemes, to words, to utterances, to complete meaningful texts- whereby meaning is derived as the last step in the process" (Alonso, 2013: 14). For minor children, the bottom-up approach will incapacitate them of any functional use of language because meaning is not prioritised in communication under this approach. Thus, it is much relevant to use the top-down approach because it triggers reasoning, arguments, explanations and questioning, all of which contribute immensely towards effective communication and language development. Using the bottom-up approach will come at the cost of the learners' time, efforts and skills because it does not encourage creativity in classroom. As Alonso (2013: 12) puts it "Speaking does not on itself constitute communication unless what is said is comprehended by another person." Thus, teaching comprehension of spoken speech should be primary and compulsory in elementary education, particularly in language teaching.

2.6.4.3. Collaborative and interactive learning

According to Al-Quada (2012: 1) collaborative learning is premised on the principles of "equal participation for all learners, interaction among learners and production of new knowledge by collective." These are the learner-centred teaching procedures that allow active participation, collaborative knowledge construction, negotiations, teamwork, collective talk and common goal in classroom. The use of Collaborative learning approach in classroom implies that: all learners should be given adequate opportunities to raise their ideas (participation); it further implies that the classroom communication should be bidirectional or reciprocal (interactive) and that the environment should allow all learners to make meaning of the shared ideas and to also produce new knowledge. Thus, the collaborative nature of interactions in a collaborative classroom will be characterised by flexibility in turn taking, time sharing

and adjustable environment of learning. The gist regarding the relevance of the collaborative and interactive approaches in teaching listening and speaking skills is that both approaches are participative. They allow learners' interactive and communicative manoeuvre towards language and knowledge development.

2.7. The challenges of developing the listening and speaking skills

Craven (2008) claims that although there are numerous listening and speaking strategies which teachers (can) use in classrooms to enhance the listening and speaking skills, some children still fail to grasp mere communication skills. Some children cannot participate in oral activities and some cannot respond effectively to questions or make artless oral statements regardless of the variety of modes presented to them (Craven, 2008). These challenges may rise as signals of the series of deficits that children have, which may range from the biological to social and/or contextual traits.

From a biological perspective, Parr, Duchan and Pound (2003) and Macblain, Long and Dunn (2015) claim that children's inability to engage in simple oral activities may be signs of the biological impairments such as Aphasia and/or Dyslexia. Aphasia is a language and communication impairment that affects one's production and comprehension of speech. It can also affect ones understanding of the written texts, as well as the ability to read and write. Parr, Duchan and Pound (2003) argue that Aphasia is a speech difficulty that could transpire in different forms. For instance, this could involve "...the difficulty with pinning down and translating thoughts into words, trouble following densely written texts, and prevents engagement in the rapid cut and thrust of debate" (Parr, Duchan and Pound, 2003: 2). Learners who experience these difficulties are often neglected and excluded in classroom activities (Hale, 2007). This is true of many public schools in that children with learning difficulties are often looked down upon. This, therefore, prevents learners from putting their ideas across in classroom in fear of social rejection and exclusion.

Other studies, such as the one of Macblain, Long and Dunn (2015) suggest that Dyslexia could be one of the factors that hinder children's development of the oral and aural language skills. Dyslexia is a learning disability in reading, which affects a learner's accuracy, fluency and comprehension in reading (Macblain, Long and Dunn,

2015). Reid (2005) asserts that dyslexic children rarely exist in public schools because their learning deficits require special education. According to Reid (2005) the core difficulties that children with Dyslexia have include difficulties with hearing, sight, connection, motor skills, interaction and diet. This disability can also create spelling difficulties in learners' speech production, thus making it difficult for them to speak in class.

Other than dyslexia, Neven, Anderson and Godber (2002) and Delfos (2004) find that the listening and speaking skills can also be hindered by children's behavioural problems such as the Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The ADHD is a mental illness that affects the cognitive functions. This illness commonly prevails among kids as the inability of a child to pay attention, impulsiveness and hyperactivities. Delfos (2004) claims that children with ADHD lack focus in the sense that they are interruptive, noisy and have low attention span. Thus, they lack the basic skills that one needs to become an effective listener and speaker.

Although the above challenges are some of the robust biological and psychological factors that affect the listening and speaking skills, they are not of concern for this study. This study's premise is not on detecting biological and psychological factors that deter efficiency in listening and speaking skills development. Rather, the study is concerned with the efficacy of activities, strategies, methods and resources that are used to develop the listening and speaking skills. The current researcher is in no position to examine nor diagnose Dyslexia, Aphasia and Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Hence, there are no scientific examinations or observations conducted in this study. This study is limited to the exploration of the social, learning, teaching, communicative and contextual classroom factors that shape the development of the listening and speaking skills and the challenges they bring.

At a communicative level, children's lack of efficient oral language grasp could be fuelled by lack of oral language supporting apparatus in schools. For instance, the suggestions of Nachoua (2012) of using digital media to equip children with the oral skills might not work in schools with low Socio-Economic Status such as those in rural areas. In addition to the difficulties of developing the listening and speaking skills in schools, lies the teacher's lack of skills to promote the listening and speaking skills. Osler (2016) claims that not all educators have effective capabilities to promote the

development of listening and speaking skills. In Osler's view (2016) developing these skills means enabling children to become independent thinkers, listeners and speakers who do so with understanding. Thus, teachers fail to develop these skills due to factors such as: lack of proper training; lack of resources in classroom; poor guidelines on the listening and speaking skill development in the curriculum; poor in-service training and workshops; insufficient time and poor curricula knowledge, among many other factors. When educators fail to give learners opportunities to optimal learning, continued education as well as effective learning and teaching could all be at jeopardy (Collins, 2015). This could consequently give rise to the tensions of poor literacy and numeracy performance among children.

2.7.1. The use of outdated language teaching approaches

It is disturbing that despite language changes and diversities that exist in South African societies and across the world, influenced by multilingualism, super-diversity, economic growth and digital growth; and despite the CAPS' (2011) emphasis that language learning in the Foundation Phase should focus on the development of communicative language skills (listening and speaking), South African public schools' still practice the parallel approaches to language learning and teaching. The classroom language practices in South African schools are still rooted in the use of the outdated teaching methods and approaches, and pay little attention to the development of communicative skills (Wium & Louw, 2011). The argument on the outdated teaching methods has also been voiced by local studies of Ramokgopa (2013) and Mashatole (2014). For instance, Ramokgopa (2013) asserts that the current educational practices (especially in language teaching) do not enable children to compare and contrast how their language skills improve over time and how they portray communication realities. That is, children complete Grade 3 without the native-like control of both their Home Languages and First Additional Languages. They fail to portray what Baker and Jones refer to as "the constant oral use of languages" as cited by (Ramokgpa, 2013: 17). This is because the focus in classroom is on learning to master languages rather than learning to use them. Ramokgopa (2013) states that the strategies of language teaching in classrooms are still fixated on the traditional objectives that are based on memorisation of rules and structures of the written language, rather than the authentic or functional use of language for logical deductive reasoning.

On the other hand, Mashatole's (2014) study finds that although practices of teaching are supposedly occurring within a communicative learning environment (as stated in CAPS, 2011), "teachers do not seem to be able to identify effective ways of mediating curricular knowledge (De Clerq 2008), and many seem unable to progress beyond traditional methodologies of teaching" (Mashatole, 2014: 5). His study sought to explore how learning and teaching occur in Mankweng Foundation Phase classrooms, and how effective teachers are able to use different teaching strategies and methodologies or approaches to enhance understanding in different classroom practices. His study reports that in the Grade 1 and Grade 3 of an investigated Mankweng Primary School, there are more oral language practices (listening and speaking) prevalent during teaching and learning than there are written language practices (reading and writing). However, the oral language interactions did not seem to facilitate any functional learning because they were based on the 'what' question-structures (Mashatole, 2014). This did not give learners ample opportunities to express their views in class, but to chant responses. The children were not able to fully participate in the classroom lessons. Mashatole (2014: 58) further argues that it is the questions such as "What do you see in this picture?" and "What is that girl riding?" in his excerpt of the observations that led to his conclusion that educators dominate classroom interactions and ask no thought provoking questions. As a result, this restricts children from making effective contributions to classroom interactions. Learners miss out on available opportunities to develop the oral fluencies despite the fact that oral language is the dominant mode of sharing information in the classroom.

What Wium and Louw (2011), Ramokgopha (2013) and Mashatole (2014) refer to as outdated approaches are ones which are intensively premised on the discrete forms of a language such as grammar, spelling, punctuations, phonetics, syntax, and other dysfunctional forms such as rote, repetition, chanting and drilling. These are the teacher-centred approaches that posit learners as passive and do not promote active learner-participation.

2.8. Advantages of developing listening and speaking skills in Grade R

2.8.1. Listening and Speaking skills can work as pertinent tools for implementing inclusivity through interaction.

“Inclusivity should become a central part of the organisation, planning and teaching at each school. This can only happen if all teachers have a sound understanding of how to recognise and address barriers to learning, and how to plan for diversity” (CAPS, 2011: 5). Teachers need to understand the complexities that exist in the diversity of learners and their languages and (to a certain extent) of their cultures to disseminate inclusive teaching (Palmer, 2014). They need to teach languages with an awareness of the children’s cultural construction strategies of language development (Idsoe, 2016). This implies that for children to acquire the effective language skills, teachers need to know what type of learners exist in their classrooms and how best they learn. This will enable them to identify and apply the relevant language teaching approaches that administer the communicative grasp of the language.

According to Gilakjani (2012) there are three types of learners that educators popularly encounter in classrooms i.e. the visual learners, auditory learners and the kinaesthetic learners. These are not disabled learners. They are learners who have different strengths and who respond actively to different modes of learning and communicating. For instance, the visual learners depend on seeing, viewing, observing, watching or reading to make sense of what they learn. The auditory learners depend on listening or hearing to learn. The kinaesthetic learners learn best by engaging authentically in activities to learn. This could involve using hands, talking, listening, experimenting, reading, writing or interacting with others. Therefore, every type of the above-described learners has their strong mode of learning, which, according to Johnson and Roseman (2003), may either be receptive or expressive. The modes are represented below as the four language systems children need to acquire:

Four language systems children need to acquire			
1. Aural system (Language by ear)	2. Oral system (Language by mouth)	3. Print system (Language by eye)	4. Written system (Language by hand)

Receptive language	Expressive language	Receptive language	Expressive language
Heard words	Spoken words	Printed words	Written words

Table 3: Four language systems children need to acquire

From the above table, the auditory learners may be categorised under the phenomenon of Aural Systems and the Oral Systems because they depend on the spoken language to learn. This means that they learn by listening and speaking to others. The visual learners may be classified under the Print System because they depend heavily on printed materials to learn. Lastly, the Kinaesthetic learners can be classified under all the systems because they need active involvement in activities that nurture whatever skills in question. This means they could be actively engaged in shared story reading or listening, narrating stories, role playing and acting for listening and speaking skills development.

Thus, in consideration of the Department of Education's (DoE, 2005) call for inclusivity in schools, it is vital that the development of the children's language skills be consistent with the Education White Paper 5 and the Human Rights in general. A quality education is described by its capacity to equip children with the listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking and literacy skills. These are the skills that determine the learners' potential or capacity to function in the modern educational systems. It becomes arguable in this regard that the responsibility of the Grade R is not only to teach learners the reading and writing skills because they are the modes of formal assessment. Rather, their focus should be primarily on developing the listening and speaking skills because these skills precede the reading and writing skills. Therefore, to cater for all the language needs of children considering their literacy backgrounds and diversity, language learning should not be confined to linear modes if education is to implement inclusivity. Alonso (2013) elucidates that learning and teaching a language should be a bi-directional or reciprocal process that comprises of the receptive (listening and reading) and the productive skills (speaking and writing). This will increase learners' communication skills, confidence and achievements.

2.9. The challenges of poor literacy in South Africa

According to van Staden and Bosker (2014) South African learners portray impoverished levels of literacy and numeracy achievement in the national and international comparative assessment studies. Wium and Louw (2011) add that the impoverished literacy performance of South African pupils is sufficient evidence to support the claim that children do not receive quality education that meets their needs from an early stage. In her investigation of language and factors that affect secondary pupils performance in Mathematics, Howie (2003: 2) finds that among several factors, “Inadequate communication ability between learners and teacher in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), lack of instructional materials...low levels of parental involvement in literacy activities before their children started school...” hold back effective literacy learning and teaching from transpiring.

Oxford Dictionary (2015) defines literacy as the ability to read and write. However, the definition of literacy cannot be concluded nor confined to the traditional perspectives which posit literacy to be the ability to decode written words (Honan, 2015). Literacy goes beyond the ability to read and write. It encompasses the ability to speak, listen and function in the literate society (UNESCO, 1993). “Literacy is recognized as being crucial for economic, social and political participation and development especially in the knowledge driven societies of today” (Singh, 2010: 13). Other aspects which constitute the definition of literacy are the abilities to draw, narrate stories and to express oneself through speaking, actions, reading and writing with understanding (Wardle, 2003). In South Africa, especially in the rural areas, literacy learning (particularly reading and writing) is strongly associated with formal schooling.

Many communities in South Africa begin to teach children literacy skills at the age of four through ECD centres in preparation for Grade R. They do so within formal contexts that only promote a decoding process (UNESCO, 1993). This does not give any reliability that when children exit pre-school they will be equipped with enough skills to function in the Foundation Phase. The practices of literacy development in the pre-schools are predominantly task-orientated than they are competence-orientated. Children are taught to master a set of language skills through repetition, recitation, rote and drilling than using language to think and express their thoughts. Alexander (2000) claims that this approach does not aid children to develop the skills and competencies

that lay a foundation for academic language competence, hence the persistent literacy shortfalls in South Africa.

It has been seven years since the CAPS was implemented with various adjustments to time schedules and approaches to learning and teaching in classroom. The CAPS (2011) has shifted from a teacher-centred approach to a learner-centred classroom. However, statistical investigations reveal that the CAPS (2011) does not reach its desired goals regarding learners' development and performance in schools. This is because low levels of literacy and numeracy are constantly escalating at an alarming rate in South Africa. There seem to be no effective intervention strategies developed nor implemented to halt the poor literacy rates in the South African foundation and intermediate schools (Spaull, 2013. & Van der Berg et al., 2016). Investigations and surveys continue to report high failure and poor reading and writing rates in elementary schools. Atmore, van Niekerk and Cooper (2012) claim that the poor literacy levels in South Africa are associated with a wide variety of factors ranging from the home to school environments. However, most learners' impoverished performances emerge as the consequences of poor literacy foundations both at home and in school. The poor performances regarding literacy in South African elementary schools are evident and documented in projects and studies such as PIRLS, SACMEQ, ANA and NEEDU, discussed broadly below.

2.9.1. Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international reading and writing literacy survey that seeks to identify and bridge literacy gaps that exist among different countries. PIRLS assessments were initially conducted in 2001 succeeding the 1991 international comparative reading literacy study (Howie et al. 2006). PIRLS seeks to study how different educational systems attempt to produce literate learners; and what key areas of learning (particularly in language) deter children from reaching their potentials. Haggerty (2007) avers that it strives to address challenges of learner's literacy competence and issues pertaining to language in education in South Africa and other countries. In South Africa, the PIRLS assessments are conducted by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (CEA) at the University of Pretoria. PIRLS studies are administered through all eleven South African official languages. This is done in consideration of the need to promote

multilingualism, inclusivity and to acknowledge the language diversities of South African children.

The current study, however, focuses on the literacy levels of South Africa as depicted by the PIRLS report on the key findings pertaining to the educational systems of South Africa. Amid all the PIRLS publications, this study focuses primarily on the 2006 and 2016 reports. This is because the two studies illustrate the literacy achievements of South African children under three distinct curricula i.e. the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, 2002), National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2007) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2012). Looking at the PIRLS results from the curricula perspective may help to draw arguments on whether changes and adjustments in school curricula have any impacts on children's learning (Adu, 2014).

The 2006 PIRLS survey comprised of 40 participating countries and 45 educational systems, out of which 441 schools participated in the projects. The PIRLS overall sample of 441 schools constituted a sample of 38 South African schools. The literacy levels were assessed through learner tests and questionnaires to the parents, educators and school principals. The learner tests were only administered to grade 4 and 5 pupils in South Africa in all 11 official languages. The assessments strived to investigate literacy benchmarks of grade 4 and 5 learners regarding the abilities to "read for understanding, locate and use information, to follow a process or argument, to summarise, build their own understanding and to adapt what they learn" (Howie et al. 2006: 6). These goals are in line with the then educational curriculum (NCS, 2006) and the current curriculum (CAPS, 2012), as well as the language and education policies of South Africa.

The PIRLS (2006) results illustrate that ten countries performed below the international mean and this included South Africa. "South Africa achieved the lowest score of all 45 education systems" (Howie et al. 2006: 19). South African children performed poorly in both their Home Languages and First Additional Language tests and are thus rated the poorest in literacy development and performance as compared with learners of other 39 countries. For instance, the summary of the PIRLS (2006) reveals that of the fixed international average of 500 points, South African Grade 4 learners achieved an average of 253 points. Whereas the Grade 5 achieved an average of 302, and these

were the lowest scores among all PIRLS 2006 countries. The PIRLS (2007) further reveals that in terms of assessment results per 11 official languages, Afrikaans speaking learners achieved the highest scores, with the English medium falling second highest. The progression of South African native languages indicates that the isiXhosa speaking children outperformed all other 8 language speaking children. Sepedi speaking children appeared on the 6th position of all 11 official languages, and the 4th position of the South African traditional languages only, with Xitsonga obtaining the last position of all 11 official languages. These rates indicate that literacy in South Africa is poor and challenging for educators to implement under rapid circumstances of curriculum change (Adu & Ngibe, 2014).

The second publication this study brings to the fore is the 2016 PIRLS report. Although the 2016 assessments were set in consideration of the standards of the educational provisions in South Africa stipulated in CAPS (2012), they depicted the same goals as the ones of PIRLS (2006). Which includes to determine South African children's literacy levels and to identify the problems that may be associated with literacy shortfalls (Howie, Combrinck, Roux, Tshele, Mokoena & McLeod Palane, 2017). This survey featured 50 countries and 11 benchmarking participants, altogether making a total of 61 participating countries. A sample of 293 South African schools participated in this project representing all the nine provinces and all 11 official languages of South Africa. In the 2016 PIRLS report, this study is more interested in the results of the grade 4 learners. This is because grade 4 learners are in their first year of Intermediate Phase education; and the skills they portray in grade 4 determine how much of language and literacy competence they have acquired in the Foundation Phase. Therefore, this focus enables the current researcher to draw claims on whether the skills children portray in grade 4 resemble sufficient language and literacy grasp from the Foundation Phase.

Howie et al. (2017) illustrate that the South African Grade 4 literacy achievements, as compared with those of other PIRLS literacy countries, position South Africa at the least achieving levels with 320 of 600 average points. The sample of South African learners was 12 810 which comprised of learners from distinct language populations. Table 2 below illustrates the languages of the learners and how much population of each respective language participated in the study.

Language	% of population
English	23,0%
isiZulu	21,8%
isiXhosa	15,9%
Sepedi	9,3%
Afrikaans	9,2%
Setswana	7,1%
Sesotho	5,2%
Xitsonga	3,8%
siSwati	2,3%
Tshivenda	2,2%
isiNdebele	0,3%

Table 4: Population representation of 11 official languages

Learners who were tested through the medium of English Language constituted the highest population among all other languages. The PIRLS performance rating per languages indicated that English tests topped all other languages with 372 mean average score of 500, and was followed by Afrikaans with mean score of 369. The lowest performing languages were isiXhosa with a mean average score of 283, and Sepedi with a mean average score of 276. In terms of provinces, Western Cape topped up all the provinces with 377 mean average score whereas Limpopo Province came last with 285 mean average score. The results were further broken-down into achievements per school locations. This revealed that learners from medium city or large town and the suburban achieved the highest scores as compared with the least achieving from remote rural and small town or village locations. These results are an indicator that literacy levels in South African elementary schools are unignorably challenging. A comparison of the 2006 South African PIRLS results (summarised by Howie et al. 2007) with that of 2016 summarised by (Howie et al. 2017) demonstrates results that portray South African learners' performance in literacy still scoring significantly below the PIRLS benchmark of 500 points; and developing at a snail pace.

2.9.2. Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ).

The purpose of the SACMEQ projects is to conduct research on South African educational stance and other Southern and Eastern African countries (Moloi &

Strauss, 2005). SACMEQ aims to generate comprehensive information that can be used by the ministries of education across Africa to track the trends in literacy and mathematics and the general schooling conditions (DBE, 2010). It further provides researchers and educational officials with pertinent measures they can use to improve the basic education conditions of Africa (Centre for Global Education Monitoring-GEM, 2015). The SACMEQ has thus far released four reports which are named sequentially as per publication i.e. SACMEQ I, II, III and IV. However, the focus of the current study is on the SACMEQ projects II, III, and IV. This study disregards the SACMEQ I because it comprised of 7 countries as participants and this did not include South Africa as a participating country. Thus, it would be out of context to make implications on the first project with reference to South Africa without its participation. The participation of countries in the SACMEQ projects increased during the SACMEQ II, comprising a total of 15 countries until the current publication, SACMEQ IV (DBE, 2010). The methodologies and assessment criteria of these projects were the same cutting across all projects. "This ensured comparability of the conditions of schooling and achievement results of Grade 6 learners from 2000 to 2007" (DBE, 2010).

The second SACMEQ project (SACMEQ II, 2000) was focused on the reading performance of Grade 6 learners from 15 African countries. This project marked South Africa's first participation in the SACMEQ literacy evaluation projects (Singh, 2010). The administered reading assessments were concerned with reading comprehension and abilities to interact with print for meaning making, and was thus in alignment with the expectations of the distinctive curricula of all participating countries. This made it possible for the SACMEQ (2000) to determine the existing differences and challenges of distinguish curricula regarding developing children's reading skills. These assessments were set to an average international mean score of 500 points; out of which South Africa achieved 492 points (Moloi & Strauss, 2005).

Although the SACMEQ reports are based on children's reading and writing skills in the Intermediate Phase (grade 6 in particular), the results portrayed herein are reflective of the learners' levels of overall language competence. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality report (SACMEQ, 2010) documented that 49% and 60.6% of Grade 6 learners in Limpopo Province are considered as non-literate and non-numerate respectfully. van der Berg, Spaull, Willis, Gustafsson & Kotzé (2016) aver that 60% of South African children complete Grade 3

without the ability to read and write for meaning in any language, and neither do they learn to read for meaning by the end of Grade 3.

These under-achievements of South African children suggest that there is a need for alternative approaches to learning and teaching. This is because the poor results are a signal that the approaches that are applied in language classrooms are misaligned to the children's literacy needs and the goals of the curriculum. This renders the isolated focus on phonetics, semantics and syntax ineffective because their unchanging forms do not resemble the authenticity of the growth, development and change in languages which children encounter from other environments. These forms (phonetics, semantics, syntax) are fixed and pinned down and thus do not portray real life language acquisition processes.

2.9.3. National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) and the Annual National Assessment (ANA)

The purpose of the NEEDU and the ANA is to monitor and report on children's performance and the state of literacy learning and teaching in all the Phases of the South African basic education system.

2.9.3.1. NEEDU

The purpose of the NEEDU is to monitor and report on the state of literacy learning and teaching in the Foundation Phase, South Africa. A report by the NEEDU (2009) reveals that the state of literacy learning and teaching in the Foundation Phase is poor. Osler (2016) states that the NEEDU evaluations have found that in majority schools across South Africa educators struggle to teach learners basic literacy skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The NEEDU (2009) study comprised of 115 schools in 15 districts across the nine South African provinces. This study sought to investigate how learning and teaching are effectively taking place in classroom. That is, to investigate what really transpire during the classroom interactions between learners and teachers. The study reveals that, in terms of language, which is its primary focus area, majority of the educators are still challenged to teach learners how to read and write effectively. Osler (2016) claims that teachers are not able to

disseminate an education that gives learners levels of independence in terms of thinking, speaking, reading and writing with understanding. Osler (2016) further states that there is a fallacy that anyone can teach children literacy skills. With emphasis on the listening and speaking skills, he emphasises that not every person can teach these skills. Teaching learners the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills require teachers who possess such skills themselves. This also involves the teachers who know how to communicate with children and how to engage them in the classroom discussions and activities.

2.9.3.2. ANA

The Annual National Assessment was developed in 2010 by the Department of Basic Education but was implemented in 2011. Although there are numeral aims which the ANA is in pursuit of, they can be summed to two points. That is, the ANA aims to assist all participating schools' systems, teachers and relevant stake holders in schools to improve their literacy performances. Secondly, the ANA aims to monitor the performance of all participating schools to track improvements in the schools' performance and accountability.

The ANA reports (2011-2016) illustrate that the majority of South African learners still struggle with basic literacy development. They fail to execute oral and written task at satisfactory and age-appropriate levels. However, the studies' quantitative evidence indicates that majority of the outperforming learners in the assessments prove to have received intensive Foundation Phase language and mathematics instruction. Which suggests that children need to be given sufficient literacy foundation to function well in the upper grades. The gist of the presentation of South African literacy stance can be summarised that, the impoverished literacy levels in South African are escalating at an alarming rate; teachers lack the optimum skills to shape the development of four basic literacy skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing); there is little attention given to the Foundation Phase learning and teaching; and there is seemingly a snail paced intervention process of disrupting the alarming poor literacy rates in South Africa.

2.10. A critical reflection on the poor literacy reports in South Africa

South African schools, particularly those in the rural areas are populated with children from diverse family, language, cultural and educational backgrounds. These children

bring to schools different experiences and levels of knowledge as well as strategies of acquiring knowledge. Thus, educators are faced with learners with diverse range of skill, who depend on variety of modes to develop knowledge. Language is the centre of all knowledge development, and it also counts as one of the elements of diversity in classrooms (Husain, 2015). Different countries and schools have varying perspectives and motives on languages and this influences their decisions on the Language of Learning and Teaching. These differences give rise to the questions regarding the fairness of the international comparative studies in judging which learner is competent and which one is not in both Home Languages and First Additional Languages. This resultantly explicates the shortfalls in the PIRLS international, national and provincial comparisons drawn on South Africa. Kellaghan and Greaney (2005) concur that there are numeral problems identified in the international comparative studies which contribute to South African children's low literacy achievements.

Amid all the contributory factors as postulated by Kellaghan and Greaney (2005), this study is more interested in issues pertaining to language differences, i.e. translating assessments from English Language into the 11 South African official languages. Although PIRLS attempts to create fair assessments by translating the English assessments to 11 South African languages, this does not seem to acknowledge languages as cultural activities. In other words, although the questions may be readable and understandable (as written in the native languages), they may not yield responses desired by PIRLS. This is because the questions may not resemble the settings and contexts within which South African learners exist (Moloi and Strauss, 2005). This includes factors such as the early education, quality of education, teacher training and skills, SES, legislative and managerial standards for given schools and language patterns and systems.

Despite the above discussed social setbacks, there are classroom barriers that have direct influence on the results children portray in PIRLS and other studies. Classrooms normally comprise of children with different sources or modes of leaning (as already illustrated in page 47). Thus, despite the combination of all the three types of learners, the classroom practices on language learning and teaching do not reach out to all the existing types of learners. This is also the same with the comparative study assessments in that, the studies focus on two modes of communication in classroom

(reading and writing) and assess children only through these two modes. Firstly, the written language is not part of many children's daily life in rural areas. Secondly, the level of comprehension that children are expected to portray mismatches what children are taught in classroom in terms of language. Thirdly, the assessments require children to showcase their potential language fluency in Home Language and in First Additional Language(s) but does not seem to acknowledge that the South African teaching practices are inadequate of encouraging the functional language skills. Non-native English learners encounter the transition into using English as a Language of Learning and Teaching in Grade 3. This is a premature stage for both the transition and assessments in English for communicative skills and fluency. Children are assessed and measured levels of competence and comprehension through their weakest language as well as through the weakest modes of communication.

Reading and writing are not and should not be the only "...strategies that could be deployed to make the code of communication accessible to all students [particularly young children]" (Mgqwashu, 2008 :324). It is unfair of any system to draw conclusions on children's literacy capabilities compared to international children on reading and writing without looking into the factors of how accessible the assessment modes and language(s) is/are to children in rural areas. Oliver (2009) concurs that assessing children's literacy competence in elementary schools should not be concerned with how much children know, rather with how effective children use their languages in a meaningful context. Thus, the weakness of the international assessments in projects is that they assess learners with limited exposure of the formal tests through the modes that are formal and limited to the children. "That is, assessing children with limited exposure to print through the medium of print. [Thus,] ...the learners language proficiencies and cultural backgrounds may not be supportive to the task requirements" (Oliver, 2009: 18). The vocabulary that children possess in their cognition/minds is precisely the vocabulary they produce in writing, and sometimes it becomes more impoverished in writing because of the immense difference between the spoken and the written languages.

In both the spoken and written language, learners often get short of words to express their ideas in their home languages and their additional languages. However, when they experience difficulties when speaking they find ways to manoeuvre around various strategies until they express their messages effectively. They are able to code-

switch, code-mix, translanguage and transliterate some words. These practices or processes may not adhere to the grammatical requirements of a standard language. The emphasis in this argument is that when children engage in verbal (spoken) communication, they get maximum exposure of the language as a whole and that fast-steadily enriches their vocabulary. This signals the need to consider enhancing children's listening and speaking skills as principles and approaches of foundational language learning and teaching. It also serves as a signal that the assessments in the national and international comparative studies should incorporate all the key areas of literacy (listening, speaking, reading and writing). This could ensure fairness in assessments and could portray realistic results of children in relation to their encounters in classrooms.

2.11. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are several language theories that guide the practices of learning and teaching in classrooms. Equally, the theories also inform the development of language policies and curricula for learning and teaching. However, this study is informed by two (developmental, communicative and constructivist) theories, and thus uses them as windows of enquiry on the development of listening and speaking skills in the Foundation Phase. This study uses the Sociocultural Constructivism theory of Vygotsky (1978) and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory of Littlewood (1981) as two fundamental frames of reference on how listening and speaking skills are developed. The literature reviewed herein is studied and critiqued based on the arguments embedded in these theories. Thus, the viability of the two theories for this study is extensively expounded below:

2.11.1. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Constructivism theory

The sociocultural constructivism theory is a theory that is based on the significance of a child as a product of the society. This theory acknowledges that social interactions play a crucial role in developing a child's language, knowledge and cognition. The theory also believes that learners have the capability to construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world. Vygotsky (1978) asserts that children acquire knowledge through interactions with the society, and this enables them to gain experiences and later reflect on those experiences to learn. The theory signifies that the knowledge children acquire is shaped by their social experiences as well as the

ability to question, explore and assess what they know. Vygotsky (1978) highlights that an environment has a huge impact on the development of children's cognitive and language skills, especially for children who are within their early developmental stages.

2.11.1.1. Vygotsky's perspectives on language and knowledge development

Vygotsky (1978) claims that children's language, knowledge and cognitive skills development requires learners to be active participants in the learning and teaching processes. His theory "...dismisses the Piagetian notion of a child as a solo mind, just taking information in and interpreting it individually" (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2011: 34). According to Singh (2010) Vygotsky's theory rejects the notion of predetermined stages of development because breaking children's cognitive growth into stages (as does Piaget (1972), contradicts the authentic language acquisition and knowledge development process. As a result, that constrains children from accessing and responding to stimuli that their natural environments present.

The Constructivism theory devalues the passive role of learners as recipients of knowledge. It perceives them as active knowledge constructivists. In other words, Vygotsky (1978) defies the conservative strategies of language learning and teaching in which children are propelled to memorise and reproduce the series of facts received from the agentive educator. It values children's prior knowledge equally as it values the role of the educators in mediating the learning process. Wertsch (1991) claims that teacher's role in mediating learning should be guided by the level of children's competence which is measured through the establishment of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

2.11.1.2. Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) connotes that children bring to school different levels of knowledge and language skills acquired from previous experiences. Thus, it is on the basis of the pre-existing knowledge that new information or new concepts are interpreted. This does not imply that the pre-existing knowledge is sufficient on its own to help learners understand all new concepts or activities. There are some activities that children may be able to perform independently, and there are also those that children cannot do alone. It therefore means that there is a gap between what children already know and what they need to know, which in most instances is depicted by what is taught in the classroom. Vygotsky (1978) labels the

distance between what children already know (or can do independently) and what they need to know (or can do communally) as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This gap can be bridged through collaborative and interactive learning processes in which the teacher acts as a classroom mediator rather than a content provider. The role of the teacher and other peers who are more knowledgeable in specific subjects or activities is to help the unknowledgeable learners to move from the level of not knowing or understanding to the level of knowing and understanding. The process of moving learners from not knowing to knowing is referred to as scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978: Singh, 2010). During the process of scaffolding, listening and speaking skills play a central role because they enable participants to clarify one another as well as to share and process information to enhance understanding.

2.11.1.3. The More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) and their role in Scaffolding

The concepts of More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) and Scaffolding are fundamental to this theory and they put the use of this theory in this study into context. The MKO are the people or learning tools that have the capacity to enhance the understanding of certain activities that are difficult for a learner to perform independently. The MKO in classroom may be the teachers, peers, textbooks, computers, tablets, maps, dictionaries and internet etc. Their role (MKOs) is to help learners to move from the level of not understanding to the one of understanding; thus, bridging the gap between active knowledge and potential knowledge (ZPD). The essence of the ZPD is that learners need guidance, clues and cues from the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) on how to solve problems in classrooms when stuck. This means that learners need to perform activities under the guidance of the MKO or in collaboration with other peers to enable scaffolding. The responsibility of the MKOs is to provide support to learners when it is most needed. Thereafter, the MKOs gradually shift from the activities when learners begin to master the activities. Hence, learning in Vygotsky's view, happens at two levels i.e. the social level and the cognitive level (Krueger, 1993). Learning at a social level denotes that a child must socialise or interact with other people and use the socio-cultural tools available in their environment to construct knowledge. Whereas learning at the cognitive level entails that a child has listened, experienced and internalised the skills acquired from social interventions (scaffolding) or from the social interactions and uses them to synthesise, evaluate, criticise, interpret and formulate new knowledge.

In the same line as this study and the CAPS (2011), Vygotsky's (1978) theory is concerned with enhancing understanding as the primary goal of learning and teaching language. It prioritises a learner-centred learning environment which strives to stimulate children's existing knowledge through active interactions. Thus, it acknowledges active learning, collaborative learning, experimenting, real world problem solving, reflections, talk and doing as the fundamental components of knowledge development. The process of interacting may entail using language to communicate and to exchange ideas. Although there are various modes through which interactions can take place in different contexts, the listening and speaking skills are not exceptions for classroom interactions, particularly in the Foundation Phase grades. This implies that learning and teaching in a constructivism classroom is a reciprocal process in which both teachers and learners listen and speak (and sometimes read and write) to one another to share knowledge and understanding. The implications of this theory in Grade R with respect to the development of listening and speaking skills are that interactions should be active, authentic and decontextualized if teachers are to develop children's oral skills.

2.11.2. The Communicative Language Approach (CLA), also called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) theory.

According to Rosmond, Myles and Marsden (2019: 9) "...linguists have traditionally viewed language as a complex communication system which must be analysed at numerous levels: phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics, lexis, pragmatics and discourse." However, Littlewood (1981) has since challenged that an immense focus on the above aspects of language is not as stimulating as the wholistic language approach. Littlewood (1981) suggests that language learning and teaching should not only be premised on the formalist and discrete linguistic systems, but also on the authentic and functional interpretations of language as a tool for communication. That is, it encourages dualistic approach to language teaching which perceives language as a system that comprises of both linguistic and communicative elements.

According to Koosha and Yakhabi (2013) this theory derives from the perspective that if the purpose of teaching language is to enable children to use language to communicate, children should authentically use language in classrooms to learn to communicate. This implies that if the purpose of teaching a language is to enhance

communicative competence, then communication should be a priority in classroom. Adi (2012) avers that during early years, children's language development is meaning orientated than system orientated. This is a trial-and-error stage in which children adhere to their own language rules and manipulate language to communicate meaning (Campbell, 2004). This means that during early years of school or of language learning, children's aim is not to sound correct, but to convey meaning and be understood. In this regard, children would draw from their different language repertoires to interpret what is said to them as well as to convey meaning. Thus, focusing mainly or only on the linguistic aspects of language could derail learners from developing efficient communication skills.

Bailey and Heritage (2008) and Wei (2011) claim that teachers need to possess the awareness that language teaching is a multifaceted process which functions well enough when it exploits children's language repertoires and modes of acquiring knowledge. In fact, in the early grades, children's strongest modes of acquiring knowledge are the oral language modes. This implies that drilling children into universal language rules at the early ages does not explore the children's modes of acquiring knowledge to the maximum potential. This unawareness may therefore derivate children from the knowledge of language as a tool for communication to a view of language as system of rules. This theory values the children's ability to use language not only as a mode of talking but also as a mode of communicating messages and learning.

The CLT theory is based on the same principles as Krashen's (1987) theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The CLT and SLA theories are based on the strategies of developing children's second language (or First Additional Languages) communicative competence. However, their suggestions on how First Additional Languages can be acquired are also applicable in teaching the Home Language communicative skills. According to Krashen (1987) humans are born with the innate ability to develop grammar. They acquire the grammatical systems of any language, particularly the Home Language through interacting with people in different environments. The SLA theory claims that people can develop language either by learning it or acquiring it. Learning a language refers to explicit, conscious and deliberate instruction on the rules of a language. Whereas, acquiring a language means that children subconsciously absorb the authentic communicative skills through

authentic interactions and navigate their own way towards meaning making with guidance from the elderly. The CLT and SLA theories therefore suggest that it is effective for children to acquire language through active interactions than to only learn it through explicit grammatical instructions.

The communicative theory is used in this study to acknowledge that language acquisition is, in nature, a cooperative process. The theory is used as a lens of enquiry on how children develop the listening and speaking skills to: learn to think, question things, comprehend concepts, communicate and construct knowledge. It is further used to determine the authenticity of the language and activities used in the classrooms as well as how they stimulate the listening and speaking skills. Basta (2011) claims that language learning [in Grade R] should not focus on the pragmatic linguistic and grammatical rules that guide speech, words and sentences formation. The view is that grammar and rules can be subconsciously acquired and can be indirectly taught through language use other than explicit classroom instruction (Kilfoil & van der Walt, 1997). Thus, having the process of learning and teaching as a communication process between educators and learners, this theory is applicable for investigating the development of listening and speaking with the understanding that they are central for knowledge development and for sharing information in Grade R.

2.12. CONCLUSION

The gist of the presented literature can be summated that children's access to quality educational foundation is a crucial determinant of their success in the formal stages of learning. However, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2014) claims that access is not the only crisis in education, but poor quality also holds back learning to transpire even for those who have access. It is irrelevant to foster the development of reading and writing skills while children severely lack oral and aural skills. Sadiku (2015) concurs that it is straining for children to comprehensibly express themselves in writing while they cannot produce meaningful ideas in oral language. Therefore, when the listening and speaking skills are neglected, children miss opportunities to develop functional language skills and basic literacy skills to function in Intermediate Phases. This might justify the spoken and written language shortfalls in formal stages of learning. Fabian and Dunlop (2007: 117) assert that "It is important that children at home and in pre-school be encouraged

and assisted to interact with peers and adults in positive ways to develop competency in oral language skills”. This, therefore, gives rise to the need to base this study in rural schools to study how listening and speaking skills are developed for children who are within their Foundation Phases of learning.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter drew arguments from the studied literature and has also explored propositions regarding the development of listening and speaking skills in the Foundation Phase. The reviewed literature opened vital insights pertaining to the expectations of the Language in Education Policy and the CAPS curriculum on the Foundation Phase practices, particularly with respect to (oral) language skills development. Numerous binding constraints and gaps regarding the development of children's oral skills in Grade R were discovered in the literature and in the curriculum. This served as a signal of the need for the current researcher to advisedly select and apply appropriate methodology and pertinent designs to collect rich data within the supposed drawbacks of the practices in primary schools, as found in the literature. Therefore, the current chapter discusses the methodology that is used in this study. It elucidates the relevance of the methodology in enabling the researcher to use the various techniques to obtain vigorous data and make credible analysis.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are various scholastic perceptions regarding what constitutes an operational definition of a research methodology. However, Kothari (2004) argues that in some definitions there seem to be inadequate awareness of the discrepancies between research methodology and research methods. *Research methods* is a concept used to refer to the techniques that are applied in different studies to collect and analyse data, given the nature, purposes and the discipline of the study (Kothari, 2004). Research methods may include techniques such as observations, documents analysis, questionnaires, interviews etc. This involves the techniques that the researcher uses in accordance with the presumed behavioural patterns of a given group in an attempt to collect data that will yield better understanding of what influences such behaviours. While some techniques are applicable in different methodologies (qualitative, quantitative and mixed methodologies); some are limited for application in specific research methodologies. Research methodology is thus an umbrella word that illustrates the logic of various steps that could or must be adopted

by the researcher in exploring a research problem or a phenomenon (Kothari, 2004). In addition, Kothari (2004) asserts that methodologies vary according to the contexts and the problems of the investigations. Therefore, various researchers' preferences of what methodologies are applicable in their studies are commonly influenced by the type of data the study wishes to scrutinise. Cresswell (2014) states that research methodology refers to the approaches, strategies and methods that are used in the research project to enable the researcher to effectively investigate a phenomenon.

In social science and (language) education, researchers predominantly use the qualitative and mixed methodologies, and make a limited use of quantitative methodology to conduct investigations. Among the above methodologies, the current researcher deems the mixed methodology as the most suitable methodology for data collection and analysis in this study. According to Smith (2007) mixed research methodology is a methodology that is used to explore the meanings and dynamics that a specific community attaches to a phenomenon, and to measure extents to which such interpretations shape and affect their behavioural patterns. The strength of a mixed methodology is that it seeks to vividly understand and describe the motives behind the participants' behaviours and practices in connection to their perspectives, experiences and understanding of a particular phenomenon (Molotja, 2016). Newman, Benz and Ridenour (1998) assert that the decisions regarding the appropriate methodology for a particular study are influenced by the reality that the research is faced with (which links to the problem and the purpose of the study); as well as the assumptions, purpose and the role of the study.

Thus, this study aims to investigate how listening and speaking skills are developed in the Foundation Phase with the (scholarly substantiated: Ramokgopa, 2013 & Mashatole, 2014) assumption that learning and teaching strategies are still rooted in rote, chanting and repetition. This does not contribute to effective language skills development, particularly the development of children's listening and speaking skills. The study is concerned with the reality that learning and teaching are predominantly based on the oral communication modes, but classroom interactions do not seem to contribute sufficiently towards children's oral skills development. Thus, the use of a mixed methodology is relevant in this study because it enables the researcher to present logical explanations of how language is used in Grade R classrooms to develop children's oral fluencies and to explore number of resources and activities

used in the schools to develop listening and speaking skills. This study presents its findings and makes analysis and interpretation of data in words and numbers. Accordingly, the mixed methodology is appropriate in that, it is orientated towards open and descriptive data as well as the numerical data. This methodology gives the researcher access to the understanding of how many approaches are used in classrooms as well as how they are used to develop children's oral fluency.

This study, however, uses qualitative methodology predominantly than it does the quantitative methodology. That is, although this study applies a mixed methodology, the methodologies embedded herein are not used at a balanced level. Newman, Benz and Ridenour (1998: 3) state that "the qualitative approach is used when observing and interpreting reality with the aim of developing theory [or findings] that will explain what was experienced". The dominance of this methodology is preferable considering the philosophies of Cresswell (1994) and Newman, Benz and Ridenour (1998) that the researcher must identify and abide by various significant standards when making decisions about the appropriate research design(s). Thus, two standards were adopted in this study and led to the preference of mixed methodology as a pertinent methodology for collecting and analysing data for this study. The standards were based on two elements as suggested by Newman, Benz and Ridenour (1998); *authenticity and practicality*. On authenticity, this study seeks to explain and explore how the *authentic* classroom practices and strategies, or approaches of learning and teaching enhance the children's development of oral communicative competence (speaking and listening). On practicality, the study seeks to examine the *realistic* performance of learners and their participation in classroom interactions. That is whether learners make any meaningful contributions to the classroom discussions and how that stimulates their oral language skills development. All of the aims elucidated above require narrative feedback. Hence the preference and dominant applicability of the qualitative methodology in this study. On the other hand, Bryman (2006) the quantitative methodology gives the researcher the leverage to measure extents to which a phenomenon is manifested within a specific research area. Thus, the quantitative perspective of this study queries the number of activities, approaches and resources that are being used for developing listening and speaking skills.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The term research design is used in this study to refer to the various strategies that are applied to handle (collect and analyse) research data. According to Kathori (2004: 14) research design connotes the “conceptual structure within which research would be conducted”. It is the chronological structure that the researcher views as efficient for yielding relevant data. Cresswell (2014) concurs that a research design is a structure of approaches, strategies and methods that are applied in a study to enable the researcher to gather the relevant information regarding a phenomenon under investigation. Thus, well considered research methods have the potential of yielding realistic results. Consequently, that reduces biasness and increases reliability of the collected and analysed data (Kathula, 2004).

With the most dominant methodology being the qualitative methodology, this study adopts a phenomenological case study paradigm as a design of the investigation. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) claim that a phenomenological study attempts to understand the people’s perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. On the other hand, Bryman (2016) asserts that a case study is a paradigm that focuses on a group of participants in a specific community as the primary respondents who have the capability to yield relevant information into the study. A phenomenological *case study* is deemed applicable in this study because it enables the researcher to explore the experiences of Grade R educators regarding how they develop children’s listening and speaking skills. The design also yields in-depth information regarding teachers’, principals’ and Foundation Phase administrators’ perspectives on how listening and speaking skills could be effectively developed in classrooms.

The listening and speaking skills can develop both by nature and by being taught (nurture). However, the development of these skills, either by nature or by nurture, requires authentic environment of communication to emerge. This implies that a realistic interactive environment is a prerequisite for the emergence of pertinent data for this study. As such, a phenomenological case study gives the researcher the leverage to study the participants in their authentic form and harvest the in-depth data

in relation to oral language skills development in classrooms. The passion to collect naturalistic data is inspired by the need for this study to open the space for different events to emerge during data collection; which will contribute to the interpretations on how listening and speaking skills are developed in two Maleboho-East primary schools. Relatively, this would enable the researcher to propose practical recommendations that will help to transform educational practices in Grade R regarding the development of the listening and speaking skills.

The use of a phenomenological case study in this investigation signifies the current researcher's acknowledgement that practices in schools differ and are shaped by various factors such as; teacher content knowledge, socio-economic status, available literacy resources and children's literacy backgrounds. In consideration of the difference in types and magnitude of the challenges that different schools are faced with, authentic environment for data collections is important. This is because teachers in different schools use different resources (as per availability) to develop different strategies or approaches that will enhance the development of children's oral skills. Thus, it is through a phenomenological case study, in Leedy and Ormrod's (2010) terms, that the researcher could generate an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation.

3.3.1. Sampling

This section covers the discussions and substantiations regarding the researcher's preference of the population, sampling procedures and sample size this study uses.

3.3.1.1. Population

According to Alvi (2016) the population of a study refers to an overall community or a collection of individuals whom the questions of the study are/will/should/must be addressed to. A population is also referred to by Leedy and Ormrod (2010) as a group of individuals whom the researcher recognises to possess the relevant characteristics that would yield pertinent data to the study. The process of identifying and selecting an eligible population for a study is often based on the preferences of age, residence, educational levels, religion and race among other countless factors. Thus, the

population of this study is selected based on residence (i.e. locality or rurality), proximity among the two schools and the researcher, as well as the availability of the Grade R cohorts in the preferred population.

This study is conducted in Limpopo Province, Bochum, at Maleboho-East circuit, Capricorn District. The population of this study is all the (94 rural-based) primary schools in Maleboho-East circuit; which comprise of approximately 938 educators. The eligibility criteria of selecting this population included the consideration of aspects such as language, residence and educational status.

On language.

This study uses language as a strategy for selecting the specified population considering that the study uses different methods of collecting data as discussed in 3.3.2. However, among the data collection strategies that this study uses, of much interest for this discussion is the document analysis and observations. The Grade R learners are taught through the medium of Home Language (HL), and so presumably are their curricula and literacy documents written. This means that the classroom interactions and instructions are delegated through Sepedi Home Language. Therefore, the current researcher is a Sepedi native speaker; which means the researcher speaks and hears the participants' medium of instruction. The researcher's ability to speak the participants' Home Language enables him to conduct class observations in authentic settings, as well as to review Sepedi-written documents. Additionally, the knowledge of Sepedi enables the researcher to collect, transcribe and analyse data with understanding. This, therefore, increases the convenience of validity and reliability in the study.

In terms of requesting for permission from the participants, particularly the assent from parents, it is beneficial for both the researcher and the parents to understandably share messages regarding; the purpose of this study, the research questions and all other important aspects regarding the involvement of their children in this study. It is convenient that the participants have open opportunities to ask questions regarding the study in the language that they and the researcher best understand. The consideration of language in selecting the population therefore guarantees that participants receive effective information and feedback to any question they have regarding the study, in the language they best understand.

On location and educational achievements

The researcher uses location to select the population because of the alarming reports pertaining to poor literacy performance among children in rural areas. For instance, studies such as PIRLS (2006 and 2016), NEEDU (2009) and SACMEQ (2010) report that children from South Africa portray lowest literacy achievements in the international comparative studies. The breakdown of literacy achievements per provinces and school locations in PIRLS (2016) as summated by Howie et al. (2017) illustrates that Limpopo is the least achieving province in South Africa, with more impoverished literacy achievements prevalent in rural areas. The PIRLS (2016) Report further highlights that children from remote rural areas and small town or villages perform extremely poor than their peers in townships, urban areas, sub-urbans and medium or large cities (Howie et al., 2017). Thus, majority of the schools in Maleboho-East Circuit are located in deep rural areas and may also be experiencing the reportedly increasing literacy shortfalls. The decision to use rural-based schools is therefore triggered by the passion to transform the practices within the early childhood education in rural schools, and to contribute to finding solutions for literacy challenges that children experience in rural schools.

3.3.1.2. Sampling

Sampling is a process of identifying and selecting a group of people or entities within the entire population to help the researcher to gather important information regarding the phenomenon of the study. In agreement, du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) claim that sampling connotes selecting a smaller proportion of accessible participants out of the whole targeted population to perform an enquiry. In other words, sampling is a process of narrowing down the accessible population into a smaller, manageable and resourceful number of research participants or subjects to perform an enquiry (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014). This study uses three different sampling strategies to select different role players to respond to the objectives and the questions of this study i.e. convenience sampling, criterion sampling and purposive sampling.

3.3.1.2.1. Convenience Sampling

According to du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) convenience sampling consists purely of the elements (places, documents, people etc.) that the researcher knows are easily and quickly accessible. This study conveniently selects two primary schools from the overall population of 94 primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit. The two selected schools are convenient because they are located within the social context of this study and are also accessible to the researcher. The proximity among the schools and the researcher enables the researcher to cost-effectively collect data and conduct full-day observations.

3.3.1.2.2. Criterion sampling

The criterion sampling involves the use of intervals or scales to identify participants who share similar or/and different characteristics to formulate a sample (Bryman, 2012). This study uses the criterion sampling to select 12 learners through classroom observations. The study uses the following criterion to select learner-participants in two primary schools: the researcher initially conducts classroom observations during which he uses three categories of learners (i.e. the highly participating, adequately participating and the less participating) to identify two learners out of the whole class for each category. The three categories are based on the observation schedule ratings (discussed in data collection). This implies that there is a total of six learners selected from each school based on the criterion described above, thus making a total of 12 learners from both schools. The 12 learners are involved in the study to explore the contributory factors towards their gaps in performance regarding listening and speaking competence.

3.3.1.2.3. Purposive Sampling

This study uses a non-probability sampling under which a purposive sampling procedure is applied to select one principal and one Grade R teacher in each participating school, as well as two Foundation Phase practitioners in the Maleboho-East Circuit. According to Cresswell (2014) the purposive sampling is a process of selecting a group of people or entities that have important characteristics which could

be beneficial to the study. Thus, this sampling procedure is applied in this study because the researcher seeks to explore the important roles that principals (as the managers of the schools), the Grade R teachers (as the skills development facilitators) and the Foundation Phase practitioners (as curriculum advisers and/or administrators) play in creating effective learning environments which stimulate children's listening and speaking skills. As du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) suggest, all the purposively selected participants are intentionally involved in a study because their characteristics (job descriptions, educational levels etc.) capacitate them to respond to the questions of a study. Hence, the above purposefully selected participants have a common character: they are the major role players in early childhood education development and they wield the responsibility of ensuring that children receive the esteemed quality education. This, therefore, fits them within the parameters of the aims of this study and the selected schools.

3.3.1.3. Overall sample of the study

Following the recommendation of Degu and Yigzaw (2006), the current researcher uses various sampling strategies in this study to advisedly select participants whom their in-depth information gives optimal insights into the phenomenon of developing listening and speaking skills in Grade R. This study comprises of an overall sample of two conveniently selected primary schools (ultimately, two Grade Rs) from Maleboho-East Circuit. It further comprises of an overall sample of 18 participants who have been sampled through varying sampling techniques. This involves the six purposefully selected learner-participants; two Grade R educators, two school principals and two Foundation Phase practitioners in Maleboho-East Circuit. It further involves 12 strategically selected (criterion sampling) learners. These participants are selected through the non-probability sampling strategies, and thus have non-probable capabilities to yield relevant and sufficient information into the questions of this study. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) claim that in non-probability sampling the researcher does not have a clue about the likelihood of having people he or she knows taking part as the participants. Thus, the above participants are not selected to satisfy the hypothesis of the researcher, but the main purpose of the study.

3.3.2. Data Collection

3.3.2.1. Data collection approaches and methods

In the process of data collection, the researcher uses observations, semi-structured interviews and documents analysis as the primary techniques of collecting data. In addition, the researcher performs notes-taking during the data collection process. The application and use of the above approaches and tools are elaborated below:

3.3.2.1.1. Observations

The researcher observes the daily classroom interactions for two consecutive days in each school (totalling in four days altogether) to capture the approaches that teachers use to engage children into the listening and speaking activities. Creswell (2014) claims that observations are usually conducted to collect first-hand data. Therefore, this study conducts observations in Grade R classrooms in their naturalistic settings to capture classroom interactions, learners' participation (learner to teacher and among learners), comprehension of concepts and the learners' performance in classroom. The researcher observes the prevalence of the above skills using Littlewoods' theory of the Communicative Learning Approach (1981), elucidated in Chapter Two. Observations are also used in this study to measure the difference in performance between the Grade R learners within classroom, as well as to enable the researcher to apply the criterion sampling strategy to select two learners in each of the three categories of performance discussed under criterion sampling in 3.3.1.2.2.

During the classroom observations, the researcher positions himself at the back of the class (behind all learners) and maintains the position of a non-participant observer. This helps to maintain children's attention and participation in class and to avoid threats to classroom authenticity during (listening and speaking) activities. Creswell (2014) claims that being a participant observer might be intrusive to the natural happenings in the environment within which the study is being conducted. In addition to Creswell's (2014) concern about interference and threats to authenticity within the observations' environment lies a vital factor that observations need to be video or audio recorded for transcriptions during analysis. This adds to the risks that this study is faced with regarding maintaining classroom authenticity because video shootings

are part of the data collection tools and are performed throughout the observation process in this study. The risk to authenticity further arises because the researcher uses two video cameras, which he puts at the front to capture classroom interactions. This is to help the researcher to record some of the events or non-verbal expressions the researcher could not see from the back. Thus, the presence of the researcher in the classroom and the use of video cameras may in/directly affect classroom authenticity during the lessons the researcher wishes to observe. This may affect children's performance and participation and thus, hinder the emergence of important data for this study. Although the presence of the researcher in the classroom and the use of video recording may jeopardise the levels of authenticity during classroom practices, Jewitt (2012) suggests that researchers can use "A fine-grained multimodal record" (P:6) to collect rich authentic data.

A fine-grained multimodal record connotes that the researcher pays attention, not only to the utterances of the participants, but also to the details of facial expressions, gaze, body postures and gestures during interactions. The use of a fine-grained multimodal record enables the researcher to use "...video data to rigorously and systematically examine resources and practices through which participants in interaction build their social activities and how their talk, facial expression, gaze, gesture, and body elaborate one another" (Jewitt, 2012: 6). Field notes are taken throughout the observations to record the most insightful happenings that are in line with the questions and the aims of this study. An observation schedule is attached at the appendices to highlight all actions and steps that the researcher undertakes during the observations.

3.3.2.1.2. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews imply that the contents, wording and order of questions might vary from interview to interview depending on participant's responses, but the researcher uses a guiding list of the questions that the interviews seek to answer (Degu & Yigzaw, 2006). Additionally, the semi-structured interviews grant the respondents the opportunities to express their views about the matter under investigation to a greater depth and allow the researcher to guide responses to relevant questions through follow-up questions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

The researcher engages the two school principals, the two Grade R teachers and the two Foundation Phase practitioners from Maleboho-East circuit into in-depth semi-structured interviews on an inquiry about how they develop the children's oral language skills. The in-depth interviews, in Rubin and Rubin's terms (2012), enable the researcher to ask open-ended questions, explore the experiences, motives, perceptions of the participants to acquire their knowledge and understanding regarding the problem in question. All the interviews and discussions are voice recorded. Field notes are also taken during the semi-structured interviews to capture most insightful responses the participants give.

The semi-structured interviews are based on the principles of the Socio-cultural constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978). The interviewees are perceived by the researcher to depict Vygotskyan (1978) notion of the More Knowledgeable Others. Thus, the application of this theory in interviews yields the in-depth responses on how the educators, principals and Foundation Phase practitioners, as the More Knowledgeable Others, contribute towards the development of children's listening and speaking skills.

3.3.2.1.3. Documents analysis

This process is an investigative review of the curricula, policy and literacy documents of the two schools for the Foundation Phases. The study reviews the schools' policies pertaining to language development to determine the extent to which the CAPS curriculum and the Language in Education Policies emphasise the importance of developing listening and speaking skills. This is done to also determine whether there are any practical recommendations or guidelines for Grade R educators on how to develop the skills in question. The researcher further reviews the children's reading, drawing and writing materials. This is to determine the availability of literacy resources and how they are exploited to improve the children's oral and aural language skills development.

The exercise books of the six strategically selected learners are reviewed to weigh whether the children's performance and differences in participation during oral activities resemble their performance in reading and writing activities. This helps the researcher to contextualise Lenyai's (2010) claim that one of the contributory factors

towards South African children's poor reading and writing performance is the poor listening and speaking skills. It also helps to validate the problem of this study regarding poor reading and writing achievements among South African learners as compared with their peers from other countries. Photo shooting is performed during this process to capture eventful sections of the documents that speak to the literacy practices of the Grade R learners in relation to listening and speaking development.

3.3.2.2. Data collection instruments

This study uses video cameras, audio recorders, photo camera, open ended questions and an observation schedule as the fundamental instruments of data collection. On the observation schedule, the researcher is required to tick the prevalent activities and other noted aspects in the observation schedule which feature as the crucial components of the process of developing the listening and speaking skills. Video recordings help the researcher to relook at the classroom interactions to confirm the appropriacy in the ticked features. The audio recorder and the open-ended questions are used during the semi-structured interviews. The researcher uses semi-structured interviews to enquire from six participants on how they develop or contribute towards children's listening and speaking skills development. Thus, it will be an impossible task for the researcher to coherently recall responses from six participants for appropriate transcriptions and analysis. Hence, the researcher uses the audio-recorders during his interactions with interviewees. The photo shootings are performed predominantly during the document review process. The researcher uses the photo cameras to capture some of insightful sections in the reviewed documents, mostly those which may probably exist in one school (e.g. drawings). Educators use different illustrations and drawings to teach the minors varying skills. Thus, photo shooting will enable the researcher to capture key sections and/or illustrations within individual school's documents.

3.3.2.3. Characteristics of the data collection instruments

The data collection instruments used herein, particularly the video recorders and the audio-recorders can capture the actual interactions as they emerge live in classroom. Both voice and video recordings have the capacity to help the researcher to capture events that were not noticed during data collection process. Thus, the diverse data

collection methods and tools ensure that the collected data is viable, reconcilable and sharable with participants on request for copies (Jewitt, 2012).

Jewitt (2012) claims that although photo shooting, audio recording and video shooting may be beneficial for data collection and storage, they can be associated with some shortfalls. For instance, they pose a great threat on (classroom) authenticity. They can either provoke exaggerated performance or cause underperformance. Resultantly, this might compromise originality in the recorded data.

3.3.2.4. Data collection process

During data collection, the researcher performs a sequential application of the following processes: observations, semi-structured interviews and documents analysis.

The observations are the preliminary procedures of collecting data in both schools. The observations are conducted on the first two consecutive days in both schools and are followed (on the third day) by semi-structured interviews with the Grade R educators and the School principals. This sequence grants the researcher an opportunity to verify his understanding or interpretation of some of the interactions that transpired classroom lessons. This is because teachers are only interviewed once. Thus, should the researcher interview educators prior observations, that might higher the chances to data misinterpretation because some of the vital questions or misunderstandings that transpired during observations would not be answered. The document reviews will be the last procedure. This procedure needs not for the researcher to interview the teachers regarding any emerging data because it comprises of the policy documents and curriculum that are common cutting across the country. This process is undertaken to examine whether there are any supporting documents regarding the strategies teachers could employ to develop children's listening and speaking skills. This procedure will also be undertaken to evaluate the 12-criterion sampled learner's activity books to examine whether their performance in oral activities reflects or enhances their performance in reading and writing activities. This would therefore enable the current researcher to contextualise some of the scholastic perceptions which posit that children's shortfalls in reading and writing have a direct link with lack of oral and aural fluencies.

3.3.2.5. Ethical considerations

Punch (2013) and Creswell (2014) claim that a qualitative research data collection deals with people and involves people. Thus, “researchers need to protect their participants, develop trust with them, promote the integrity of the research, guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organisations or institutions and cope with new challenging problems” (Creswell, 2014: 93). To address the above-mentioned issues, the researcher adheres to the following principles:

3.3.2.5.1. Ethicality and permissions

The researcher obtains the UL TREC ethical clearance certificate that certifies the ethicality of the purpose of the study and the appropriateness of the questions of the study to the participants prior interactions with them. Before requesting for permission from the participants, the researcher requests for authorisation from the Department of Basic Education to conduct the study in the two selected primary schools. Thus, the researcher abides by all the rules or regulations the DBE assigns. Letters of request for permission to collect data are distributed to all participants prior data collection. The letters include the request for permission to perform the observations, interviews and document analysis (children’s activity books), as well as to do visual and audio recordings. The letter of request and assent form templates are attached as appendices at the end of this dissertation.

This study complies with the existing legislation regarding researching on the minors, such as the South African Constitution of 1996, Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005, the Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1976 and the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). In particular, this study complies with the Children’s Act no. 38 of 2005, amended in 2007 by the Children’s Amendment Act. For instance, the South African Children’s Act (2007) regards children under the age of 18 years as minors who are not fully capable of making independent decisions. Therefore, with the consideration of the legislative age restriction policies such as Children’s Act (2007, Chapter 2 and 3), the researcher obtains the assent forms from parents or legal guardians to grant him permission to involve their children as participants in this study. The researcher avows to respect the constitutional rights of all the children as enshrined in the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the constitution of South Africa, 1996, Act 108). This includes

ensuring that no learner is exposed to harm, traumatic experiences and/or anything violent in nature.

3.3.2.5.2. Informed consent

A clearly defined and detailed written consent is obtained from all participants for permission to proceed with the study. Thus, the researcher takes an initiative to fully inform the participants about the purpose of the study and their role for participating in the study in their preferred language for pure understanding. The participants are given research information sheets that vividly inform them of the purpose of the study and their role as participants. The information sheet template is also attached in the appendices.

3.3.2.5.3. Assent forms

Human-Vogel (2007) claims that the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) advises that children under the age of 18 must be assisted by their parents/legal guardians or caregivers when approached for participation in research. It is therefore in line with the HREC guidelines that this study fully informs the parents of the minors about the aims of this study and thereafter, request for parental assent to involve their children as participants in this study. The researcher assures that all participants are treated with utmost respect, and their dignity is also valued in this study. Respect is addressed through the acknowledgement of the participant's cultural and religious differences, as well as their knowledge, experiences and understanding regarding the phenomenon in question. The researcher conducts himself mannerly and gives respect to the dignity, privacy and the confidentiality of the participants.

As advised in the Children's Act 38 of 2005, this study gives children's expressions sufficient protection and consideration. Thus, all intentions of involving children in this study oblige to respect, protect and fulfil their Human Rights. This includes the right to privacy, health and protection from risks, harm, maltreatment and abuse. The researcher portrays his value of the children's dignity by treating them fairly and equally, as well as by refraining from any form of discrimination or its perpetuation.

3.3.2.5.4. Confidentiality and anonymity

The security, confidentiality and protection of the participant's identity or declarations that may unveil their individuality and names is prioritised in this study and is thus rest assured to all participants. The researcher uses pseudonyms in the research report to name the investigated schools and participants. The researcher conducts a careful analysis and report in the research report, such that the declarations of the participants cannot be traced back to them.

3.3.2.5.5. Voluntary participation

The participants are informed that their participation is pure voluntary; which means that there is no remuneration for participating in the study. Participants are not propelled to partake in this study and neither are they penalised, prosecuted nor interrogated for withdrawing from the study at any juncture. It is within their rights to suggest whether the information already collected about them should be used in the research report or not, and such declarations are treated with respect.

3.3.2.5.6. Protection of the participants

The participants are not harmed in any manner nor are they put in situations which could jeopardise their safety, health and privacy. There are no corporal punishments, threats or any kind of abuse to the participants. Thus, the researcher protects, respects and upholds the participants' democratic rights prior, during and after all interactions with them. Those who do not want to be video recorded are responded to with open positiveness and politeness.

3.3.3. Data analysis

Patton (2002) claims that the data analysis is a process of transforming raw data into meaningful findings. It is a unique process that remains known only to the researcher, and to readers only when the researcher has arrived at (Schutt, 2012). This study analyses data through a thematic lens. Thematic analysis gives the researcher the leverage to intensively study the collected data to reveal vigorous data that can be integrated to create solid arguments (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2009). That is,

it acknowledges the interrelated nature of diverse research responses from different data collection methods and tools.

3.3.3.1. Data analysis from the observations

The data collected through the observations includes video recordings, field notes and observation schedules (checklist). Thus, the video recordings are transcribed for analysis. The video recordings and transcriptions are intensively studied during this stage to produce relevant themes that speak to the purpose and the questions of this study. With regard to the observation schedule, the researcher records the most prevalent events (which are marked with a tick) on the observation schedule. This is done to identify the common modes of communication and approaches of learning and teaching that teachers apply to develop children's listening and speaking skills. Within the observation schedule there are remarks from the various observed activities which the researcher uses to examine whether the teaching strategies enhance listening and speaking skills as well as learner's participation. Data analysis in this stage uses main events that emerged during video recordings and transcriptions as well as in the observation schedule to create rigorous themes.

3.3.3.2. Data from semi-structured interviews

The audio recorded data from the semi-structured interviews is transcribed for analysis. The researcher intensively studies the transcriptions of the school principals and teachers interview recordings and label the corresponding responses and contradicting ones in terms of how they relate to the curriculum and the classroom practices. The researcher further studies the two Foundation Phase practitioners' interviews recordings and transcriptions and codes the repeated responses and examine how they correspond with the ones of the educators and principals. Thereafter, the researcher draws discussions on such important insights in relation to what has been observed, as well as to the stipulations of the curriculum regarding the initiatives the respondents take to develop the speaking and listening skills. The interview responses are analysed through the perspective of Vygotsky's (1978) theory on the role of the More Knowledgeable Others in developing children's language skills.

Thereafter, the researcher creates vigorous themes based on the correlating insights from all the coded responses of the principals, educators and the Foundation Phase practitioners. In other words, the corresponding events in this category and other categories are linked and used to formulate robust themes.

3.3.3.3. Data from document reviews

Data analysis under this procedure is intensively premised on a critical review of the stipulations of relevant documents in relation to the prevalent activities in the investigated schools. Critical arguments are raised on whether the classroom practices of the investigated cases respond to the stipulations of the reviewed documents. The themes are thus developed using 'A Step-by-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Analysis' by O'Connor and Gibson (2009). Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2009) claim that a good way to structure the results section of a study into themes is to use the main categories which emerged from the data as subheadings (themes). Thus, the researcher formulates themes following the five steps below as outlined by O'Connor and Gibson (2009):

Step 1

Organizing data; in this step, the researcher studies the collected data systematically and vigorously internalize it to familiarize it with the contents of the research, including the research questions and objectives.

Step 2

Finding and organizing ideas and concepts; the data and responses that link to a particular research question or objective are grouped together. This step involves sorting findings into different categories in relation to the aims of the study.

Step 3

Building over-arching themes in the data; this step involves formulating or naming relevant themes in which the collected data is distributed. In other words, initial naming of themes takes course in this stage. This stage is aided by the connecting answers and the recurring data as arranged in Step 2.

Step 4

Ensuring ethicality and trustworthiness in the data analysis and in the findings; this step involves reviewing the data analysis for the purpose of refining, correcting mistakes and modifying the themes. In this stage, the researcher renames the themes, re-arranges the themes, and reduces or adds data in some themes.

Step 5

Finding possible and plausible explanations of the findings; this is the final step which involves the narration of the research findings in a thematic order as constructed from step one to step four. In a nutshell, this is the final writing pertaining the discussion of the research findings.

3.4. Quality assurance

The quality criteria of the study are often regarded as the trustworthiness of the study. Sekhukhune (2013) citing Shank (2006) defines trustworthiness of the study as the degree to which people can depend on and trust given research findings. The researcher in this study earns trustworthiness by adhering to; Credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

3.4.1. Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of a given study can be transferred to a different setting or be used with a different population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Transferability is addressed through clear definitions of the key-concepts of the study. It is also addressed through a clear outline of the purpose of the study and appropriate citations and references. The researcher studies the collected data to the depth and applies relevant data analysis techniques to create an analysis that is open for re-analysis by other researchers.

3.4.2. Dependability

Dependability is the degree to which data change over time and alterations are made in the researcher's decisions during the analysis process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). This study avoids problems concerning dependability by in-depth reading of the

findings and regular or intense usage of supervision guidance. The researcher collaborates with the supervisor and the co-supervisor as co-analysts of the collected data to maintain consistency in the focus of the study, and thus promoting the dependability of the study.

3.4.3. Confirmability

Confirmability implies that the researcher demonstrates the findings that emerged from the data gathered, not his predisposition (Creswell, 2014). This study refrains from invading the research findings or falsifying of the information for the suitability of the researcher's hypothesis. During data collection, the researcher refrains from probing leading questions. Participants are studied in their natural form such that a second researcher could observe similar findings be there a need for reaffirmation.

3.5. Conclusion

In accordance with the questions and objectives of this study, a relevant research methodology has been selected and fully discussed in this chapter. The discussion clarified how relevant and vital a mixed methodology is to this study. Furthermore, the study substantiated for the choice of the dominance of the qualitative methodology over the quantitative methodology. Methods applicable under the qualitative research (particularly those that are applied in this study) are deemed by the researcher to be important and relevant for the goals set in this study. Thus, this chapter has extensively discussed the methods and tools that are used in the study for data collection and analysis. The researcher has provided substantial justifications for the choice(s) of the methods and tools used for data gathering and analysis in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided rigorous discussions on methodology and approaches that were used to collect data in this study. Furthermore, it vividly elucidated the steps and procedures of data analysis that are used to scrutinise data in this chapter. Therefore, the current chapter gives a presentation of the significant findings that transpired during data collection. These findings are related to the events that the researcher considered important because they generated the analytic or discursive data for this study. The processes of data presentation, discussion of the findings and analysis are done procedurally in this chapter. The researcher initially gives a brief summary of what transpired during data collection under each data source (i.e. observations, interviews and documents analysis). Thereafter, the researcher deals interactively with the insights that emerged from all sets and subsets of the collected data through a thematic lens. This implies that the researcher formulated themes during the intensive study and critique of the collected data and uses the themes to demonstrate how data from different sources support one another regarding the development of listening and speaking skills. Thus, all themes are orientated towards revealing how teachers develop listening and speaking skills in Grade R in the investigated schools.

4.2. Demographic profiles of the participants

This study sampled two primary schools in Maleboho-East circuit, Capricorn District. The schools are located in deep rural areas as described by Barley, Lauer, Arens, Apthorp, Englert, Snow, and Akiba (2002) that rural areas are commonly described by underdeveloped geographic zones and few, isolated households far from towns and/or cities, with densely low populations. The herein sampled schools are approximately 3.5 kilometres away from each other and are estimated at 10-12 minutes' drive and 30-45 minutes' walk. The figure of Grade R learners was 32 pupils in School A out of which 11 were males and 21 were females. In School B the figure of Grade R learners was 28 out of which the male representation was 10 learners and 18 females. Only

one learner in School A was above the age of five years, while the rest of them were aged five years. The older learner in School A was six years old.

In School B, the class comprised of 5-6 years old cohort in which two learners were aged 6 years, while the other 26 learners were aged five years. The study further sampled two school principals and two Grade R educators from both schools (one in each). The demographic profiles of the principals and educators, especially the ages and educational profiles, were not revealed due to lack of ethical certification of such enquiry. However, the figure of the four personnel was represented by females only.

4.3. The pseudonymous presentation of participants' attributions

This study committed to protect the dignity of the participants and to privatise any information that could risk their identity. Thus, the study presents remarks made by participants through pseudonymous references to various participants as follows:

The two schools are referred to as School A and School B. On the observational transcriptions, learners from School A are referred to as LA 1, 2, 3 (Learner A one, two, three...). Learners from School B are referred to as LB 1, 2, 3 (Learner B one, two, three...). The class teacher from School A is pseudonymously referred to as TA (Teacher A) and the teacher from School B is referred to as TB (Teacher B). The school principals from School A and B are respectfully referred to as PA (Principal A) and PB (Principal B). References made to participants with point A connote that a participant belongs to School A, and B means that the participant belongs to School B.

4.4. Data Presentation

This section provides a chronological discussion of the events that emerged in each category of data collection i.e. observations, interviews and document analysis and their links to the literature, theory, research questions and the main aim of the study.

4.4.1. Discussion of the findings from observations

Classroom observations were the initial procedure of the data collection process in this study. The observations were conducted from the 7th to the 8th February 2019 in School A, and from the 14th to the 15th February 2019 in School B. Observations

sought to capture interactions between learners and teachers, as well as between learners themselves to examine how classroom interactions help learners to develop listening and speaking skills. The observations were also conducted to identify teaching and learning approaches and resources that were used in classrooms during lessons to develop learners' listening and speaking skills. In addition, the observations were performed to explore how instructional practices in classrooms stimulate listening and speaking skills among learners. That is, to explore how practices encourage learners' comprehension and introduction of new concepts in dialogue. Thus, the observations were conducted between 08H00 am and 12H50 pm, and they were stopped at saturation points in different activities. The time frames of the observations were informed by the Limpopo Provincial Grade R Daily Programme of 2019 attached as Annexure B.

The daily program illustrates that Grade R classes must commence at 07H00 am and end at 12H00 in the afternoon. However, the observations have revealed that Grade R classes in both schools commenced at 08H10 am and ceased at 12H30 pm. The Grade R daily programme illustrates that learners must be engaged in twelve activities and those are: Welcome to school, Good morning Health check, Morning circle/ring, Let's work, Work time, Tidy up time, Washing up, Let's eat, Sing and dance, Let's play (outdoor play), Washing up and Story time. Table 3 below shows a summary of what must be done under each prescribed activity.

Activities	Practices
1. Welcome to school	Learners go to the assembly point to sing and pray.
2. Good Morning, Health check	Learners go to the toilet to refresh and wash hands before getting inside class.
3. Morning circle/ring	Joint activity of weather interpretation, birthday singing and my body chart interpretation.
4. Let's work	Learners' free choice of drawing, painting, clay-making, playing with toys and colouring activities.

5. Work time	Engaging in teacher-planned activity i.e. mixing colours or painting.
6. Tidy up time	Joint activity of cleaning or clearing toys, clay and other previously used tools.
7. Washing up	Learners wash their hands after clearing materials and prepare for lunch.
8. Let's eat	Lunch time
9. Sing and dance	Motor or physical activities of singing and dancing
10. Let's play (outdoor play)	Learners enjoy energetic, noisy and physical play outside classroom.
11. Washing up	Learners go to toilet, thereafter, proceed to wash their hands and enter class.
12. Story time	Learners listen and participate in story sharing, story sequencing and answering questions.

Table 5: Summary of Limpopo Provincial Department of Education's Grade R programme.

The above-mentioned activities are practically learned or performed under three major subjects namely, Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. Thus, teachers are required to artfully fuse the above activities with the subjects mentioned above to develop learners' knowledge of language, numbers and general life skills (CAPS, 2011). Nonetheless, among the twelve activities above, only six academic activities were commonly practiced in Schools A and B, namely: 1). the morning ring, 2). work time, 3). let's eat, 4). washing up, 5). sing and dance and 6). story time. Therefore, the activities that were most relevant to the aims of this study, or perhaps that responded to the questions of this study, were *My Body*, *Morning Ring* and *Story time activities*. These three activities attempted to expose learners to open, communicative and prolonged classroom talk. They demonstrated interactive efforts to learning through questions and answers sessions. They further encouraged learners' voices through oral presentations and summary of stories, and thus had the potential to equip learners with effective listening and speaking skills. Nevertheless, despite the other activities'

less contribution towards enhancing effective listening and speaking skills (especially the writing activities), some insightful events from such activities are cited in this chapter to express how listening and speaking skills were potentially discouraged by practices within such activities.

There are two data sets that were obtained through observations, namely: data from the observation checklists and data from the transcribed video recordings. The observation checklists were used to record the dominance of different media of interactions, prominent role players in interactions and the resources that were used to enhance learning in different activities. Thus, data from the observation checklist is analysed quantitatively to identify dominant modes of learning, role players and resources that were used to enhance the development of listening and speaking skills. The sample of the observation checklist from which the graphic findings (presented and synthesised in thematic analysis) have been extracted is attached in appendices as Annexure A. On the other hand, the open observation (transcribed) data sought to reveal the practical measures teachers adopt to develop children's listening and speaking skills. This includes the learning and teaching approaches, theories, strategies, activities and resources they use, as well as how they use such resources to develop listening and speaking skills.

4.4.2. Data from the observation checklist

The observation checklists sheets have recorded that of the overall six activities observed in each school each day, only three activities were most relevant and responsive to the aims of this study. Those are the My Body, Morning ring and Story reading in both schools. Data from the observation tools indicates that majority of the interactions between educators and learners were based oral and print media. This reaffirmed Palmer's (2014) argument that learning and teaching occur predominantly through oral medium than print medium in early grades. This is because, although the dominant modalities were print, usage required summarising, storytelling and retelling—all of which revolved around orality. Learners were engaged in activities that required them to discuss the functions of the body parts and to mention correspondence of outside weather with ones pasted in classroom.

The checklist results further demonstrated that teachers used whole-class approaches to develop listening and speaking skills, and subsequently used group works for

written activities. The observation checklist furthermore revealed that teachers dominated classroom discussions while learners contributed less meaningfully towards classroom discussions. The interactions between the learners and teachers were predominantly based on discourse. Discourse in this context implies that activities were premised on spoken communication and encouraged learners to speak about what they feel, see, think and know. During these activities, communication between the learners and the teachers was found to be less interactive. Teachers prevailed to be authoritatively asking questions, sifting the learners answers, reformulating and rejecting some of them.

In light of the above argument, it is arguable that although the activities and approaches teachers used to develop listening and speaking skills had the potential to equip learners with the functional listening and speaking skills, they were not able to do so to the maximum effect. Educators did not seem to be courageous to explore the learner's responses and take further initiatives to explore reasoning or thinking behind the learner's responses and they dominated the classroom talk. This argument is immensely expanded in the discussion of transcribed observational data below.

4.4.3. Discussions of the findings from the open (transcribed) observations data

The open observations have revealed that there were important factors in both schools that determined learners' efficiency or inefficiency of developing listening and speaking skills. Such factors had strong capacities to either stimulate or hamper learners' participation in oral activities and print activities. These were contextual factors relating to the physical environment of learning and the pedagogic environment of learning. The physical environments of both schools demonstrated lack of resources for learning and teaching in general—but with extremity lack of oral skills development apparatus. The discussion below demonstrates issues pertaining lack of furniture and literacy resources in each school and how they generally affected learning and teaching.

4.4.3.1. Matters of the physical environments of learning and teaching

School A

In School A learners were described by black and white uniform. Due to shortage of sitting furniture, classroom arrangements had two sitting patterns in which the class was divided into two groups. One group of learners would be seated on the floor playing with toys to keep from making disruptive noise, while another group was seated on chairs doing a class activity issued by the teacher. When the first group finished an activity, they would rotate to the floor and give other groups the opportunity to do activities on the chairs and tables. However, in dominant instances, the class teacher grouped all learners together on a floor-mat to deliberate lessons such as story reading, storytelling and/or story retelling. The pictures below demonstrate the classroom arrangements in School A.

Picture 1



Picture.2



Figure 1: The classroom arrangements in School A.

Picture 1 illustrates the sitting arrangement for story lessons and Picture 2 shows the sitting arrangements for colouring, cutting and pasting, painting and drawing activities. Although the second sitting arrangement (picture 2) has no direct effect nor contribution towards the development of listening and speaking skills, it was observed to affect the teacher's ability to manage time and to make all learners participate in fair time-shared activities. The first groups always had ample time to do their activities and received adequate scaffolding and constructive feedback from the teacher, while the second groups hastily performed their activities in chase of time. The shortfall with the arrangement in Picture 2 was that the first selected group of learners to do activities on chairs and tables comprised largely of the highest performing learners. Thus, although time restrictions were perceivably an alarming factor from this arrangement, concerns also raised regarding creation of rooms for improvement for learners who

displayed lowest performance and participation in oral activities. In other words, putting the lowest oral performing learners second and offering them lesser time during the print activities, did not seem to encourage improvements in their participation nor performance both in print and oral activities. Validations to the latter notion are presented in 4.4.5.2. on the analysis of learners' activity books.

School B

In School B learners were described by the gold and black uniform and casual dressing. Although learners in School B had enough sitting furniture, they were also divided into two groups during activities. Thus, the teacher issued an activity to half of the class to do first and moved to other groups when the first group had finished. The rationale to this arrangement was clarified during teacher interviews that *"I dedicate a whole day to administer written activities so that when the managerial staff [HoD, school principal and district officials] want children's activity books, all learners' workbooks would be up to date."* This meant that dividing learners into two groups enabled her to manage learners and to ensure that all instructions of the written activities are observed by each learner. It is thus arguable that the premise of these activities was likely not on facilitating literacy skills development because the teacher mentioned the administration of activities merely as a procedure of formality not as a procedure of skills development or progress evaluation.

Similar to School A, there were instances in School B where learners were required to do activities while seated on chairs, and there were instances where they had to join the teacher on the mat to share stories. The pictures below demonstrate the classroom arrangements in School B:

Picture 3



Picture 4



Figure 2: The classroom arrangements in School B.

The most remarkable feature about the categorization of learners into two groups, as illustrated by Picture 3 above, is that while one group is given an activity to draw, colour or write, another group has to sleep, or witness the tasked group. Thus, it was observable that Teacher B's strength did not allow her to give equal attention to Group 1 (circled in orange) and 2 (circled in yellow). It was observed that Group 2's interactions with the teacher and print were not fruitful nor contributory towards effective listening and speaking skills development. Group 2 learners are seen in Picture 3 sitting idly without the teacher to interact with, books, print resources, toys or anything to engage their minds in, while their counterparts work on book activities. The educator is seen in Picture 3 moving between Group 1 desks offering scaffolding and monitoring the completion of the activity at neglect of Group 2. These events served as pre-highlights that teachers are faced with difficulties of time management and whole-class teaching approaches, which challenged them when developing learners' listening and speaking skills. This is because both teachers split learners into smaller manageable groups when administering activities—which in turn, subjected the second groups of learners to failure of completing activities within the proposed times of the daily program nor to the satisfactory levels of proficiency.

In short, Alexander (2010) claims that learning is sometimes affected by numerous contextual matters of the learning environment, ranging from the physical to the pedagogic matters. Thus, under physical factors of the observed schools, the researcher revealed that lack of furniture, limited learning space, lack of listening and speaking supporting devices and time limitations had a great impact on teachers' capabilities to teach learners listening and speaking skills.

4.4.3.2. Matters of the pedagogic environments of learning and teaching

Apart from the physical matters of the classroom, the observations found that the pedagogic environment of learning and teaching contributed in hampering effective development of listening and speaking skills. The notion of pedagogic context connotes the practical aspects of teaching and learning that affected the development of listening and speaking skills. Thus, the observations revealed that time limitations, limited knowledge and misapplication of strategies (linear approaches) and teacher dominance had immense effects on children's development of listening and speaking skills. The observations revealed that some of the pedagogic contextual factors which hampered listening and speaking skills development were influenced by the physical factors discussed above. For instance, the arrangements in both schools had negative influence on time management in the sense that, when time for certain activities is extended or prolonged, it eats up on the time for other activities. As a result, teachers compromise other activities on the daily program to allow all learners to complete written activities.

Teachers stated during interviews that they sometimes dedicate the whole day to administer written activities so that learners' activity books could be up to date. Thus, it is valid that limited time affects the quality of teaching and learning in classroom. This is because some activities are administered for formality and hastily in overload. This results in the quality of the activities not being adequate for producing measurable progress towards the development of listening and speaking skills. The activities neither allowed teachers to introspect the effectiveness of their methods and approaches of teaching listening and speaking skills. The practice of both educators of sparing the whole day or majority of class time to administer written activities implies that they shove other activities on the daily program during that particular day to allow all learners to do their activities. Therefore, when some activities are shoved, learners miss out on the knowledge those activities would have offered on those particular days. The missed-out knowledge would likely be the new words, sentences, ideas and expressions that would improve their listening and speaking skills.

4.4.4. Discussion of the findings from interviews

Interviews were the second procedure of data collection process in this study. They were conducted on the third day in each school post the observations. Interview participants of this study were two Grade R teachers and two School principals. These interview respondents were sampled to respond to different questions based on the roles they play as mediators of learning in their schools.

4.4.4.1. Findings from interviews with Grade R teachers

Interviews with the teachers were intended to explore the pedagogic strategies and processes that teachers use to develop children's listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, the interviews sought to unveil the challenges teachers experience during lessons which disturb them from developing children's listening and speaking skills.

Teachers expressed that they develop listening and speaking skills through interactive teaching approaches such as CLT. They stated that they use question and answer sessions at the end of all activities to assess learners understanding and progress towards the development of listening and speaking skills. Teachers further expressed concerns regarding lack of listening and speaking supporting apparatus and have demonstrated that their limited access to different resources incapacitate them to diversify teaching methods nor apply varying approaches to accommodate all learners. Therefore, learners who struggle to learn through the predominantly used and perhaps the only available resources become vulnerable to the risk of being excluded from learning throughout the length of the theme or content through which that resource must be utilised. In addition, teachers also expressed that they are not given adequate support in forms of workshops and in-service training on how they should teach Grade R learners' variety of skills. For instance, Teacher A claimed that "*Since this year began, Grade one and two teachers have already attended two workshops, but I have not attended any*". This implied that teachers relied on the documented guidelines in curriculum, policies and lesson plans, as well as their knowledge to teach listening and speaking skills and other literacy skills. Therefore, if a teacher misinterprets a notion on the daily program policy or misapplies a teaching approach suggested by the curriculum, it is likely that her lessons may not help learners to meet curriculum goals,

especially those that relate to listening and speaking skills. This was observable during lessons, whereby teachers were not able to move beyond the scope of their mainstream teaching resources such as teacher guide, curriculum and daily program. This, therefore, deterred teachers from enticing discussions beyond the contexts of the conventional materials to enhance listening and speaking skills through authentic talk.

4.4.4.2. Findings from interviews with school principals

The school principals were interviewed as heads of schools and were required to express their knowledge regarding the process of developing listening and speaking skills. Principals were required to express their views on the roles that Grade R teachers play or must play to develop learners' listening and speaking skills. Furthermore, they were required to explain how they support Grade R educators to interpret and implement curriculum stipulations regarding the development of listening and speaking skills. Lastly, they were required to elucidate their perceived challenges that Grade R teachers experience regarding the development of listening and speaking skills, as well as how they intervene to help teachers overcome such challenges.

The principals did not express new knowledge or different knowledge from the insights already mentioned by teachers. Both principals reiterated the activities that are suggested on the Grade R daily program. PA stated that, "*Teachers are advised to develop children's listening and speaking skills through different resources, modalities and activities but they should not derail from the scope of the daily program as well as the curriculum stipulations*". She further demonstrated that with the nature of the suggested Grade R teaching methods, i.e. the methods of integrating different subject contents, and to perform what one would refer to as simultaneous teaching of Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills, "*Teachers lose track of what each subject's policy says about the development of listening and speaking skills*". Similar to the educators, principals also expressed that there is lack of proper teaching resources for developing listening and speaking skills in their schools. They expressed that televisions and radios in their schools have been stolen and that elevated the scarcity of resources in their schools. Principal B stated that, "*We have toys that we use during fantasy play that help them [learners] to develop listening and speaking skills*". With regard to digital

devices, principals expressed that their schools are currently running short of such resources and the gap is feasible because their Grade R learners' oral development has reduced since their schools' digital resources were stolen.

Principals expressed that learners' difficulties of developing listening and speaking skills can be traced from their home environments. PB said that, *"Learners are sponges. They absorb whatever they hear. Thus, when we interact with our learners, we detect that they watch soapies more than educational programs at home. When you ask them what they watch at home they mention Tv programs that are not only violent, but also have strong language content. So, we encourage programs like Takalani Sesami to help learners learn listening and speaking. These are the programs that would be easy for them to copy or repeat after and would be fruitful to their learning."*

With respect to their views about CAPS and how they help teachers interpret and implement it, principals claimed that they do not have confidence in Grade R curriculum. They are encouraged at the workshops to encourage Grade R teachers to use Grade 1 curriculum to teach Grade R pupils. This is because Grade R curriculum is full of play than learning. Principal B said, *"We are trying to reduce the strains we often experienced with previous Grade 1 learners who were not able to learn effectively because of the difference between the environments of the two Grades. In Grade R there is too much play and in Grade 1 learning is more formal"* Principal A further said, *"We feel stuck between Grade R and Grade 1 syllabus in Grade R because the slow learners I have talked about earlier, find it difficult to cope with the demands of Grade 1 curriculum."* This implied that teachers have to manoeuvre between two curricula (Grade R & 1 curricula) to accommodate all types of learners.

Inadequate knowledge of the curriculum and inadequate capabilities of implementation among Grade R teachers prevailed to be one of the challenges experienced in both schools. Principal A asserted that they assist Grade R teachers by sharing information with them from the workshops they have attended. She further demonstrated that Grade 1 to Grade 3 teachers attend NECT workshops regularly, and any teacher who went to the workshop must share what they have learned with all Foundation Phase teachers including the Grade R teacher. Principal B expressed the challenge of having unqualified educators who teach Grade R. She said *"Our*

teachers are not able to interpret policy documents and curriculum. They are not fluent in English and they attend very few workshops in a year which are conducted in English.” This implies that teachers face a challenge of translating the information from workshops and policies from English to their strongest languages. This incapacitate them to interpret, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the information they get from the workshops. Thus, PB said *“We find that the teachers that our government gives us from rural areas are not educationally equipped with skills necessary to teach learners all skills they need to learn, especially those associated with literacy and numeracy.”*

4.4.5. Findings from Document Analysis

This study reviewed two types of documents, namely, Official documents and Textual documents. Official documents connote the educational documents published by the government and other stakeholders under the Department of Education. These are the documents that give regulations on what teachers must teach, how they should teach and when they should teach certain skills. On the other hand, the textual documents connote the internal documents that vary cutting across different schools. This includes learners’ activity books, record-keeping documents and personal lesson plans.

4.4.5.1. Findings from official documents review

This study reviewed the general Foundation Phase Curriculum Assessment Policy and Statement (CAPS, 2011) but rested immense focus on stipulations regarding how listening and speaking skills must be developed in Grade R. The study reviewed Sepedi written and English written documents of the Grade R CAPS (2011). In addition, the study reviewed Language in Education Policy (LiEP, 1997) on how listening and speaking skills must be developed within educational practices. The study has furthermore reviewed daily lesson plans for teachers, both self-designed and governmentally designed. The researcher adopted the impression of Bowen (2009) to analyse documents. Bowen (2009) states that when performing documents analysis, one needs to intensively study proposed documents to get immense thoughts of the documents and to evaluate success in their implementation.

4.4.5.1.1. The Foundation Phase CAPS 2011 and Language in Education Policy 1997

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) is an amended policy statement of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, 2005). CAPS (2011) is based on the principles of "...social transformation; active and critical learning; high knowledge and high skills; progression, human rights and inclusivity..." among other principles (DoE, 2011: 4-5). According to the DoE (2015) children in Grade R are faced with countless areas of development, and many of which are crucial predictors of educational success. For instance, children need to develop motor skills, language skills, numeracy, literacy and life skills. However, with reference to the development of the language and literacy skills, CAPS (2011) expresses that priority in Grade R should be granted to the development of listening and speaking skills in and through Home Language.

The South African Foundation Phase curriculum stipulates that practices in Grade R-3 (Foundation Phase) should focus on three developmental areas: literacy, numeracy and life skills (Howie et al., 2012). However, 40% of the time in Foundation Phase classrooms is allocated to literacy learning, which incorporates the development of language skills among other skills (Howie et al., 2012). CAPS (2011) has moved beyond the traditional notions of literacy as the ability to read and write. CAPS (2011) uses literacy to refer to a wide range of contemporary skills (CAPS, 2011). It presents the evolution of literacy as one that recently includes digital skills, multimodality, health literacy, information literacy, emergent literacy and multilingual literacy etc. However, at the Foundation Phase level, literacy practices are often orientated towards language development. Activities at this level strive to enhance children's ability to use language to interact with others, interpret visuals and to make meaningful participation in communicative activities such as role-play, narration of stories and group work.

This study finds that CAPS (2011) acknowledges that children need oral language skills to learn to interact with written texts at meaningful levels. The study also finds that all other forms of literacy mentioned above are relevant to the demands of the 21st Century Skills and the goals of the 2030 National Development Plan. However, it is arguable that these skills cannot be acquired in isolation from language. The researcher values CAPS (2011)'s commend that Grade R learners require Home

Language communicative competencies to effectively learn all subjects. Therefore, with the recognition of Home Language as a Language of Learning and Teaching throughout the Foundation Phase, one finds that the curriculum supports the notion that teachers must equip learners with effective oral language skills prior reading and writing skills development. This would enable learners to display eloquent reading and writing skills at conventional grades.

CAPS's (2011) recommendation of learning and using HL as a LoLT throughout the Foundation Phase correlates with the aims of the South African National Educational System Language Policy, also known as the Language in Education Policy (1997). "The Language in Education Policy aims to protect, promote, fulfil and extend the individual's language rights and means of communication in education" (Howie et al, 2006: 8). Thus, according to Language in Education Policy (1997) there is a growing demand for children to learn their Home Languages in education especially because they need their Home Language skills to acquire English language skills in Grade 3. The Language in Education Policy recognises 11 official languages and the multilingual nature of South Africans and it gives priority to listening and speaking as language modalities that could disseminate effective acquisition of language in early grades. Therefore, this recognition gives the existing South African education curriculum a challenge of having to enforce the development listening and speaking skills in every subject (Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills). In other words, every subject must have its specific curriculum which outlines the skills to be developed, time allocations and teaching and learning strategies for developing such skills. Thus, the CAPS's response to this challenge is an adoption integrative approach to subject teaching and learning. That is, CAPS (2011) recommends simultaneous teaching of Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills in Grade R. There are no stipulations on how listening and speaking skills can be developed under each subject. This, therefore, implies that the parameters regarding time allocations for listening and speaking skills development as well as the suggestions on pertinent strategies thereof, are applicable across all subjects. Hence, the simultaneous subject teaching.

This study finds that prioritisation of listening and speaking skills by the curriculum and policy grants children with little or inefficient Home Language background the leverage to grasp language skills they need to function well in classroom. This contextualises Vygotsky's theory (discussed in 2.2), in that it values the potency of Home Language

communicative skills in helping children to learn to read and write, as well as to acquire the communicative skills of other languages. However, the study also finds that, with grievance expressed by school principals regarding Grade R teachers' capabilities, teachers may not be able to equip children with effective listening and speaking skills through the "multi-focus" integrative approach. Westbrook, Durrani, Brown, Orr, Pryror, Boddy and Salvi (2013) claim that this inter-transactional orientation to subjects, contents, contexts and registers may not equip learners with effective grasp of language functions. Thus, it could be overwhelming for teachers to expose learners to the true social functions of a language and its pedagogic functions at the same time.

4.4.5.1.2. Findings from textual documents review

As already mentioned, textual analysis is used in this study to refer to the textual documents such as learners' activity books, record-keeping documents and teachers' self-made lesson plans. The purpose of this procedure was to examine consistencies between the oral and the writing performances of the three categories of learners identified during observations. The researcher identified two learners in categories of Proficient learners, Average learners and Below average learners. The motive to examine these categories was triggered by Lenyai's (2011) argument that poor listening and speaking have negative influence on children's reading and writing skills development and can affect a learner's overall performance. The researcher therefore integrated data from the 2019 Grade R Daily Program regarding the roles that teachers and learners must play during various activities, with data from the Grade R Term 1 Home Language Lesson Plan regarding the goals of listening and speaking activities to formulate an assessment tool that sets performance benchmarks for the three categories of learners. Table 3 below demonstrates the assessment tool that was used to ascribe learners into three different categories.

Task descriptors	Performance Descriptors		
	Proficient	Average	Below average
(What learners are expected to do)			
Explores different areas of the classroom as an individual.			

Shows enthusiasm during activities morning ring, greetings, singing and dancing.

Responds to questions on different topics in various subjects.

Voluntarily participates in oral activities

Responds positively and actively to teachers' requests to give answers or do activities.

Demonstrates a good use of language and vocabulary of understanding.

Participates in interactions with peers, the teacher and/or lesson material.

Expressively counts numbers, reads picture story books, can sequence events, can summarize stories with understanding.

Asks questions when they do not understand instructions, questions or lesson content.

Follows instructions during music, drama and/or movement activities.

Expresses gestures, facial expressions and other linguistic gesticulations during lessons, especially during oral lessons to elicit meaning.

Table 6: Three descriptors of learners' task performance.

The researcher developed the above assessment tool using guidelines from the study of Abucayon, Bautista and Romano (2016). The above three performance descriptor was used as rough draft during observations to identify learners under each segment of performance. When a learner was identifies for a specific performance level, the researcher wrote few features about them under each performance descriptor for ease of identification during teacher consultations on request for the identified learners' activity books. For example:

Task descriptors (What learners are expected to do)	Performance Descriptors		
	Proficient	Average	Below average
Explores different areas of the classroom as an individual.	The learner with straight back, yellow ribbon and shiny teeth.	Little chubby boy with burn scar on the right hand.	A slim tall girl. Teacher said to her you are older than them all.

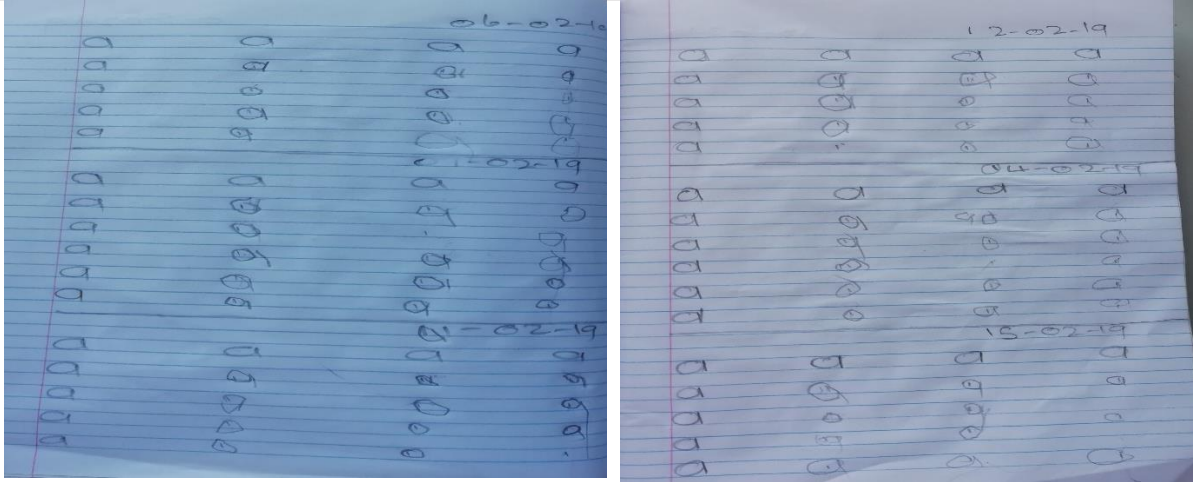
Table 7: Exemplary demonstration of how learners were physically identified through the performance assessment and describer tool.

After identifying these learners, the researcher gave these descriptions to the teacher and requested for the described learners' activity books. There were two twin siblings in School A and two among the four of them were classified under different categories. Thus, for convenience and confirmation, the researcher showed teachers the photos of the identified learners to avoid possible confusions of descriptions. Therefore, the researcher successfully ascribed four learners (two in each school) under each performance descriptor outlined in Table 3 above. The researcher thence requested for the identified learners' activity books to examine consistency between their performance in oral and print activities.

4.4.5.2.1. On Proficient learners

Proficient performance descriptor implies that learners in this category are able to engage in tasks described in Table 3 actively and with understanding. They voluntarily initiate and maintain lengthy conversations during interactions or when requested to do so by the educator (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016). They demonstrate effective listening skills through correct and/or relevant responses to teacher questions and instructions. Additionally, they exhibit appropriate performance in multiple activities and topics (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016).

School A, Proficient learners



School B, Proficient learners

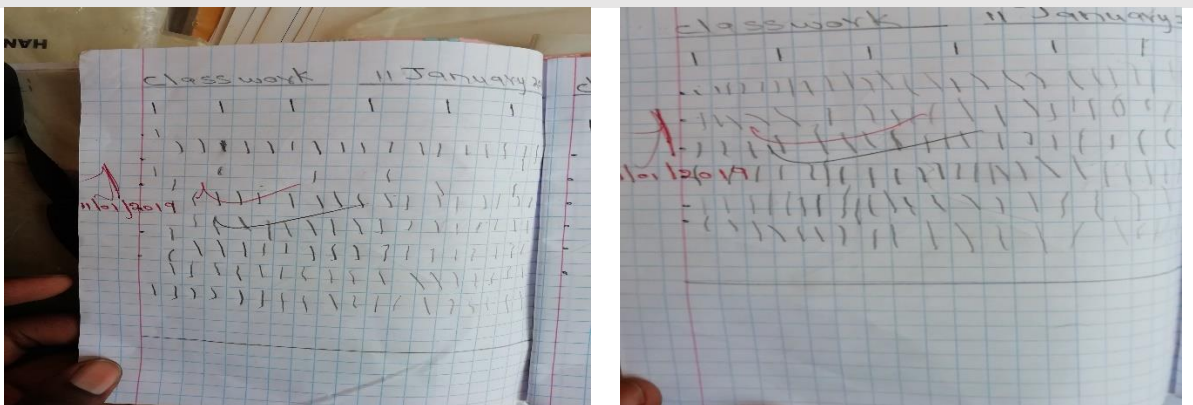


Table 8: Demonstration of consistency in proficient learners' oral and print performance.

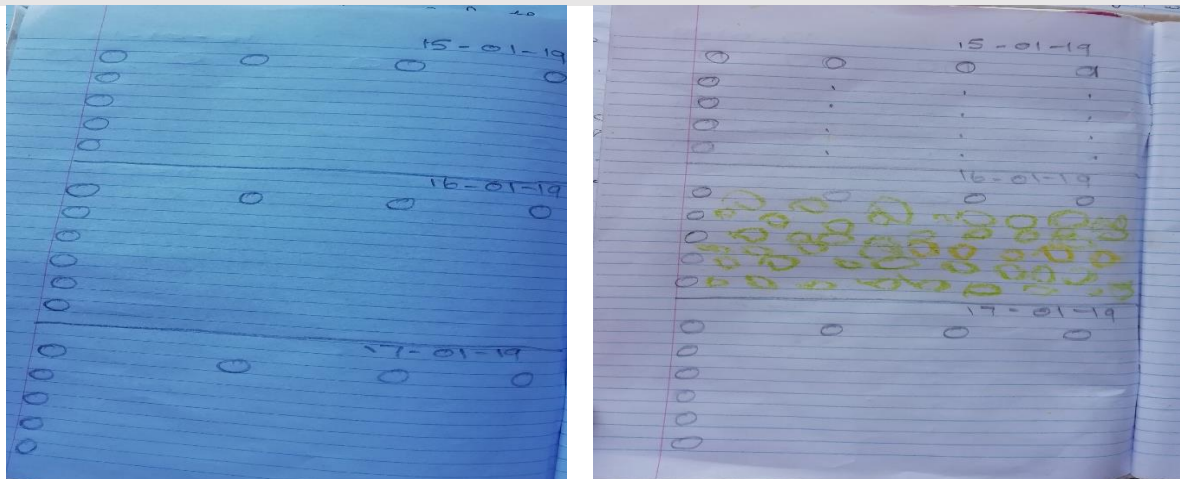
The above table demonstrates the samples of written activities for oral proficient learners. Although reading and writing activities in Grade R do not require learners to express conventional meanings, they have a potential of revealing learners' performances and abilities to perform instructions. The learners who were identified to demonstrate voluntary and tasked responsibilities of initiating and maintaining lengthy interactions equivalently demonstrated the abilities to do written activities to the satisfactory standards of performance. In School A, the teacher wrote four A letters in small capitals and requested learners to individually copy what she has written and fill up the pages. Equally, Teacher B in School B also issued a more similar activity but

requested learners to copy the number “1” (one). This study therefore found that there is a consistent relationship between the proficient learners’ oral and writing performances. This validates the notion of Lloyd, Mann and Peers (1998) that listening, speaking, reading and writing are interrelated and are inseparable. This also contextualises Lenyai’s (2011) argument that effective listening and speaking skills pave a good way for the development of reading and writing skills. It is shown above that learners who maintained lengthier attention and conversations demonstrated better abilities to understand instructions and perform written activities at age and grade appropriate standards.

4.4.5.2.2. On Average learners

The average performance descriptor connotes that learners in this category demonstrate adequate engagement with activities and can initiate and maintain average conversations. They express meaningful ideas but limited to what they have been requested to say, discuss or explain (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016). Therefore, they exhibit appropriate-like performance with minimal need for teacher intervention in some activities (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016).

School A, Average learners



School B, Average learners

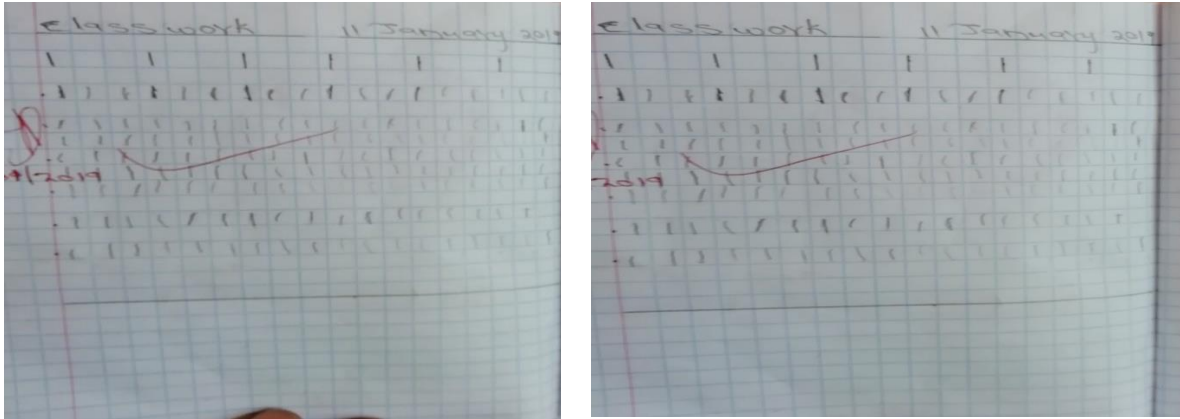


Table 9: Demonstration of consistency in average learners' oral and print performance.

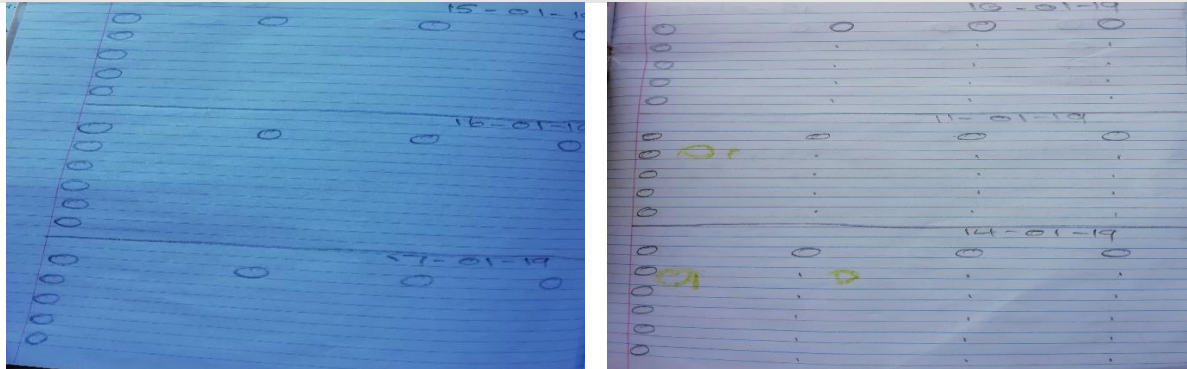
The above table demonstrates the samples of written activities for orally average learners. The table demonstrates inconsistencies between School A and B regarding learners' writing performances. However, there are sheer consistencies between performance of learners in each school. For instance, in School A, both learners gave the activity a fair attempt, but they did not complete the activities. In School B, learners completed their activities at satisfactory standards of performance. The performance of School A learners contextualises the descriptive argument of Abucayon, Bautista and Romano (2016) that average learners exhibit appropriate-like performance with minimal need for teacher's intervention in some activities. This is to say, although their activities are not completed, they (activities) indicate that learners were in the right direction of responding to the teacher's instructions. This therefore demonstrates a consistent balance in their oral activities that they only do what they are requested to do without putting extra effort (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016). This speaks much about their abilities to listen for understanding in that it shows that they have good listening for understanding skills, but they may be lacking some motivation, reinforcements or scaffolding to complete their activities—to which the More Knowledgeable Other must intervene, as Vygotsky (1978) acknowledges.

4.4.5.2.3. On Below average learners

Below average performance descriptor implies that learners in this category demonstrate little and passive participation in activities. They participate in brief interactions mostly to give one answer or little information to teacher questions (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016). This category of learners includes learners

who do not exhibit age appropriate nor grade-appropriate performance. They demonstrate high need for teacher intervention and extra lessons on multiple activities (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016).

School A, Below average learners



School B, Below average learners

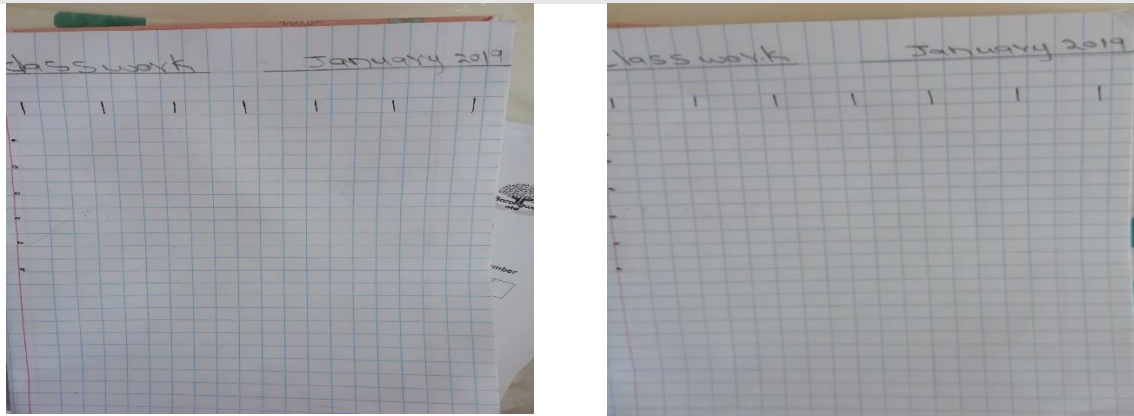


Table 10: Demonstration of consistency in Below average learners' oral and print performance.

Table 6 demonstrates performance in written activities for learners who showed minor participation in interactions. These are learners who would only speak in class to give one answer or little information to the teacher, and who sometimes refuse to give answers at all (Abucayon, Bautista & Romano, 2016). Majority of their answers are either out of context or show lack of concentration or listening skills, and teachers label such answers as 'wrong'. There are two insightful concerns regarding the below average learners' performances, i.e. reluctancy and lack of feedback from teachers. This category of learners comprised of learners who portrayed reluctant participation in classroom, and this pushed them to the experiences of passive learning in classroom. This was detected in their wrongful discussions, out of context answers

and poor concentration levels which teachers regarded as wrong answers. However, Arends and Phurutse (2009) claim teachers must be partly held responsible for learners' poor performance. It is significant in this context to hold teachers responsible for subconsciously marginalising the below average learners and not creating favourable learning environments for them to improve their performances. In table 4 and 5, especially in School B, learners' activity books show that Teacher B evaluated (or signed) the proficient and average learners' activities but has not evaluated (or signed) the below average learners' activities. This implies that the below-average learners' works were not evaluated. Thus, feedback regarding their performance is not given due consideration. Godwin-Jones (2006) states that giving learners feedback in all activities motivates them to take activities seriously and it improves the quality of learning. Thus, from the issues discussed under physical and pedagogic contextual matters to the current issues pertaining to poor learner feedback, it is arguable that while the proficient learners enjoy time and feedback privileges, the vulnerable learners become more excluded from learning and improving.

4.5. Data analysis: Emerging insights

The data presented in 4.4. is critically analysed through the following themes:

- **How listening and speaking skills are developed in Grade R**
- **Availability of resources and their usage for developing listening and speaking skills**
- **The challenges of developing listening and speaking skills Grade R.**

The above themes were generated from the findings discussed in 4.4. These themes address the events that responded to the questions of this study and reveal how such events yielded the understanding of how listening and speaking skills are developed in the two investigated schools.

Prior the critical discussion of themes, it is imperative to illuminate that the observation transcripts are crafted with use of transcription system symbols. The transcription system symbols are symbols that explain participants' non-verbal cues and expressions that were observed during classroom interactions (van Lier, 1990). Thus, the names and functions of the herein used transcription symbols are explained in Annexure D in the attachmens.

4.5.1. How listening and speaking skills are developed in Grade R

According to the Department of Education (White Paper 6, 2005) success in developing literacy skills (listening and speaking skills in this context) lies with the relevance and application of teaching and learning approaches, activities and resources that teachers adopt. Additionally, the roles that teachers and learners play in different lessons have great impacts on lesson outcomes. Thus, the theme of how listening and speaking skills are developed in Grade R is expatiated through the 3 subthemes below:

- How teachers apply the teaching and learning approaches to develop listening and speaking skills in Grade R
- The potency of activities and resources teachers use to develop listening and speaking skills in Grade R
- The role of teachers in developing, and the role of learners in acquiring listening and speaking skills

How teachers apply the teaching and learning approaches to develop listening and speaking skills in Grade R

The Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) recommends that teachers use the Communicative Language Teaching approach to teach listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. CAPS (2011) values language as a tool for communication and learning. Thus, CAPS (2011) believes that language can be acquired through effective communication between learners and teachers. Cleary (2014) claims that communication is broad in meaning. It can be used to refer to languages people use to interact, models, media and approaches that people use to share meaning (Cleary, 2014). However, Al-quada (2012) claims that the basic principle of effective listening and speaking skills development is the practice of interactive communication process in classroom.

Data from the observation checklist revealed that 33% of activities in the investigated schools were used to promote listening skills, whereas 25% of the activities thrived to develop learners' speaking skills. The results also indicated that 25% and 17% activities sought to develop learner's reading and writing skills respectfully. These results correlate with the argument of Sekhukhune (2013) that the process of learning and teaching in elementary grades is predominantly premised on orality (listening and

speaking). It is noticeable from these results that majority of the time was spent in classroom by children listening and speaking than they were reading and writing. Additionally, the reading resources were the pictorial story books which required learners to interpret, sequence or summarise events as demonstrated by pictures through oral presentations—which ultimately chained them back to speaking. Graph 1 below demonstrates the percentile results stated above.

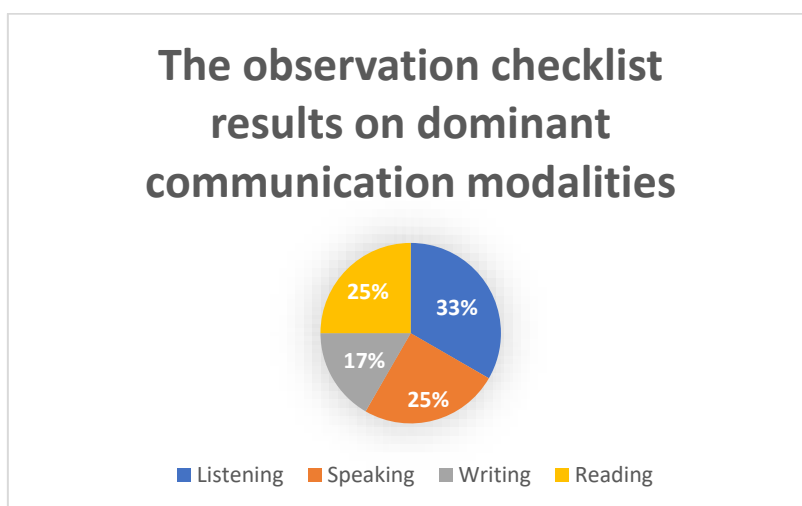


Figure 3: Dominant communication modalities at the investigated schools.

Although the graph indicates that listening, speaking, reading and writing activities were prevalent in both schools, the observation transcripts revealed that the practices of developing these skills, especially the listening and speaking skills, were not effective. Gruegeon (2010) cited by Birbili (2013) claims that effective listening and speaking skills development occurs in authentic communication spaces which are characterised by discussions, dialogue, debates, arguments, reasoning-gap activities, agreements and disagreements among many other reciprocal communicative tasks.

In contrast to the above claim, this study found that there were parallel communications between learners and teachers in the investigated schools. Learners only spoke under instructions to read picture story books, to mention functions of different body parts and to answer teachers' questions. This devalued the principles of CLT approach in that it dismissed authenticity and interactivity in communication. According to Koosha and Yakhabi (2013) CLT regards activities such as drama, debates and role play as pertinent activities for improving learners' (interactive) listening and speaking skills. The transcription below exemplifies the nature of interactions between learners and teachers in School A during story sharing lessons:

43.	LB3:	Afro tšhoši e be ele o mo nnyane, a palelwa ke go reka. Kgale bas a mmone. Yena a le o mo nnyane (0.4) Afro ant was very tiny, he was not able to buy. They could not see him. He was very tiny (0.4)
44.	TB:	Namile? And then?
45.	LB3:	Namile batho ba reka ba tloga yena a dutše kwa a re 'nna gak e kgone go reka' ke nna o mo nnyane' (0.5) ((looks at the teacher)) And then people bought and went away while he was seated there and saying 'I am not able to buy, I am very tiny
46.	TB:	Namile o ile a re go bona gore ga a kgone go reka ka morago a dira bjang? The what did he do after seeing that he is not able to buy?
47.	LB3:	Ka morago batho ba tsamaya, namile le yena a tsamaya, namile a ema ko pateng namile bus yam o tlogela (0.3) ((looks at the teacher)) Thereafter, people left, and he also left, and then he waited by the road and the bus left him. (0.3)
48.	TB:	Bus ye re go mo tlogela o ile a dra bjang? After the bus left him, what did he do?
49.	LB3:	Namile a nna kwa, namile yona ya tsamaya And then he sat there, and the bus left
50.	TB:	O ile a, ka morago o ile a dirang? What did, what did he do afterwards?
51.	LB3:	(0.5) ((squeezing her dress))
52.	TB:	Gore a tle a gole a be o mo golo o ile a dirang? For him to grow and be huge, what did he do? (class makes noise)
53.	TB:	O ile a dira eng gore a tle a gole a be o mo golo? Ye? What did he do to grow and become huge? Huh?
54.	LB7:	Ma'am ba re a ja They say he went to gym
55.	LB3:	A ja He ate
56.	TB:	A ja, a dira eng ga bedi? He ate, and what else did he do?
57.	LB3:	A ja namile ge a fetša a ya go jima. He ate and after that he went to gym
58.	TB:	Ge a seno ja le go jima, ka morago a dira eng?

Figure 4: Transcript template 1.

The teacher in the above transcript requested learners to stand in front of the class and re-tell the story she shared with the class from the previous day. The teacher pointed learners whose hands were risen to individually perform this activity. Due to time limitations, only 5 learners were able to do the summaries. Thus, the above transcript is a sample of the first learners' story re-tell.

There are two factors from the above transcript that oppose the basic principles of the CLT and thus hindered effective listening and speaking skills development. Firstly, is the interruptive environment the teacher creates for learners to make their summaries or story re-telling activities. In turn number 43, when Learner B3 (LB3) starts to introduce the summary of the story the teacher asks "*Namile?*", which means "And then?". The same attitude continued throughout the story retelling activity and led the researcher to the discovery that the teacher ended up dominating LB3's speech subconsciously. For instance, from turn number 47 to turn 58, the transcript shows that the learner's speech narrowed from a prolonged creative speech to shortened answers to the teacher's questions. It is observable from turn 47 to turn 58 that when LB3 says, for instance, "*Thereafter, people left, and he also left, and then he waited by the road and the bus left him*", Teacher B (TB) says "*After the bus left him, what did he do?*" LB3 "*And then he sat there, and the bus left*" TB "*What did, what did he do afterwards?*"... TB "*What did he do to grow and become huge? Huh?*" LB3 "*A ja- he ate*". It is imaginable how limiting it could be for learners to express their unique understandings of the story with teacher's comments between all lines of their speeches. Thus, the presenting learner's attributions became narrower in word count and in meaning while the teacher's voice became more dominant in that, all what learners said were answers to the teacher's questions. This was a limiting factor for the four learners who followed the first one because they felt propelled to revolve their understandings of the story around what the teacher was asking the first learner. Thus, instead of crafting their own stories using their varying vocabularies, learners who followed would stand at the front, say their greetings and names then wait for the teacher to ask them questions.

The second factor was the linear conversations between presenting learners and the teacher—which led to sheer exclusion of the seated learners. Nunan (2001) claims that listening is two-folds, it can either be a reciprocal or non-reciprocal process. As illuminated in Chapter 2, the reciprocal listening describes interactive communication

in which the listeners also become speakers and speakers become listeners interchangeably (Nunan, 2001). Non-reciprocal listening denotes a linear transfer of messages from the speaker to listeners (Nunan, 2001). In addition, Alonso (2013) asserts that speaking can also be described in two forms i.e. spoken production and spoken interaction. Spoken production is a process of learning the spoken language that is immersed with the linguistics components of language e.g. phonetics, phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and grammar. Whereas the spoken interaction is concerned with the abilities of individuals to use language to communicate meanings and share ideas in everyday encounters. Thus, with the consideration of the principles of CLT the researcher concurs with Nunan (2001) and Alonso (2013) that listening and speaking skills can be developed effectively through the reciprocal listening and the spoken interaction models.

In light of Transcription 1 above, it is arguable that there were no interactive discourses between teachers and learners in the investigated schools. Figure 5 below validates this notion:



Figure 5: Example of teacher to learner and learner to teacher interactions.

This diagram typifies the argument made previously that learners were requested to re-tell stories, but such events ended up turning into questions and answer sessions that limited learners' thinking and speaking capabilities. When a learner re-tells a story and the teacher interjects his/her speech with questions between all the lines of the learner's speech, the questions go directly from the teacher to the learner and so are the answers from the learner to the teacher. Thus, this nature of interaction dismisses Littlewood's (1981) notion of the teacher as a learner and the learner as a teacher and

creates an exclusive learning environment for other learners. For instance, the seated learners were excluded from participating in presentations because they played a passive listener's role during presentations. Due to their exclusion, as demonstrated in Figure 5 above, the seated learners ended up engaging in noise making and disruptive activities. This, consequently, rose a critical question of 'who listens to the learner who is making the presentation (if not the educator only) and who benefits from the interactions (if not minimally, the learner who makes the presentation)?' It is for this reason that the current researcher finds that story-sharing activities were not interactive, but linear, and only occurred between individual presenting learners and the teacher.

The above diagram shows that although the story re-telling activities were concealed by the question and answer sessions, the teacher's questions did not offer learners opportunities to engage in dialogic talk with the teacher nor peer learners. The teacher's questions did not allow learners to engage in reflective thinking. The questions neither gave learners access to meaningful learning. Consequently, this led learners to giving responses that were inadequate of promoting effective listening and speaking skills, and those that could not help the teacher to evaluate learners' progress towards listening and speaking skills development. Some of the learners' responses were labelled wrong, while some were reformulated. Thus, from one's perspective, the learners' wrong responses to teachers' questions were misquotes of the narrator's words, not reflections of misunderstanding and speaking difficulties. Alexander (2010) claims that learners' contributions and ideas should not be undermined nor be discretely labelled as wrong. Instead, they should be reflected upon, discussed, debated and argued about in a constructive manner. In turn, this would create an interactive environment in which children listen to one another, share ideas and build on each other's ideas.

4.5.1.1. The potency of activities and resources teachers used to develop listening and speaking skills in Grade R

According to Excell and Linington (2011) listening and speaking skills can be effectively developed through activities that encourage meaningful interactions. This includes activities that Van Der Walt, Evans and Kilfoil (2013) regard as natural listening activities which encourage authentic dialogues and daily life conversations.

Thus, amid the numerous activities outlined on the daily programme of the DoE (2019), the observations revealed that teachers relied greatly on *Morning ring* activities, *My Body* activities, storytelling and retelling activities and the subsequent question and answer sessions to develop children's listening and speaking skills. The above-mentioned activities are interactive in approach but are greatly dependant on administration to either work for or against the anticipated subject and curriculum goals.

Educators claimed that the above-mentioned activities are most enabling for them to develop children's listening and speaking skills. For instance, through these activities Teacher A (TA) said, *"I am able to talk to them [learners] and assess how they develop mentally. Does this learner understand me? Do learners hear what I say? When I give them feedback after speech, does this learner hear me? Some totally do not hear me and some do."* How do you help those who do not hear you, the researcher asked, and TA responded that *"We just try to engage them because we cannot discriminate them."* On the other hand, Teacher B (TB) said, *"In Grade R, we develop oral which is to listen and to speak, the written language which is to read and write. We also teach stories and other things. We encourage the listening and speaking skills through poetry and story lessons. After poetry and story lessons we ask them questions and that will be their opportunities to speak. We also encourage story telling-(TA) and story re-telling-(TB) and through it [them] they are able to speak."*

Data from the observation checklist revealed that although there were story sharing activities as well as questions and answer sessions, 46% of the content of these activities was based on discourse. Discourse connotes that the activities are premised on oral communication and encourage learners to speak about what they feel, see, think and know (Ziegler, Paulus & Woodside, 2014). In the context of this study, such activities included Weather charts, My body theme, Birthday songs and telling or re-telling stories. The checklist results further demonstrated that 36% content was based on the functional use of language. In function, learners and teachers engage in authentic communication that requires them to use everyday language to learn in classroom (Tomlim, 1990). This use enables learners to draw from their pre-existing experiences and repertoires of languages to make meaning in new interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). Interactions and form (each) comprised 9% of the content of the above-mentioned activities. Language form entails the formal activities such as writing

vowels and numbers (Tomlim, 1990). When learners performed activities in formal content, teachers encouraged them to remain quiet, not interrupt one another and focus on their own works. Hence the incapacities of the formal activities to yield effective findings regarding the development of listening and speaking skills. The graph below demonstrates the above quoted percentages.

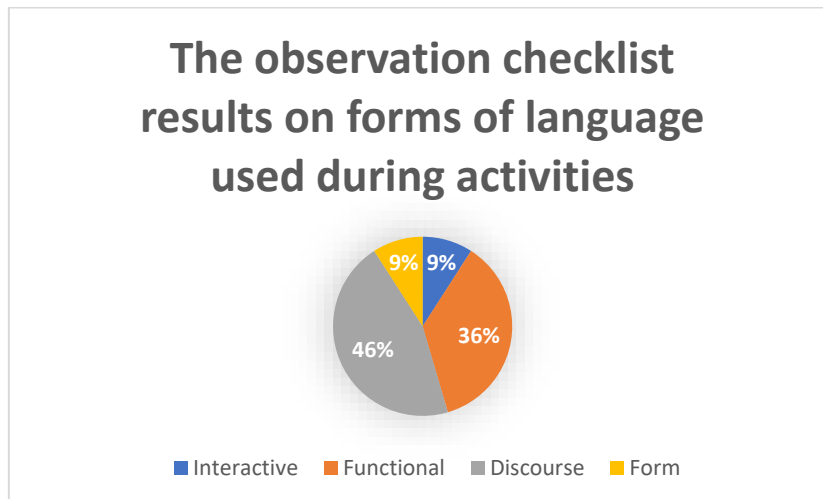


Figure 6: Findings on forms of language used in schools.

The above findings reveal that teaching language through discourse, function and interactions was the reliable method of equipping learners with effective listening and speaking skills than was the formal approach. Palmer (2014) supports this argument in stating that question and answer sessions are capable of equipping children with effective oral skills if well administered. This implies that teachers need to master the art of asking children thought-provoking questions as well as to provoke justifiable responses from learners. In alignment with Palmer's argument (2014), Krashen (1982) claims that teachers should use interactional approaches to enhance listening and speaking skills development. Thus, Krashen (1982) suggests that teachers can make the environment of learning sufficiently challenging for learners to grasp knowledge by using the input+1 (i+1) method to ask questions. The input+1 strategy denotes that teacher's questions should not be too hard nor too simple for learners to comprehend (Schutz, 2007). That is, questions should encourage learners to draw from their linguistic backgrounds and memories to retrieve information to help themselves formulate explainable responses.

The observations revealed that there were dominant instances of question and answer sessions during class activities. This is particularly because even the activities that

were meant for free speeches and open discussions were subconsciously diverted to questions and answer sessions as demonstrated Transcript 1. The practices within the immanent question and answer sessions seemed to contradict the suggestions of CAPS (2011) that question and answer activities must be interactive and enabling of participation for both teachers and learners. The transcripts on the next pages validate this argument:

School A

TA:	Ge re lebeletše ka mo ntle ban aba ka re a bona gore bo sele. Bo sele ga botse, go hlakile. Ke mang yo a ka tšwelang kwa ntle] When we look outside my children we see that it is a new day. It is a good new day, it is clear. Who can go outside]
Class:	[<i>((chanting and raising their hands))</i> Ke nna! Ke nna!] [It is me! It is me!]
TA:	[A lebelela kwa ntle a boya a mpotša gore kwa ntle] [And come back to tell me that the outside]
	<i>((learners turn and look at the door, some hastily try to o outside))</i>
TA:	Emang! Bo sele bjang? Wait! How is the weather?
Class:	Ke nna, ke nna (<i>((raisin their hands))</i>) It is me, it is me
TA:	Emišang matsogo ke le bone Raise your hands for e to see you
	<i>((Learners raise their hands))</i>
TA:	<i>((Points at LA5))</i> tsamaya, a re ye. Tsamaya o lebelele kwa ntle o boye] Go, move. Go and look outside and come back
	<i>((LA4 rushes outside))</i>
TA:	Hey! Ke romile wo (<i>((pointing LA5))</i>) I sent this one
	<i>((LA5 walks outside))</i>
TA:	O ya mo ntle mo setupung, a re ye, e ya kwa ntle o hlole o mpotše gore naa bo sele bjang. O bonang ka ntle? You go outside to the veranda, let's go. Go outside and check how the weather is. What do you see outside?
	<i>((LA5 returns))</i>
TA:	Re botše ngwanaka Tell us my child

Figure 7: Transcription template 2.

School B

1. TB: ((*Demonstrating by pointing on the chart on the chalkboard*)) ke tlile go le šupetša ditho tša mmele, (.) gomme la nama la mpotša mešomo ya tšona
I am going to point at different parts of the body, and you are going to tell me their functions
2. TB: ((*Point at the eyes*)) dits- ma::hlo, ma::hlo...? re na le mahlo, <mošomo wa mahlo ke go dira eng?
ear- Ey::es... Ey::es? we have eyes, <what is the function of eyes?
3. Class: ((*Chanting*)) ↑ke go bona?↑
↑is to see?↑
4. TB: ↑ae, o emiša letsogo (0.3), ↓mošomo wa mahlo
↑no, you raise your hand, ↓the functions of the eyes
5. LB3: ((*Sighs*))
6. TB: mahlo a re thuša ka eng, mošomo wa mahlo ke go dira eng?
how do eyes help us, what is the function of the eyes?
((Learners raised their hands))
7. TB: ((*pointing at one learner and calling them by their surname*)) <LB6!
8. LB6: ((*with a low voice*)) ↓go a tšhela sehlare↓
↓to pour eye medicine in them↓
9. TB: o a tšhela sehlare? >Ke ra mošomo wa ona gore a re thuša bjang?<
you pour them with medication? >I want to know their function as to how they help us↑< (0.5)
10. TB: _akere ge o a tšhela sehlare a tla ba a lwala?
is it not that when you pour them with medication, they will be ill?
11. LB6: ↑Ee↑
↑Yes↑
12. TB: Ee::, bjale re ra gore mahlo mošomo wa ona ke go dira eng, goba a re thuša bjang? mahlo
ye::s, now we mean what is the function of the eyes or how do they help us? eyes!
13. TB: ((*points at one learner and call them by surname*)) LB7!
14. LB7: ((*responds with unconfident voice*)) <mahlo
<eyes
((Class laughs))

Figure 8: Transcription template 3.

In the above transcripts, teachers engaged learners in different activities of the same structure. These activities required learners to speak about their understanding of the

weather and different parts of the body. In the above transcripts, there are instances in turn 45-56 (School A) and turn 45-50 (school B) whereby educators ask questions that required certain answers, but learners gave different answers to the ones expected by the teachers. The learners' answers were correct as per literal interpretation of wording in the question asked by the teacher, but when one puts the questions into discourse (language use) and context, the learners' answers become wrong. Thus, teachers missed the opportunities in this regard to use listening and speaking activities to create awareness of language context and discourse to the learners. For instance, in School A the teacher pointed at different parts of the body on a chart and requested learners to mention their functions. In School B, the teacher sent learners outside individually to assess the weather and come back to answer questions regarding what they have seen or felt. Teachers' questions and learners' responses were for instance structured as follows:

Teacher A

Learner's response

Mošomo wa mahlo ke eng?

Ke go tšhela sehlare.

What is the function of the eye?

Is to pour medicine.

Mošomo wa mahlo ke eng?

Go bona.

What is the function of the eyes?

To see.

Mošomo wa nko ke eng?

Ke go ntšha mamina.

What is the function of the nose?

Is to release mucus.

Moxomo wa dinko ga se go ntšha mamina.

Ke mang a ka re botšang mošomo wa dinko.

The function of the nose is not to release mucus. Who can tell us the function of the nose?

Ke go dupa.

Is to smell.

Ke go dupa ee, o mongwe?

Yes, is to smell. Another function?

Ke go hema.

Mmetheleng matsogo.

Is to breathe.

Applaud him.

Learners clap

Table 11: Teacher and learner interaction sample School A.

Teacher B	Learners
Ke mang yo a ka yang kwa ntle a mpotša gore bo sele bjang kwa ntle?	Go a fiša.
Who can go outside and tell me how the weather is outside? ((She selects one learner))	It is hot.
Re bona ka eng gore go a fiša?	
What do we see with that it is hot?	Ka mahlo. With eyes.
Aowa, ga re bone ka mahlo. Ke mang yo a ka mpotšang gore re bona ka eng?	Go na le letšatši.
No, we do not see with eyes. Who else can go and tell me what we see with? ((select a learners))	There is sun.
There is sun, applaud him	

Learners clap hands

Table 12: Teacher and learner interaction sample School B.

The above transcriptions and the subsequent extracts demonstrate that teachers authoritatively dominated classroom interactions. Teachers were observed to be sifting learners' responses using the correct and incorrect notions. Palmer (2014) claims that teachers spend much of their time in classroom either explaining or using

highly abstract language to enforce knowledge in learners' minds. This was also prevalent in the current study in that, the question and answer sessions were meant to assess the learners' levels of understanding, memory recall and general knowledge but unique knowledge was not acknowledged. As noted by Vygotsky (1978), every learners' answer needs to be considered as their unique knowledge which may emanate from their prior interactions and former discussions of the same topic. Thus, despite the fact that these sessions only allowed teachers to ask questions and learners to only give answers, teacher's responses to learner's answers were demotivating as well as limiting in thought and expression. For instance, it is general knowledge that the nose can be used for releasing mucus, smelling and breathing. However, these answers were said to be wrong. It is also common that medication can be poured in the eyes in situations when eyes cannot see well. These responses were relevant to the questions asked and required teachers' skills to understand the perspectives from which learner's answers emerge.

These scenarios resonate with Mashatole's (2014) argument that teachers are not able to move beyond the scope of their curriculum in that, teachers are seen in this study struggling to understand learners' responses beyond literal words as against formal documents. Although these activities had so much potential to equip learners with the effective listening and speaking skills, they were ineffectively administered for this purpose and thus not able to do so to the maximum extent. The educators did not seem to be courageous to explore the learners' responses and take further initiatives to explore reasoning or thinking behind the learners' responses. Thus, it can be determined that teachers could not use these activities to encourage meaningful talk.

From the line of questions teachers ask in both schools, it is observable that learners listen more and say very little during the morning ring activity. It is further observable that teachers ask questions that keep learners' prior knowledge restricted and thoughts limited. Garcia (2013) argues learners must be prepared to become successful communicators by allowing them to use their varying repertoires of languages to express their views. Thus, the teachers' questions were found to be close ended and unenticing of realistic communication. When a teacher asks "*Mošomo wa nko ke eng*" which translates, "*What is the function of the nose*", it could suggest to one, based on teacher's response to learners' answers, that there is only one function of the nose. Instead, the questions should have been, what are the functions of the

nose and the other body parts. Mickan (2012) claims that one of the defining features of a language is its ability to be used. Therefore, what was observed in classroom is that learners rarely used languages to learn, and their abilities to use language to learn through orality were not evaluable because of the defining constrains expressed above.

4.5.1.2. The role of teachers in developing, and the role of learners in acquiring listening and speaking skills

To enable functional learning to take place in and outside classrooms, Freire (1996: 54) claims that teachers need to refrain from attitudes and practices in which: a). “the teacher teaches, and the learners are taught; b). the teacher knows everything, and the learners know nothing; c). the teacher thinks, and the learners are thought for and about; d). the teacher talks, and the learners listen passively and idly; and e). the teacher enforces his ideas and decisions to learners and they uncritically comply.” Although these suggestions were spoken in the context of higher learning, they are also relevant and applicable in the context of the Foundation Phase. Children can construct their own knowledge through experiencing situations and later reflecting on those experiences to make sense of the new encounters (Vygotsky, 1978).

This study has found that teachers in both schools authoritatively dominated classroom interactions. Teachers’ practices defied the notion of Vygotsky (1978) that their role is to mediate learning, thus, helping learners to bridge the gap between their existing knowledge and their potential knowledge. This study unveiled that learners played passive roles in learning, while teachers played the most dominant roles. The graph below validates this argument:

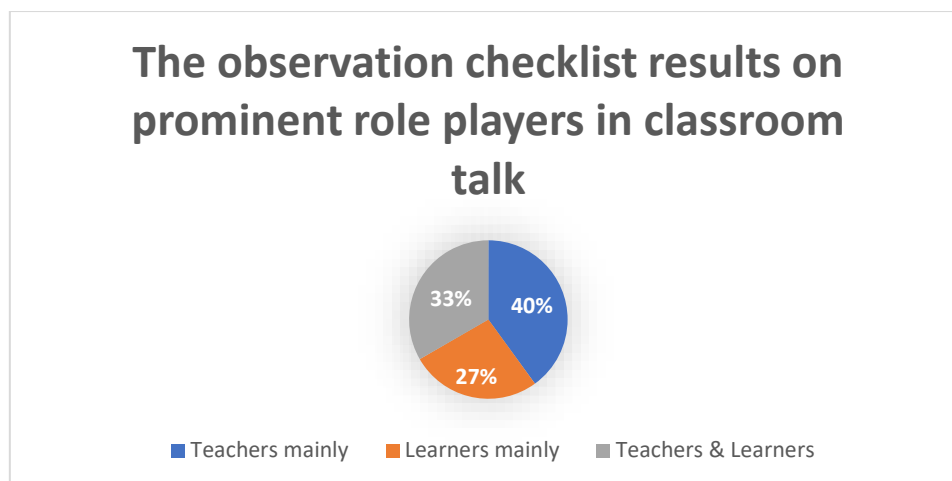


Figure 9: Findings on dominant role players.

The above graph illustrates that teachers were the main role players in 40% of the classroom activities and talk. This means that classroom talk was dominated by teachers and only created 27% opportunities for learners to play prominent roles in talk and activities. The notion of ‘Learners mainly’ does not dismiss the teachers’ participation in class. It illustrates that learners participated in talk and activities at the above value, yet with minimal talk and in some context overshadowing talk, from the teachers. The graph also shows that 33% activities involved both teachers and learners engaging in fair time-shared activities, and all of them enjoying a balanced percentage of roles and responsibilities.

The grounds for the argument that learners played passive roles during classroom interactions are that teachers were observed to speak for one to two minutes and only prompted questions that require learners to give one word response, which a learner would do in less than ten seconds. Although Chomsky (1999) claims that meaning is not centred around the quantity of words in a sentence, prolonged oral expressions remain central to the development of effective listening and speaking skills. After the long expressions from teachers, they (teachers) asked learners if they understood through phrases such as “*akere*” which means *-is it?* and “*le a nkwa*” *-do you hear me?* or “*le a nkwešiša*” *-do you understand me?*. Thus, learner’s responses to these statements would always be a loud yes, expressed in Sepedi as “*Ee*”.

Palmer (2014) claims that teachers cannot rely on learners’ responses ‘yes’ as evidence that they have understood. Teachers have to ask thought provoking

questions that encourage learners to express views, than to give singular answers. Thus, it was typical in the efforts to develop listening and speaking skills that teachers in both schools did not ask learners to make meaningful contributions to classroom discussions—let alone affording them the freedom to orate story summaries in their own words. Thus, learners were deprived opportunities to talk, ask or answer questions or participate in story activities as active speakers and listeners. This had negative effects on the development of the listening and speaking skills and it shut down the thoughts of majority learners in the classroom.

When asked about the abilities of learners to use language to acquire the listening and speaking skills, Teacher A (TA) claimed that *“They use language to express their views by doing rhyme activities. They do rhymes, poems, songs, stories and drama so that they can speak and know language.”* Teacher B on the other hand, expressed that *“Learners can express their views by asking questions where they do not understand.”*

None of the processes mentioned above was feasible during classroom observations. The most reliable activities for oral skills development observable was the story telling activities. However, during the story lessons, the observations revealed that children spoke in class only when they were instructed to do so. In other words, learners spoke through a point-to-point narrative—with teachers closely monitoring their talk. As already highlighted, both educators did not offer children opportunities to raise questions, seek clarity or express their own views at meaningful levels. For instance, in transcription templates 1, 2 and 3 educators dominated classroom interactions and encouraged very minimal oral contributions or participation of the learners. Most of their questions required fixed answers and irrational phrases at times.

The common practice in both schools was that teachers would speak for long and at a pause or break, ask children if they understood through a Sepedi expression *“Akere”*. In a classroom that comprises of matured learners, e.g. Grade 7-12, it is likely that after a prolonged talk by the educator that is followed by the phrase *“akere”*, a learner’s hand can be raised in quest for clarity before the teacher moves on. The phrase *“akere”* is a confirmatory question that could be phrased in English as ‘isn’t it, do you understand, are we together, did you get that, okay? and so on’. The researcher wishes to give deserved attention to the impacts of this phrase on listening and

speaking skills development in the observed schools because, minor as it is, its use in classroom contributed immensely to creating confusion among educators and learners. This happened in the sense that when learners said yes to teachers' question 'Akere', teachers assumed that learners understand. There has never been an instance in both schools where the educator would ask "akere?" and learners give a negative response "no". Thus, learners always responded to this phrasal question with an active yes, then the teachers continued with the subject after this response. However, with support of performing the fine-grained multimodal observations, proposed in Chapter 3, the researcher revealed that in some instances of the observation learners would respond yes to the teachers' questions, yet their facial expressions showed great confusion and/or misunderstanding.

For instance, during the morning ring/circle activities learners ought to demonstrate their knowledge about their bodies, the weather, birthday charts, family and many other themes suggested in the pace setter. In the transcriptions of the themes, "*My Body-Mmele wa ka*" and "*Weather-Boso*" as already mentioned, activities were meant to teach learners about different parts of the body and their functions as well as to interpret the weather. Thus, educators would point at one part of the body on a chart and select one learner to mention its function. On the weather chart they would be asked 'how is the weather outside today?'. What transpired during observations was that both educators asked learners close ended questions, and although the questions were close-ended, learners' responses offered educators opportunities to open or widen the discussions and entice prolonged responses—of which educators did not perceive.

For example, TA asked: "*what do we use the nose for?*" and later "*What do we use eyes for?*". TB asked: "*What do we see with that it is hot outside?*". To the first question, a learner responded, "*to release mucus*". To the second question a learner responded, "*To put in medication (Go tšhela sehlare)*" and to the third question a learner responded, "*With eyes*".

That is, we use the nose to release mucus "*Go ntšha mamina*", we use eyes to pour medication "*Go tšhela sehlare*", and we see with eyes ("*ka mahlo*") that it is hot outside. All these responses were declared wrong and were later followed by the question

'*akere?*', to which learners confusedly responded with a yes. Three insights emerged from the above incidences.

The first one is that the phrasal question '*akere*' played a decisive role in creating confusion and marginalising the oral contributions of the learners as well as to reject their thinking. It appears that learners were subconsciously propelled to shove their own knowledge and ingest that of a prominent educator. The second insight is that the classroom conversations are arranged in a manner that posits learners as the main listeners and educators as the main speakers. When teachers speak for long and learners speak in response to formula questions, it yields a lot about participation imbalances between the learners and teachers. In simple terms, this suggests that in classroom there are those who speak and those who listen, and this rarely, if not never, turns the other way around. Thus, it could be argued that the observed educators only listened to the literal words learners said in response, instead of the meanings beyond learner's literal words.

The third insight is that teachers demonstrated lack of skills to contextualise their conversations with learners, particularly their questions. Consequently, they got trapped by search for accurate answers into rejecting the learners' responses. Nachoua (2012) argues that contextual awareness is important in teaching listening and speaking skills than it is in reading and writing. This is because written texts could be re-read for clearer sense, but spoken messages are hardly repeatable. Thus, the above misunderstandings between learners and teachers demonstrated that there is lack of context awareness between educators and learners—to which the educator owes responsibility to make children ware of. Nachoua (2012) claims that how a learner would respond to a medical doctor when they ask, "how are you?" could not be the same as how the same learner would respond when asked by an educator even in the same physical environment. The different responses are influenced by the context beyond the physical environment within which conversations occur.

In this case, one finds that the learners' responses are tied to the previous interactions that they have had with the teachers or their classmates. More even, they may emanate from their pre-school encounters. In particular, the learners' responses may have been linked to their previous lessons on the theme 'My Body'. Thus, the children make meaning of the teachers' questions based on their pre-contextual encounters

with the question. With light to Vygotsky's (1978) perspective of background knowledge and pre-existing experiences, it is arguable that much of the responses teachers reject echo the learners experiences with the subject content. Thus, when educators say "*We do not use the nose to release mucus*", "*We do not use eyes to pour medication*" and "*We do not see with eyes that it is hot outside*", without engaging further on the responses learners have given, and without providing or clarifying the contexts of their questions, but persisting to get correct answers, learners start to feel obliged to agree to everything educators approves of. As such, children's responses "yes" to "*akere*" cannot be reliably used as measures of understanding because they emanate from fear of rejection, confusion and lack of context and understanding. Van der Berg (2015) expresses this better when stating that learners are used as casualties to teachers' goals. In short, the above incidences portrayed teachers as dominant knowledge gate keepers whose responsibilities were to transmit rigid knowledge to learners. Whereas learners were perceived as passive knowledge recipients whose knowledge was rejected, belittled and reformulated.

4.5.1.3. Availability of resources and their usage for developing listening and speaking skills

Westbrook, Durrani, Brown, Orr, Pryor, Boddy and Salvi (2013) claim that it is difficult for teachers to find or select resources that will meet learners' communication needs and help them achieve lesson goals. Additionally, it is arguably frustrating, as was observed in this study, for teachers to be limited to using one resource to teach variety of skills to diverse learners. This study revealed that teachers solely relied on print resources as the primary materials for developing listening and speaking skills. Secondly, the teachers used oral traditions (talk) to enhance learners' listening and speaking skills. The graph below demonstrates the findings pertaining to the available resources and extents to which the resources were used to improve learners' listening and speaking skills.

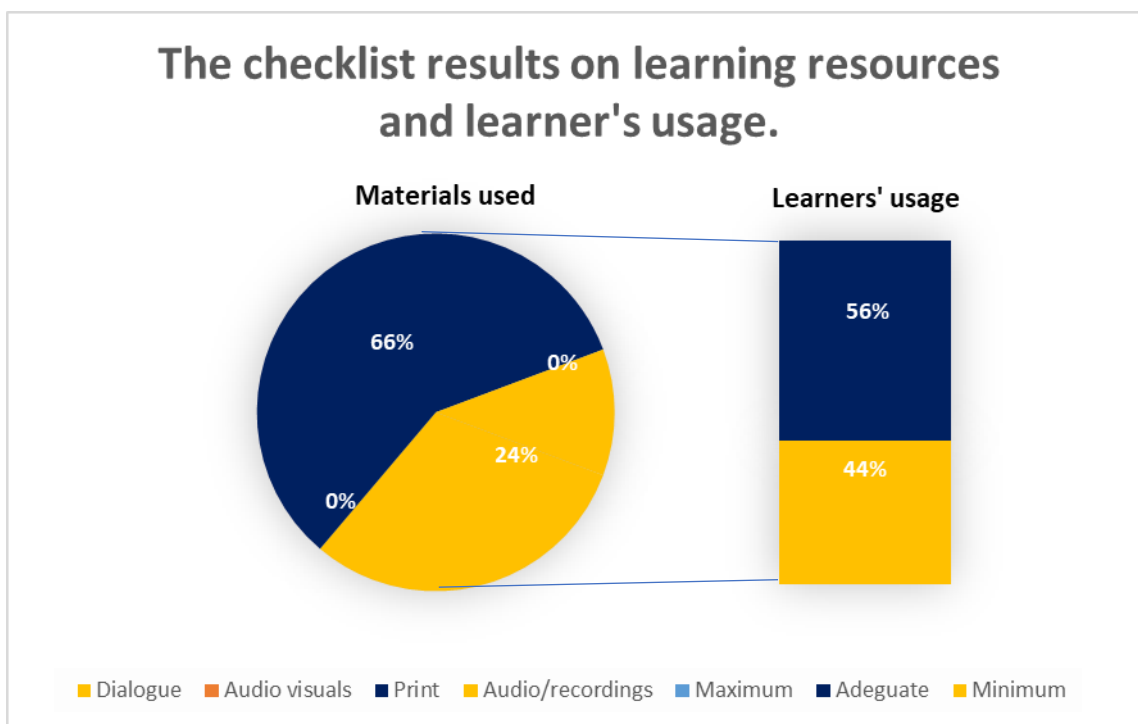


Figure 10: Findings on available resources and levels of usage.

The above graph demonstrates that print resources were dominantly used in classroom and were the primary resources for developing listening and speaking skills. The graph shows that 66% of classroom talk was based on print and 24% was based on traditional dialogue. The use of print to develop listening and speaking skills incapsulates story books, pictures and diagrams, while dialogue entails oral conversations. There were no observable activities in which teachers used audio visuals or audio/recordings to teach listening and speaking skills. Print resources such as story books were used to develop listening and speaking skills through storytelling, summaries and story re-telling activities. However, their use was not fruitful for developing learners' oral skills because, as already explained, learners' voices were submerged by teachers' questions and demands for precise answers. Additionally, learners did not showcase new concepts nor effective grasp of ones introduced by teachers because their voices and thoughts were dominated, interjected and resultantly overshadowed by teachers' quest for right answers.

Talk was more prevalent through question and answer sessions. In these activities, teachers would narrate a story or demonstrate a diagram to children, narrate the content of the resource and later ask learners questions. Similar concern to the one raised above re-emerged, that learners were not asked questions that require them to

think nor express meaningful ideas. The observed activities did not yield potentialities of developing new vocabulary nor concepts. The activities neither challenged learners' thinking. These factors were limiting in thoughts and expressions and thus did not encourage active voluntary participation. Cleary (2014) claims that communication involves a wide spectrum of languages, models, media and approaches that people use to share meaning. However, this study has found that communication in the observed classrooms was confined to the use of live talk and print resources to. This rose numeral challenges, and incapacitated teachers to manoeuvre between different modalities to accommodate all different types of learners.

4.6. The challenges of developing listening and speaking skills in Grade R

The DoE (White Paper 6, 2005) expresses that there are numerous challenges that teachers in Early Childhood Education are faced with, which hinder effective learning from taking place. The DoE (White Paper 6, 2005) claims that although the challenges may vary in magnitude from one school to the other, they are commonly provoked by limitations of the physical and/or pedagogic contexts of learning.

Under the physical context, two major challenges that were observed were lack of physical infrastructure, especially sitting furniture and shortage of learning and teaching resources such as story books, audio visuals and other digital resources. The lack of furniture affected learning in general in that teachers were propelled to divide learners into two groups to administer different activities, especially the written activities. The challenge this posed on developing listening and speaking skills was that these groups were not preparedly formulated because they were “a-no-option” situation for teachers. The group works through which writing activities were administered were not encouraging of collaboration among learners. Learners were banned from speaking to one another or help each other in writing activities, unless one asks for a scissor, colour or marker. Although it is enshrined in the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT, 2019) lesson plan document that teachers are encouraged to use group activities as key methods of developing oral skills, teachers in the observed classrooms were propelled by lack of furniture to form groups for written works—not advertently in pursuit to expand their oracy teaching methods. The NECT (2019) lesson plan states that it is obligatory that learners be engaged in group works, drama and peer work to motivate meaningful listening and speaking interests.

The NECT (2019) lesson plan informs that learners should not be grouped equivalently according to their capabilities, but groups should comprise of learners with different strengths. However, it was found in this study, as discussed in 4.4, that the proficient learners were grouped together and enjoyed a lion's share of the time for performing written activities. The proficient learners were further privileged of effective scaffolding and feedback. Although this organisation is forbidden by the CAPS (2011) and the NECT (2019), it seemed to be encouraged by Principal A in her statement that "*In Foundation Phase we use group works predominantly. You organise learners into good groups in a manner that you would know which ones are slow-learners and which ones are not. Therefore, you cannot teach them all at the same time, hence we have the floor mat. You take others to a mat, and give them a different activity, and deal with another group.*"

The implications of the above statement are that learners can be grouped in terms of their strengths and/or weaknesses, and this yields an unintended opposition or ignorance of the NECT and CAPS stipulations that learners should be mixed to enable peer scaffolding. As Nation and Newton (2009) put it, balancing groups with different levels of learners may enable the proficient learners to give guidance to the average and the below average learners, and thus provide disadvantaged learners with pegs upon which they can hang their ideas. This would in turn stimulate collaborative learning attitudes among learners. Thus, as indicated in 4.4 this study observed that the average and below average learners were mixed in certain instances and performed their activities under constraints of time. Additionally, these groups were not given effective feedback orally as well as through assessment (marking) of their written works. Although the herein discussed activities had no direct bearing with the development of listening and speaking skills development, they had powerful influence of hindering learners' motivation to perform oral and written activities actively—and this may justify the findings from textual analysis that learners who performed at proficient, average and below average levels during oral activities were found to maintain tantamount standards even in written activities.

4.6.1. Limitations of (learning and teaching) resources for developing listening and speaking skills.

This study has revealed that teachers and learners relied solely on print resources and live talk to develop listening and speaking skills. There were dire scarcities of digital resources for developing listening and speaking skills in both schools. Grussendorff, Grussendorff, Booyse and Burroughs (2014) claim that digital resources are not effective nor compliant with the current curriculum theorem (CLT) and demands because they encourage rote and repetition. However, Nachoua's (2012) exploration of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for improving students' listening skills reveals that there are more advantages of using technology to develop oral skills than there are advantages of not. Nachoua (2012) claims that live talk has limited opportunities for audience to re-hear what the speaker said in orality and it is not easy for the speaker to re-tell the statement and re-use the same words and facial expressions when repeating statements. Therefore, the advantage of using audios and audio visuals is that learners who missed the content, the general idea of the story and other unifying aspects of communication will have opportunities of re-hearing the recording and re-looking into speaker's gestures to make better understanding of conveyed messages. In agreement, Gilakjani (2012) claims that facial expressions in live dialogues are the grammar of oral conversations. That is, one is guided by facial gestures of the speaker for meaning when listening. Therefore, digital resources have the capabilities of exposing learners to different gestures, vocabularies, accents and speeds of speaking.

Lack of these resources posed a challenge not only of limiting teachers to use uniform resources, but also of discouraging inclusivity in learning. As Gilakjani (2012) alerts, there are three types of learners, the auditory, oral, visionary and kinesthetics. These are learners who respectfully depend on hearing, speaking, seeing and doing to learn in classroom. Thus, resource limitations and the subsequent incapability of teachers to diversify strategies and multiply activities resulted in the exclusion of other learners from learning.

From the pedagogic perspective, listening and speaking skills development endeavours were hindered by poor teacher content knowledge, poor lesson preparations, lack of lesson plan revision and time limitations. The observed

challenges such as poor teacher content knowledge, poor lesson preparations and lack of lesson plan revision are communally discussed under the theme, Teachers' lesson under-preparedness. The shortfalls of time constraints are also discussed separately as a subtheme.

4.6.2. Teachers' lesson under-preparedness

The inabilities of teachers in both schools to implement curriculum and lesson plan suggestions contributed immensely in mystifying the processes of developing learners' listening and speaking skills. The mismatch between curriculum stipulations and actual classroom practices deterred majority of the learners from participating in activities in a manner that is inclusive, active and interactive. This suggested that teachers may not be revising their teaching resources such as lesson plans or may be unable to implement the stipulations of the curriculum and lesson plans.

Teacher dominance also emerged as a sheer contributory factor towards ineffective listening and speaking skills development. For instance, discouraging learners' free speech, limiting their talk to formula questions and answers as well as the un-interactive group activities suggested that teachers play authoritative roles in classroom. This was a limiting factor and thus a challenge because learners spoke only to respond to questions and instructions and provided answers which are sifted and labelled wrong in confusing context. Thus, learners withdrew from expressing meaningful ideas to answering teachers' questions.

4.6.3. Time limitations

CAPS states that learners should be provided with many opportunities to develop listening and speaking skills. van Staden and Howie (2012) claim that 'many opportunities' is used to denote a large number of occasions of doing something. In the context of CAPS (2011) 'many opportunities' is used in a broader sense to refer to sufficient time, inclusive activities, enabling environments, diverse and flexible learning and teaching methods. Tables 13 and 14 below illustrate weekly lesson routines and time specifications for developing different skills in the Foundation Phase for both English HL and Sepedi HL. Only the English version is demonstrated in the tables

below because the Sepedi version is a direct translation of the English versions of weekly routine and time specifications.

4.6.3.1. LESSON DEMONSTRATIONS

Weekly routine and lessons

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Morning Oral	Morning Oral	Morning Oral	Morning Oral	Morning Oral
Phonics 10	Phonics 10	Phonics 10	Phonics 10	Phonics 20
Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15
Handwriting 30	Writing 30	Handwriting 15	Writing 15	Writing 15
Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15	Group Guided Reading 15
Shared Reading 15	Shared Reading 15	Shared Reading 15	Listening & Speaking 30	Listening & Speaking 15
Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Shared Reading 15
Total 85	Total 85	Total 70	Total 85	Total 95

Table 13: Foundation Phase weekly routine and lessons.

4.6.3.2. Caps specifications on time

ACTIVITY	SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION	NOTES
Listening & Speaking	15 minutes per day x 3 days	45 minutes allocated to LISTENING & SPEAKING
Phonics	15 minutes per day x 4 days	60 minutes allocated to PHONICS
Shared Reading	20 minutes per day x 3 days	60 minutes allocated to SHARED READING
Group Guided Reading	30 minutes per day x 5 days	150 minutes allocated to GROUP GUIDED READING
Handwriting	15 minutes per day x 3 days	45 minutes allocated to HANDWRITING
Writing	15 minutes per day x 4 days	60 minutes allocated to WRITING

Table 14: CAPS specifications on time

Despite the feasible need to develop listening and speaking skills, there seem to be a snail-paced transformation towards developing listening and speaking skills as effective modes of language acquisition in the South African curriculum. This is because the DBE (2012) prioritises the listening and speaking skills but does not dedicate adequate time to, nor does it express immense emphasis on, the development of listening and speaking skills. Field (2009) claims that listening and speaking skills are treated as extra skills. Field's claim can be accredited validity in this study on the basis that listening and speaking skills are taught 3 days a week and are only afforded 15 minutes each day. The compatibility of these allocations with respect to the processes, the demands and difficulties of developing oral skills are questionable. That is, how do teachers afford all learners opportunities to express themselves fluently within such limited time frames? How do teachers integrate different subjects (Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills) in one activity, maintain the content of each subject and still be able to reach out to all learners to meet their needs within these confining time frames? Thus, this study finds that the motives that guided 15 minutes allocation to oral skills development were not attentive to the demands of this process as well as to the principles of CLT.

The interviewed Grade R teachers expressed that they are not given any form of support in form of workshops nor in-service training. Principal B added that since she has been a principal in school B since 2014, there has never been a foundation phase curriculum specialist or advisor who ever visited her school. It is arguable in this regard that the stipulations of CAPS and the Maleboho-East Department of Education do not give Grade R teachers sufficient support in terms of guidance on how to develop various skills, especially listening and speaking skills in this context.

Although the above tables indicate limiting time allocations, they also do not seem to provide teachers with grounds to interpret the Department of Basic Education's declaration that "...children must be provided with 'many opportunities' to use language to develop speaking skills" (DBE, 2010: 10). The evidence that little time is devoted to listening and speaking skills development may arguably imply that the notion of 'many opportunities' is not used to only refer to the length of time for teaching different skills. As already indicated, this may also mean that educators must provide learners with ample activities that enhance their listening and speaking skills. Thus, teachers were unable to apply this interpretation, and were also limited by the lack of

resources to diversify learning and teaching for effective listening and speaking skills development.

4.7. Conclusion

This study has found that to ensure that children acquire effective listening and speaking skills through the oral medium, teachers engaged learners in activities such as story reading, story-telling and re-telling as well as the question and answer activities which occurred through Morning ring activities, My body and Weather chart interpretation activities. It was evident that both teachers applied the communicative and interactive approaches to learning and teaching different skills as recommended by CAPS (2011). However, there were limiting factors in activities and approaches that were applied to develop listening and speaking skills.

Although the activities and approaches that were used were in the best interest of enhancing the oral and aural activities, of which they were capable, they did not seem to be applied or practised in the manner that allows them to support the learners development of listening and speaking skills. The researcher has observed that the endeavoured activities that were applied in pursuit of developing listening and speaking skills were applied in manners that were ignorant of the interactive nature of meaningful communication. This is because the activities did not facilitate talk among learners themselves nor encourage active participation as well as meaningful communication between learners and teachers. As demonstrated in transcript 1 and 2, dialogues occurred between educators and individual learners who were selected to give answers to teacher's questions or perform the supposed story retelling. Furthermore, the dialogues between teachers and individual learners were found to be learner.

Harmer (2007) states that interactions that are capable of developing the listening and speaking skills are identified by arguments, interchange, confusion, surprises and more, all of which may lead to the use of facial expressions, body postures and gestures to elaborate meanings. On contrary to Harmer's (2007) claim, educators in the observed schools were found to be authoritatively giving instructions and asking learners formula questions that led to meek responses. Thus, this study has demonstrated that teachers lacked good skills for developing listening and speaking

skills—and in some contexts, they were deterred by the limitations associated with the physical environments of learning.

CHAPTER 5

Summary of key findings, recommendations and conclusion

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings from the data that were collected through observations, interviews and documents analysis. The chapter, later, developed a thematic analysis of the discussed data. The current chapter presents a summative discussion of key findings that emanated from the previously presented and analysed data. This chapter further provides recommendations that yearn to assist practitioners in Grade R with guidelines on how to effectively develop learners' listening and speaking skills. The recommendations are tailored to address the weaknesses teachers displayed as well as the difficulties teachers and learners experienced in their endeavoured processes of developing listening and speaking skills. At the end, this chapter spells out some of the limiting factors this investigation has experienced and thus, builds strong suggestions for future studies of this nature, either by the current researcher or other researchers.

5.2. Recap

This study was an investigation of how listening and speaking skills are developed in Grade R and was conducted in two primary schools. Thus, the main objective of the study was to query the processes and strategies of developing listening and speaking skills in two schools through concentrated response to the questions below:

- How are listening and speaking skills being developed and encouraged to exist in Grade R in the two primary schools under investigation?
- What are strategies and approaches that Grade R teachers apply to nurture oral language skills development (listening and speaking) in Grade R?
- What literacy resources are available in Grade R and how are (or can) such resources be exploited to improve children's oral and aural language skills?

The above questions were explored through processes such as observation of classroom interactions and learners' participation, evaluation of the development and comprehension of new concepts and examination of performance consistencies

between learners' oral and written activities. Thus, the questions were used as robust themes for analysis and have culminated in the following findings, in summary:

5.3. Summary of key findings

This study has revealed that the process of developing listening and speaking skills in the two schools was guided by three factors, namely: How teachers applied the teaching and learning approaches, the activities and resources teachers used to develop listening and speaking skills and the roles that teachers played in developing, and the roles of learners in acquiring listening and speaking skills. This study has found that there were numerous activities through which teachers developed learners' listening and speaking skills. However, the most responsive activities were revealed to be the Morning ring activities such as My Body, The Weather, Birthday chart and more other activities such as story reading/telling/retelling as well as the question and answer sessions. The observations have revealed that teachers relied solely on print resources to develop learners' listening and speaking skills. The print resources were used for story reading purposes as well as for the birthday, weather chart and my body activities. Teachers deployed the Communicative Language Teaching approach as a prominent strategy to facilitate effective development of learners' oral skills through the above-mentioned activities.

The examination of the effectiveness of the processes, activities, approaches and resources that were used for developing listening and speaking skills has led this study to the conclusion that listening and speaking skills are not sufficiently developed in the investigated schools, nor are they effectively encouraged to exist in classrooms. There were numerous binding constraints which hindered learners' and teachers' efforts to engage in meaningful conversations and thus held learners back from improving their listening and speaking skills. Common challenges were attributed to limitations of the physical and pedagogic environments of learning.

For instance, in School A, it was demonstrated that there was lack of furniture for all learners i.e. chairs and tables. As a result, Teacher A was propelled to administer activities through group works. In School B, although there was enough furniture, Teacher B used group works to administer activities, especially the written activities. There were no prevalent group discussions, peer activities, dramatic play, role play or

any other form of reciprocal communication activities. Thus, there were adverse deprivation of learners to authentic talk and interactive activities.

Although the group sitting arrangements were not meant for developing listening and speaking skills, they revealed that learners were grouped according to their strengths and weaknesses. As Principal A calls them, the '*slow learners*' were observed to be neglected while their counterparts (the proficient learners) were prioritised in all activities. Teachers would select the proficient learners to perform different activities first and give lesser attention to the below average ones. This negligence was also discovered in the textual documents analysis that teachers did not mark/sign/assess the below average learners' written activities. This suggested that these learners are not given sufficient opportunities to improve their performance levels. Maja (2015: 8) claims that "It does not mean when a learner is slow, other learners cannot learn anything from him." Therefore, shoving the '*slow learners*' and treating them second affected their motivation to participate in oral activities.

The insinuations of the pedagogic matters were that teachers lacked strategies to engage learners in meaningful talk, to create bi-or-multidirectional conversations and to lead learners towards purposeful goals regarding listening and speaking skills development. With reference to teacher's inability to create open environments for language use and multidimensional conversations, the researcher has found that learners' use of language, especially the oral language, was inefficient and unreliable for promoting fluent listening and speaking skills. For instance, post story reading, telling and re-telling activities, teachers would involve learners in question and answer sessions. However, it was observed that even in instances where teachers had to say less and listen more, the opposite was prevalent. Thus, majority learners demonstrated lack of motivation to participate in oral activities. Despite neglect, to majority of learners this was because of fear of being dictated as wrong or right speakers.

Teachers did not seem to have confidence in their learners' individualism and capacities to express meaningful ideas about what they think, see and/or feel. Learners were interjected between their speeches during story retelling activities and were thus deprived opportunities to showcase their unique vocabularies and independent thinking capabilities. The interjections came in form of limiting questions

from teachers. Teachers asked learners questions that limited their expressive talks to mere phrases and meaningless utterances. The morning ring activities demonstrated a predominant use of close-ended questions. However, this was also limiting of learners' independent thinking because their background knowledge regarding functions of different body parts was rejected. This exposed teachers' inabilities to handle learners' responses, as well as the inabilities to unlock the limitations of the content materials. Therefore, this reaffirmed Mashatole's (2014) argument that teachers are not able to move beyond the scope of the curriculum content. Teachers demonstrated lack of listening and speaking development capabilities because they did not seem to know nor understand the roles they should play in supporting, mediating and scaffolding learning. They dominated classroom conversations and enticed very little learners' participation and interactions.

What predominantly occurred in both schools was that teachers would front classes and speak for long and only pause to ask one answer questions or to ask if learners understood through the expression '*akere*'. Learners' answers to the teachers' questions did not last at least more than 30 second nor did they at least comprise of four or more words in majority of activities. This, therefore meant that there were limited rooms for production of meaningful phrases and sentences or at least motivation for that through question and answer activities. Little contribution towards meaning making from the learner's side illustrated that meaning and authentic language were of little significance to the educators. There were no observable activities within which teachers attempted to create environments in which learners would work in groups to perform oral activities, talk to one another, debate or ask each other questions during formal lessons. All conversations were directed from the teacher to the learner (either as a question or command) and from the learner to the teacher (either as an answer or recitation).

In a sense, when learners speak only to respond to questions and instructions – answers of which are sifted and labelled wrong and right, they subconsciously develop an attitude of competitiveness towards learning. This prevailed in the observed schools to be a threat to collaborative or co-learning and interactive learning attitudes, which are the fundamental aspects of developing listening and speaking skills. It was observed that learners who gave wrong answers became embarrassed and they withdrew from voluntarily participating in class due to fear of the rejection for their

thinking. Fauzan (2016) claims that learning should not be portrayed to the learners as a competition. Rather, it should be displayed as a joint process of developing knowledge and understanding (Fauzan, 2016). This is because competition could perpetuate self-centred behaviours or attitudes which stand in stark contrast to the principles of the CLT and Socio-cultural Constructivism theories – principles such as scaffolding, collaborative learning, interactions and authentic communication.

Collaboration, participation, communication and interactions are the most important facets of the CLT and Socio-cultural Constructivism theories in relation to the development of listening and speaking skills. The above concepts entail that all voices must be heard and given considerable attention in classroom (Jack & Richards, 2008). Thus, through competitive questions and answers, as well as hierarchical group organizations of the class, this study found that majority of the learners' voices, especially the average and below average learners, were silenced and rejected in a narrow sense of 'wrong answers'. For instance, in school B the proficient learners were exceedingly dominating lessons, whereas the average and the below average learners were given minimal opportunities to participate in lessons. As (Palmer, 2014) puts it, instead of discretely labelling learners' ideas as wrong, their voices and assertions should be reflected upon, discussed and debated if teachers are to develop effective listening and speaking skills.

In the transcription of school A lesson, when the teacher asked the learners what are the functions of the nose and the eyes, learners replied "*Ke go ntšha mamina*—is to release mucus" and "*ke go tšhela sehlare*—is to pour medication"...in the eye. These responses were labelled wrong. However, these responses may assume that learners know the obvious answers (to breathe and to see) but wanted to inform the class about something they experienced outside classroom. Additionally, it may demonstrate learners' better understanding of the questions and their desire to engage into the questions at higher levels of thinking. For instance, if follow-up questions were made such as: why would you pour medication in the eyes, the most possible response would be that 'mahlo a tla ba a lwala- the eyes will be sick' how would you tell that your eyes are sick, asking the class, responses would then differ based on different experiences... "they will be red, they will be lacking clear vision, painful, so on'. These follow up questions to learners responses may end up revealing to the educators that

learners know that the function of the eyes is to see, but there is more knowledge to them (learners) about eyes than just what they (eyes) are used for.

The teachers' responses to learners' answers demonstrated lesser extents to which they pay attention to learners' responses because of the high search for 'correct answers'. Learners' answers reveal that they know better about the questions asked to them, the problem lies with how the questions are framed and teachers' expectations. The learners' responses demonstrated their desire to engage in prolonged and authentic conversations. However, the teachers (subconsciously) narrowed the learners' answers to mere wording or articulations.

There were no observable teachings or use of new concepts by teachers and learners. Although some concepts were familiar to learners, misunderstandings occurred due to context barriers. This suggested that such concepts should be re-introduced and there should be teaching of context through listening and speaking skills. For instance, when a teacher asked "*Re bona ka eng gore go a fiša ka ntle - What do we see with that it is hot outside?*", **seeing** is a familiar concept to the majority of the learners in class, but learners still could not answer the question effectively. Hence, one learner responded that we see with eyes that it is hot outside. Learners' responses indicated two important points (1) that their levels of context awareness are not well resources and need not to be ignored, and (2) that learners crave opportunities to showcase their knowledge.

Thus, concepts and knowledge may not be introduced by teachers only. Instead, the teachers can use learners' answers to encourage free talk for learners to bring new concepts to class. Such concepts would be understandable and negotiable in the sense that learners could not only know them but will also be able to use them in conversations with understanding. To develop effective grasp of new concepts through listening and speaking activities, the educators needed to prolong the conversation around learners' wrong answers. The elaboration of these answers, either by the educator or co-learners in an explicit manner would have served as a great opportunity engage the learners into a subconscious concept development process.

There were limitations pertaining to resources for developing listening and speaking skills. This study has found that teachers relied on print resources such as diagrams, charts and story books to develop learners' listening and speaking skills, as well as

other literacy skills. Teachers relied solely on print (diagrams, charts, images and story books) to teach listening and speaking skills. However, the use of these resources did not culminate in inclusive practices as well as efficient grasp of the listening and speaking skills. Majority of learners demonstrated poor skills of interacting with print at meaningful levels and this edged them to limited participation in oral activities. Bamgbose (2000) claims that majority of learners are from deep rural areas and thus begin school without efficient listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This contextualises the argument of Sekhukhune (2013) who claims that it is difficult to develop learners' literacy skills through resources that are inaccessible and weakest for them and teachers. Nachoua (2012) claims that language is best acquired when information is received through multiple perceptual modalities e.g. the eye, the ear and experimentation. Thus, the use of print as the only resource for developing listening and speaking skills did not seem to accommodate different learners' strengths.

Teachers and principals expressed challenges with regard to time allocations, limited resource—specifically the digital resources and the lack of support from the Department of Education in form of workshops, seminars and/or in-service training for Grade R teachers. Principals additionally expressed challenges regarding Grade R teachers' low levels of education and their inability to implement curriculum and lesson plan stipulations. However, the observations revealed that simultaneous approach of teaching literacy, numeracy and life skills and the need to fuse the twelve activities from the daily program with the subjects overwhelmed teachers and incapacitated them from successfully developing learners' listening and speaking skills. Zanjani and Izadpanah (2016) claim that learning does not occur if there is no input. It can thus be summated that although learners' levels of input (listening) were high, it was immeasurable whether the input was orally developmental for learners or not. This is because Field (2009) claims that efficiency of the learners' input is measured through output. That is, listening must be assessed through speaking. Therefore, in the context of this study, teachers dominated classroom discussions and did not offer learners "many opportunities" to express meaningful ideas. Hence the listening and speaking skills development setbacks.

5.4. Recommendations

Teachers should revise and stick to the goals of teaching listening and speaking skills. This would encourage them to use materials and to apply strategies in different ways to help all learners develop skills through understandable participation. This gives teachers the responsibilities to acquaint themselves with skills of evaluating learners' strong modes of knowledge acquisitions. This knowledge would enable them to adjust lesson contexts and language register to the learners' levels of proficiency. Consequently, this would trigger learners' interest and motivation for meaningful participation.

Teachers should lift themselves amid the limitedness of resources in their schools. They should diversify ways of teaching even if it is through similar resources. They can perform group discussions, role play, debates, fantasy plays such as *Masekitlana* and *Mantlwane* (Sepedi fantasy plays). The confines of oral teaching resources should not deter teachers from encouraging reciprocal communication and active participations. Multiple uses of similar resources can give learners exposure to a variety of thoughts and contexts. This may also elevate learners' curiosity. In simple words, interactive activities can expose learners to different accents, vocabularies and pronunciations and most importantly, this could help learners to grasp different ways of making meaning.

It would be effective for teachers to introduce lessons and outline the main objectives of the lessons. This would give guidance to both learners and teachers regarding the roles each must play during the lessons. In other words, learners will be able to measure the demands of the activities and adjust themselves mentally and physically to the anticipated demands of the activities as guided by objectives. Learners' minds should not be undermined nor taken for granted. Hence, teachers should acknowledge varying knowledges learners bring to school, and should acknowledge that learners can think and speak.

Teachers must treat learners as equals and give all learners effective feedback regarding their performance in different activities. This should be done constructively to increase learners' motivation and confidence to participate in classrooms activities. There should be a flexible application of strategies for teaching listening and speaking.

Although the two approaches may differ, (top down and bottom-up approaches), they could be used interchangeably to introduce learners to different levels of listening as outlined by Nunan in Chapter 2—when situations call upon.

Learning must be motivationally challenging for learners. Teachers should introduce activities that are not only different in type but also in complexity in consideration of the input+1 method. As Iran (2016: 6) puts it, “Teachers must develop necessary skills of listening comprehension like listening for understanding particular information, listening for main ideas, explanation and inference, listening for intended meaning through providing different tasks and activities at different levels.” During the story retelling activities learners must be encouraged to use body language such as gestures, pointing and facial expressions to reinforce their meanings or at best, help other learners make better meanings of the story... thus, “providing pegs upon which other learners’ ideas can be hung.”

The local Department of Education, specifically the Maleboho-East Circuit should host workshops and provide in-service training programs to provide teachers with appropriate skills of teaching listening and speaking skills and other literacy skills. Teachers should thus receive adequate support that reinvents their teaching strategies and help them to adapt to the demands of the contemporary curriculum (CAPS) and its subsequent excerpts such as the NECT lesson plans regarding various skills development processes. The DoE in Maleboho-East circuit should appoint curriculum advisers or Early Childhood Education practitioners for Grade R teachers.

5.5. Limitations of the study

The presence of the researcher and the cameras may have contributed significantly to de-authenticating practices in the observed schools. In the being history of the sampled principals and Grade R teachers at the investigated schools, this was the first research to be conducted in their schools. Thus, teachers were not able to conduct lessons in the manner that is authentic and genuine. For instance, teachers prioritised proficient learners in most activities and neglected the average and the below average learners. This led to the supposition that teachers assumed that they need to impress the researcher by offering only best learners good opportunities to participate in oral

activities for the class to look good. As a result, this took away authenticity in the observed practices and may thus render some data sets in this study ingenuine.

This study was conducted in the first term of the 2019 school calendar and data were collected in February. Considering that Grade R comprises wholly of learners who just exited pre-schools, this study might have been conducted too early. It can be assumed that learners were still adjusting to the new environment and getting used to the new teacher. Some learners may have been starting to see each other in 2019 and were thus getting to know each other, hence there were no dialogues between learners during classroom lessons. Equally, the teacher might have also been getting to know the learners. Thus, considering these factors and linking them with the availability of the researcher as a stranger and the cameras, it could be claimed that the physical environment of learning was uncondusive for learners to give oral activities their best.

The researcher had intended to interview two Foundation Phase specialists in the Maleboho-East Circuit to respond to the questions of how they help teachers in Grade R with implementing the curriculum stipulations particularly with respect to the development of listening and speaking skills. This attempt was vain because the researcher was advised that Maleboho-East Circuit does not have specialists who deal with Foundation phase. This resonated with what Principal A said, that there has never been any specialist who came to their school to assess learning and teaching in the foundation phase since her existence at the school. Thus, it can be confirmed that there is no support for Foundation Phase educators from the local Department of Education. The failing endeavours to interview specialists created a gap in the data regarding the involvement of the DoE in the Foundation Phase (Grade R) to improve learning conditions.

5.6. Future directions

In exploring this study further, the researcher intends to conduct a quasi-experimental and interventionist research in the middle of the third term of the school calendar. The study will be one in which, focus will not only be premised on what is absent in Grade R, but particularly onto what is present in the schools and how available resources can be used to improve listening and speaking skills. The study will be taken further using more engaging methods to encourage learners' participation during intervention

lessons. This will be done with sole purpose of encouraging inclusivity as well as provoking learners' interests to participate in classroom discussions.

5.7. Conclusion

This study sought to investigate the development of listening and speaking skills in two Primary Schools (Grade R) at Maleboho-East circuit. The investigation thrived to reveal the activities, approaches and strategies teachers used to develop listening and speaking skills, and whether such activities, resources and approaches encouraged active learning and participation. Thus, the study revealed that interactions between learners and teachers in both schools did not facilitate effective development of listening and speaking skills. That is, the activities, strategies, approaches and resources that teachers used to develop listening and speaking skills were not applied in ways that encouraged interactive nor active oral participation. Field (2009) claims that learners' level of input determines their level of output. Which means that the more learners listen the better speakers they are likely to become. In the context of this study, however, it was not evaluable whether learners had good or poor listening skills as they were deprived platforms to express meaningful ideas. Learners' speeches and conversations were interjected and thus limited to narrow statements by teachers' closed-ended questions.

One can conclude in the context of what has been observed that the quality of teaching in both schools was ineffective of yielding operative growth of oral skills amid learners. Hence, listening and speaking skills were inefficiently developed nor encouraged to exist in the investigated schools. The study revealed several challenges both in literature (Chapter 2) and data analysis (Chapter 4) that impinged on teachers' efficacy to develop listening and speaking skills, as well as those that detained learners' zeal to participate in activities in meaningful ways. Therefore, the study recommended that listening and speaking skills be given primary and significant attention because they are strong modes of language acquisition for children in the early ages. Furthermore, the study pleads with the local Department of Education to provide support for Grade R teachers and learners. The support should be in form of workshops and/or in-service training programmes for Grade R teachers and multiple learning and teaching resources for learners—with no exception to digital learning resources for the investigated schools and other deprived schools in Maleboho-East circuit.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: T-REC Clearance Certificate



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

**TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

MEETING: 27 November 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/223/2018: PG

PROJECT:

Title: An investigation of the development of Listening and Speaking skills in the Foundation Phase: A case of two primary Schools in Maleboho-East circuit. Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

Researcher: TB Semono
Supervisor: Dr TW Molotja
Co-Supervisor/s: Dr AE Maungedzo
School: Education
Degree: MEd Language Education


PROF. TAB MASHEGO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

Note:

- i) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee.
- ii) The budget for the research will be considered separately from the protocol. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Appendix B: Request for Permission to the DBE (Maleboho-East Circuit)



Semano Tshwenyego Benny
P O BOX 1077
Bochum
0790
14 January 2019

The Circuit Manager
Maleboho-East Circuit
Private Bag X5003
Bochum
0790
Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss

Request for permission to conduct a research study in two primary schools, in Maleboho-East circuit.

Title of Dissertation: An investigation of the development of Listening and Speaking skills in the Foundation Phase: A case of two primary Schools in Maleboho-East circuit. Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

I am Semano T.B, student number [REDACTED] I am a registered student at the University of Limpopo for the 2018/2019 academic years. I am currently studying for Masters in Education (Language Education) under the supervision of Dr T.W Molotja and co-supervisor Dr A.E. Maungedzo.

This letter serves as a request for permission to conduct a research study in Tswatsane and Mmantotole Primary Schools as parts of the primary schools within the Maleboho-East Circuit. The study intends to investigate the development of the Listening and Speaking skills in the Foundation Phase (Grade R) of both schools. It intends to reveal the approaches or methods that are applied cutting across the two primary schools in pursuit of children's listening and speaking skills development.

The study desires to culminate in influential suggestions on how the used strategies in two schools can be incorporated, stimulated and improved to equip children with the fundamental and foundational listening and speaking skills to enable the children to become effective communicators. This could also help learners and teachers to establish their strong modes of learning and teaching (communication) and utilise them to meet the requirements of the school curriculum goals (CAPS).

Data collection procedures will include;

1. Classroom observations for two consecutive days in each school.
2. Thirty minutes interviews with school principals and the class teachers in the above-mentioned primary schools; as well as thirty minutes interviews with two Foundation Phase practitioners in the Maleboho-East circuit.

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3. Document analysis.

This study intends to develop approaches that will inspire the children's ease and efficiency for learning in both their Home Language and First Additional Language in formal (Intermediate) schools by drawing from their rich linguistic repertoire developed in the Foundation Phase.

The study will comply with the existing legislation regarding researching on the minors, such as the South African Constitution of 1996, Children's Act No. 38 of 2005, the Health Professions Act No. 56 of 1976 and the Human Research Ethics Committee's stipulations (HREC). Thus, the participating and non-participating children in the schools will not be harmed or be threatened to participate in the study. The collected responses will be treated with tremendous respect and confidentiality. This implies that the participant's images (faces), names and any other information that may risk the disclosure of their identification will be anonymised in the research report. Should parents doubt the risk of their children participating in this study, they have the rights to withdraw their children from participating in the research. It is also their decision whether the data already collected through their children's participation should or not be used in the research report. The names of the schools will be anonymised and will be referred to as School A and B throughout the research report.

Should you seek clarity or additional information regarding the study, please contact the research supervisor on: Tel- [REDACTED]

Email: wilfred.molotja@ul.ac.za

Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Mr TB Semono [REDACTED]

Signature researcher



Signature supervisor



UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

2019 -01- 09

DEPARTMENT OF
TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL & EDUCATIONAL
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

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Appendix C: Permission from the DBE (Maleboho-East Circuit)



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
CAPRICORN DISTRICT

MALEBOHO EAST CIRCUIT

Maleboho East Circuit Office
Private Bag X5003
Senwabarwana
0790

To: Maleboho East Schools


28 January 2019

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN MALEBOHO EAST SCHOOLS - SEMONO T.B

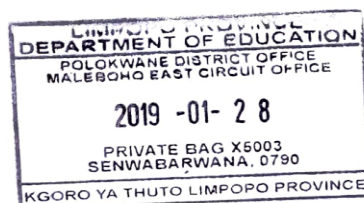
1. The above matter bears reference.
 2. Semono T.B, a student at University of Limpopo has requested to conduct a research in some of our schools in the Circuit.
 3. The Circuit therefore grant him permission to execute his duties in our schools, provided these do not compromise teaching and learning in the school.
 4. Should there be any alterations to the agreement, a written communiqué will be sent to schools for attention.
- ☞ Wishing him a fruitful and very compassionate visit to our schools.



(CIRCUIT MANAGER)



(DATE)



Appendix D: Request for Permission to Teachers and Principals



University of Limpopo
Faculty of Humanities
School of Education
Department of Languages, Social Sciences and EMS
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3722 Email: wilfredmolotja@ul.ac.za

Dear Mr/ Ms/ Miss/ Mrs/ Dr/ Prof(name)

I, Semono T.B student number [REDACTED] am a registered student at University of Limpopo for the 2018 academic year. I am currently studying for Masters Education (Language Education) under the supervision of Dr T.W Molotja and co-supervisor Dr A.E. Maungedzo.

This letter serves as a request for your participation as a respondent in my investigation. The study seeks to investigate the development of listening and speaking skills within the daily programs and activities of the two purposefully selected primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit.

In undertaking this study, I am intending to reveal the approaches or methods that are applied cutting across the two primary schools in pursuit of children's listening and speaking skills development. I intend to unveil how such strategies can be incorporated and stimulated to equip children with the fundamental and foundational oral and aural language skills that will enable the children to meet the requirements of Intermediate Phase schooling curriculum skills. This is done to develop approaches that will benefit children in acquiring the communicative competence of both their Home Language and First Additional Language in formal schools.

This study involves 30 participants. Furthermore, data collection will include observations, interviews, document analysis and focus group discussions in which there will be audio and visual recordings. The collected data will thus be treated with tremendous respect and confidentiality. This implies that the participant's images, names and any other information that may risk the disclosure of their identification will be anonymised in the research report.

Thank you

Finding solutions for Africa

Consent Form

I, hereby confirm that I understand the purposes of this study and I am willing to participate in this research project. By signing on the dotted lines below, I agree that I am well informed about the objectives and questions of this study. I have been afforded adequate time to ask questions about the research. Thus, I agree to take part as a respondent to the questions and objectives of this research.

.....
Signature supervisor	Signature researcher	Signature participant
.....
Date signed	Date signed	Date signed



Appendix E: Parental Research Information Sheet



University of Limpopo
Faculty of Humanities
School of Education
Department of Languages, Social Sciences and EMS
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3722 Email: wilfredmolotja@ul.ac.za

Dear Parent/ Guardian

February 2019

I am Semono T.B, student number [REDACTED]. I am a registered student at University of Limpopo for the 2018/2019 academic years. I am currently studying for Masters Education (Language Education) under the supervision of Dr T.W Molotja and co-supervisor Dr A.E. Maungedzo.

This is a parent/guardian's letter of information regarding the investigation that will be conducted in your school as part of the Maleboho-East Circuit primary schools.

In undertaking this study, I intend to reveal the approaches or methods that are applied cutting across the two primary schools in pursuit of children's listening and speaking skills development. I intend to unveil how such strategies can be incorporated and stimulated to equip children with the fundamental and foundational listening and speaking skills that will enable the children to meet the requirements of formal schooling curriculum skills.

Data collection procedures will include;

1. Classroom observations.
2. Interviews with school principals, class teachers and Foundation Phase practitioners in the Maleboho-East circuit.
3. Document analysis.

The main idea for this study is to develop approaches that will inspire the children's ease and efficiency for learning in both their Home Language and First Additional Language in formal (Intermediate) schools by drawing from their rich linguistic repertoire. The children will not be harmed or in any manner be threatened to participate in the study. Most importantly, the collected responses will be treated with tremendous respect and confidentiality. This implies that the participant's images (faces), names and


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any other information that may risk the disclosure of their identification will be anonymised in the research report. Should you, as a parent doubt the risk of your child participating in this study, it is within your rights to withdraw your child from participating in the research. It is also your decision whether the data already collected through your child should continue to be used in the report or not. The names of the schools will be pseudonymised and will be referred to as School A and B throughout the research report.

Should you seek clarity or have questions about this case study, you are encouraged to feel free to contact the school principal on [REDACTED]. Need there be, please call the research supervisor on: Tel-0 [REDACTED]

Thank you in advance


Yours sincerely



Signature researcher

01/02/2019

Date signed



Signature supervisor

01/02/2019

Date signed



Appendix F: Parental Assent form



University of Limpopo
Faculty of Humanities
School of Education
Department of Languages, Social Sciences and EMS
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3722 Email: wilfredmolotja@ul.ac.za

Dear Parent/guardian

February 2019

I, Semono T.B, student number [REDACTED] am a registered student at University of Limpopo for the 2018\2019 academic years. I am currently studying for Masters Education (Language Education) under the supervision of Dr T.W. Molotja and co-supervisor Dr A.E. Maungedzo.

This letter serves as a request for permission for your child to participate as a respondent in this study. The study seeks to investigate the development of listening and speaking skills within the daily programs and activities of the two-selected Grade Rs in two Maleboho-East Circuit primary schools.

In undertaking this study, I intend to reveal the approaches or methods that are applied cutting across the two primary schools in pursuit of children's listening and speaking skills development. Additionally, I intend to unveil the functionality of such strategies and how they can be incorporated and stimulated to equip children with the fundamental and foundational oral and aural language skills. This is done to develop approaches that will benefit children in acquiring the communicative competence of both their Home Language and First Additional Language in formal schools.

This study involves 18 participants. Therefore, data collection procedures will include observations, interviews and document analysis, in which there will be audio and visual recordings. The collected data will thus be treated with tremendous respect and confidentiality. This implies that the participant's images, names and any other information that may risk the disclosure of their identification will be anonymised in the research report.

Thank you

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Informed assent form

Research title:

An investigation of the development of Listening and Speaking skills in the Foundation Phase: A case of two primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit, Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.


Researcher:


Semone T B

Supervisor:

Dr T.W Molotja

I (name) hereby confirm that I am the parent/guardian of (name). I confirm that I have read and understood the information regarding this research in the information sheet. Furthermore, I confirm that the researcher has taken an initiative to explain my child's involvement in the study in relation to the study questions. I have been granted an opportunity to ask questions where I did not understand. I am thus willing to permit the researcher to involve my child as a participant in this research project. I am well informed that I may withdraw my child out of the project anytime without being interrogated or prosecuted. By signing on the dotted lines below, I assent to video recording of my child and that my child may participate in this research project.


.....
Signature Supervisor

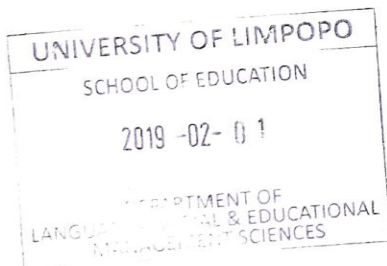

.....
Signature Researcher

.....
Signature Parent/Guardian

01/02/2019
.....
Date signed

01/02/2019
.....
Date signed

06/02/2019
.....
Date signed



Appendix G: Letter of Proof of Editing

Mr Mashatole MA, Lecturer (UL), PhD Candidate (Wits)
School of Languages and Communication Studies
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 2610 | Abram.mashatole@ul.ac.za
New K Block, Office 7006, University of Limpopo

CONFIRMATION OF DISSERTATION EDITING AND PROOF-READING

This serves to confirm that I have edited and proof-read this research report titled '*An investigation of the development of listening and speaking skills in the Foundation Phase: A case of two primary schools in Maleboho-East Circuit, Capricorn District, Limpopo Province*' by Semono TB, student no: [REDACTED]

Yours Sincerely
Mr. M.A Mashatole

Annexures

Annexure A: Observation tool

Date:		OBSERVATION SCHEDULE										
School:	Subject:	Aim of the lesson:	Modality	Listening								
Grade:				Speaking								
				Writing								
				Reading								
		Role players	Teachers mainly									
			Learners mainly									
			Teacher & Learners									
		Language	Interactive									
			Function									
			Discourse									
			Form									
		Type of task	Class									
			Pair									
			Individual									
			Group									
		Activity										
		Time										

Annexture B: Grade R Daily Program

GRADE R DAILY PROGRAMME							
ACTIVITY	TIME	WHAT CHILDREN CAN DO	WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO	ACTIVITY	TIME	WHAT CHILDREN CAN DO	WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO
WELCOME TO SCHOOL 	07H00 - 07H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children arrive and pack away their bags. They gather together on the carpet or chairs set in a circle. While waiting for their friends to arrive, children may explore the different areas of the classroom. Children show their presence at school by placing their name cards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome children and be available to chat to any parent who may need to relay a message. 	WELCOME TO SCHOOL	07H00 - 07H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children arrive and pack away their bags. They gather together on the carpet or chairs set in a circle. While waiting for their friends to arrive, children may explore the different areas of the classroom. Children show their presence at school by placing their name cards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present special activity, for example working with numbers, experimenting with materials and objects to solve problems, make the materials available for further use next day.
ARRIVAL TIME							
GOOD MORNING 	07H30 - 07H40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children say good morning to their friends. Children answer questions about any health problems, eg they show plaques over any cut and bruises. Children discuss the weather and the programme of the day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register of attendance. Check which name cards or symbols were not placed in containers, get children to identify who has not yet arrived. Run a quick hand to toes check of each child. Keep a health record of any signs of illness observed. Check weather given. Note course for next attention. Fill in the weather chart for the day. Mention any birthdays. Go through the Daily Programme and mention the activities and events for the day. Do this throughout the day, any time a new activity starts. 	GOOD MORNING	07H30 - 07H40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children pick away all material and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join children in packing material and equipment away. Sing a clean-up song to indicate when it's time to clean up.
HEALTH CHECK							
MORNING CIRCLE 	07H40 - 08H05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children participate in the activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce new material, new theme, for the week, phonics, letter recognition, writing practice, story discussion, rhymes, songs, or games, ideas, songs or rhymes, announcements, concepts or skills. 	MORNING CIRCLE	07H40 - 08H05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children wash away all material and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clean water, soap and towels.
LET'S WORK 	08H05 - 08H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children choose what they anticipate will be the most interesting area of their choice. Children must count how many are already at the interest area before they start. If they still, they need to choose somewhere else to play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide stimulating and challenging activities. Observe, interact, join in, support and assist children. Place signs at the various interest areas so that all children can take their place. Access popular areas and materials. Add interesting items to attract children to areas less used. Give children 5 minutes warning before the end of the activity-especially work time. 	LET'S WORK	08H05 - 08H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy morning snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to children about what they did during work time. Prepare the room for the next activity.
WORK TIME 	08H30 - 09H25			WORK TIME	08H30 - 09H25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One group to meet the teacher to engage in a particular activity planned by the teacher on a mat or around the table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present special activity, for example working with numbers, experimenting with materials and objects to solve problems, make the materials available for further use next day.
SMALL GROUP							
TIDY UP TIME 	09H25 - 09H35			TIDY UP TIME	09H25 - 09H35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children pick away all material and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join children in packing material and equipment away. Sing a clean-up song to indicate when it's time to clean up.
WASHING UP 	09H35 - 09H45			WASHING UP	09H35 - 09H45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children wash their hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clean water, soap and towels.
LET'S EAT 	09H45 - 10H15			LET'S EAT	09H45 - 10H15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy morning snack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to children about what they did during work time. Prepare the room for the next activity.
SING AND DANCE 	10H15 - 10H45			SING AND DANCE	10H15 - 10H45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children participate in music, drama, gross motor and movement activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join in children's play talk to them and assist where needed
MUSIC AND MOVEMENT 							
LET'S PLAY 	10H45 - 11H15			LET'S PLAY	10H45 - 11H15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy noisy and physical play for learning experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join in children's play talk to them and assist where needed
OUTDOOR PLAY 							
WASHING UP 	11H15 - 11H30			WASHING UP	11H15 - 11H30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children go to the toilet and then wash their hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervise routine.
STORY TIME 	11H30 - 12H00			STORY TIME	11H30 - 12H00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children listen to and participate in storytelling story sequencing, answering questions on the story and drawing their own part of work completed during work time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage children in stories being told, ask responsive questions, allow and encourage children to be actively involved in the story.

Annexture C: Performance descriptor tool

Task descriptors (What learners are expected to do)	Performance Descriptors		
	Proficient	Average	Below average
Explores different areas of the classroom as an individual.			
Shows enthusiasm during activities morning ring, greetings, singing and dancing.			
Responds to questions on different topics in various subjects.			
Voluntarily participates in oral activities			
Responds positively and actively to teachers' requests to give answers or do activities.			
Demonstrates a good use of language and vocabulary of understanding.			
Participates in interactions with peers, the teacher and/or lesson material.			
Expressively counts numbers, reads picture story books, can sequence events, can summarize stories with understanding.			
Asks questions when they do not understand instructions, questions or lesson content.			
Follows instructions during music, drama and/or movement activities.			
Expresses gestures, facial expressions and other linguistic gesticulations during lessons, especially during oral lessons to elicit meaning.			

Annexture D: Transcription symbols

Symbol	Definition and use
WORD	Upper case – indicates words louder than surrounding speech by the same speaker
°word°	Degree sign indicate syllables or words distinctly quieter than surrounding speech by the same speaker
<word	Pre-positioned left carat indicates a hurried start of a word.
word-	A dash indicates a cut-off. In phonetic terms this is typically a glottal stop
>word<	Right/left carats indicate increased speaking rate (speeding up)
<word>	Left/right carats indicate decreased speaking rate (slowing down)
.hhh	Inbreath. Three letters indicate 'normal' duration. Longer or shorter inbreaths indicated with fewer or more letters.
hhh	Outbreath. Three letters indicate 'normal' duration. Longer or shorter inbreaths indicated with fewer or more letters.
whhord	Can also indicate aspiration/breathiness if within a word (not laughter)
w(h)ord	Indicates abrupt spurts of breathiness, as in laughing while talking
£word£	Pound sign indicates smiley voice, or suppressed laughter
#word#	Hash sign indicates creaky voice
~word~	Tilde sign indicates shaky voice (as in crying)
(word)	Parentheses indicate uncertain word; no plausible candidate if empty
(())	Double parentheses contain analyst comments or descriptions
(.)	A micropause - a pause of no significant length.
(0.7)	A timed pause - long enough to indicate a time.
[] [yeah] [okay]	Square brackets show where speech overlaps. Overlapping talk
_____	Underlining denotes a raise in volume or emphasis.
↑	Rise in intonation
↓	Drop in intonation
→	Entered by the analyst to show a sentence of particular interest. Not usually added by the transcriber.

=	Will be at the end of one sentence and the start of the next. It indicates that there was no pause between them.
:::	Colons - indicate a stretched sound.
. , — ¿ ?	Markers of final pitch direction at TCU boundary: Final falling intonation (.) Slight rising intonation (,) Level/flat intonation (—) Medium (falling-)rising intonation (¿) (a dip and a rise) Sharp rising intonation (?)

Annexture E: Interview schedules for class teachers and principals.

1. What language-related literacy skills do you develop in young children in the Foundation Phase (particularly in Grade R)?
2. How do you develop children's listening and speaking skills?
3. How well do children use language to learn and express their views in their everyday classroom interactions?
4. How do they portray listening capabilities, speaking capabilities (new vocabulary) and understanding or comprehension?
5. What activities do you give to children to stimulate their oral and aural language skills development?
6. How do you assess the children's oral and aural skills?
7. Does your school follow any policy or curriculum regarding language development, and how do you implement it to develop the listening and speaking skills?
8. How do you integrate the reading and writing resources with listening and speaking skills to enhance oral language development?
9. What do you think are the benefits of developing the children's listening and speaking skills?
10. What do you think can be done to develop the children's listening and speaking competence in Grade R?

Principals' interview schedules

1. What are the Grade R roles in developing the children's listening and speaking skills?
2. How are listening and speaking skills developed in Grade R through the languages that children learn in (Home Language and First Additional Language)?
3. What learning resources do primary school have (or need to have) in the Foundation Phase to develop the children's listening and speaking skills?
4. How are such resources accessible to children and how can they be used to develop the children's listening and speaking skills?
5. What view do you have about the CAPS curriculum with respect to the development of children's listening and speaking skills?
6. Are CAPS endorsements, with respect to listening and speaking skills, successfully implemented in Grade R? In other words, are teachers in the Foundation Phase

(Grade R) hands-on with the grade-appropriate CAPS curriculum guidelines on (oral) language development?

7. How do you support teachers in Grade R to implement the CAPS stipulations about the development of listening and speaking skills?
8. What activities do you recommend as appropriate for the development of children's listening and speaking skills in Grade R, and how can they be administered to enhance the development of listening and speaking skills?
9. What do you think constitutes a good process of developing children's listening and speaking skills in Grade R?
10. Do you think there are any social controversies either from the home to the school or vice-versa that impinge on children's development of the listening and speaking skills?