



**DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE PHONICS TEACHING STRATEGY FOR GRADE ONE
CLASS IN ISINDEBELE IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nomfundo Sophy Skhosana, learner number 201504079, declare that this dissertation, **"Designing an Effective Phonics Teaching Strategy for Grade one class in isiNdebele in the Nkangala District,"** is my original work. All the ideas, concepts, and findings presented herein result from my independent research and analysis. Any external sources used in this dissertation are appropriately acknowledged and cited in accordance with academic conventions.

I affirm that this dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification at any other university or institution. All contributions from other individuals or sources have been duly credited.

Where assistance was provided, whether in the form of guidance, data collection, or intellectual contributions, appropriate acknowledgement was given to those involved. Any quotations, figures, or data from other sources have been properly referenced. Furthermore, I assert that this research complies with all ethical standards and guidelines, including the principles of academic integrity and research ethics. All necessary permissions and approvals for using copyrighted material or sensitive data have been obtained.

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Signed: Nomfundo Sophy Skhosana

Date: 31 January 2024

DEDICATION

I've navigated an extensive landscape of study, learning, and development while writing my dissertation, and I dedicate it with profound gratitude:

- To my siblings, Mapule and Zakhele Skhosana, your boundless love, patience, and belief in my abilities have been my source of strength and motivation.
- To my son, Luthando, and my daughter, Luyanda Ndlovu.
- To my late parents, Sarah Motau and Thomas Skhosana, who have always believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to design an effective strategy to teach isiNdebele phonics in a Grade one class in KwaMhlanga North East Circuit Inkangala District North East Circuit Inkangala District of Thembisile Local Municipality in the Mpumalanga Province. The study explores the challenges faced by teachers in teaching isiNdebele phonics. Identified and prioritised challenges are teachers teaching inappropriate sequencing of phonic content, teachers being unable to understand the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes, teachers having problems with the application of phonetic patterns, teachers having challenges in creating lesson plans that are not adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners, teachers having issues in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding). The study has adopted the posthumanism theory. Posthumanism theory questions the anthropocentric view that positions humans as the central and privileged beings in the world. An anthropocentric view of posthumanism in phonics teaching focuses on embodied learning experiences as a means to engage learners. Activities involving movement, gesture, or physical materials designed to appeal to Grade one learners' sensory experiences and facilitate their understanding and retention of isiNdebele phonics concepts. Phonological awareness was the conceptual framework that guided my study, and Participatory Action Research (PAR) as my methodological approach. PAR creates cooperation between educators, pupils, and other stakeholders, enabling them to participate actively in developing and improving phonics teaching approaches. The research team identified the challenges and came up with solutions through the discussions during the meetings. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used to analyse data. CDA was used to uncover language use's underlying power dynamics, ideologies, and societal implications, aiming to create awareness, challenge dominant discourses, and foster more equitable communication practices.

KEYWORDS: Phonics, Participatory Action Research (PAR), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Posthumanism, phonological awareness

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AR	Augmented Reality
CBPAR	Community-Based Participatory Action Research
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CER	Critical Emancipatory Research
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EFL	English First Language
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGRS	Early Grade Reading Study
GPLMS	Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy
HoD	Head of Department
ILA	International Literacy Association
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NELP	National Early Literacy Panel
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NICHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NPWSE	National Policy on Whole School Evaluation
PA	Phonological Awareness
PAR	Participatory Action Research

PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PRIEDE	Kenya Primary Education Development
PSRIP	Primary School Reading Improvement Programme
SAJCE	South African Journal of Childhood Education
STS	Science and Technology Studies
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation will assist in designing an effective strategy for teaching IsiNdebele phonics in grade one class in improving literacy outcomes, providing early intervention and support, tailoring instruction to meet diverse learner needs, promoting long-term academic success, informing teacher professional development and allocating resources effectively. This dissertation addresses the multifaceted dimensions of teaching isiNdebele phonics in early education settings, with a keen focus on integrating posthumanist principles into pedagogical approaches. Through an exploration of diverse methodologies and practical applications, this study aims to design the strategy to teach grade one phonics in IsiNdebele effectively. The study will contribute valuable insights to the field of language education, empowering educators to create inclusive and culturally relevant learning environments where isiNdebele phonics thrives as a cornerstone of linguistic diversity and cultural heritage preservation. Data is collected through PAR, analyzed through CDA and Phonological awareness is the conceptual framework that guides the study. The study's background is provided, followed by a rationale for the research and the problem statement, the objectives, significance, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, an overview of the research design and methods and ethical concerns.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The primary objective of the research is to develop an effective strategy for teaching phonics in IsiNdebele. Designing, as defined by Krippendorff (2019:21), involves intentional, specific, and deliberate actions. It is a systematic process that includes the creation of human-made items and systems, considering people's needs and desires in their surroundings (Milton, 2022:1; Wales, 2021:2). An effective strategy, according to Collins (2023:10), is an action that operates efficiently and achieves the intended goal. In

line with Bukhari (2022:554), it is a well-planned method designed for success, creating valuable, sustainable, and unique ways to attain a specific goal (Krippendorff, 2019:32).

As described by Ehri (2020:55), phonics is a method of teaching reading and writing alphabets. It emphasizes the relationship between sounds and letters, demonstrating how these sounds combine to form words. The goal of Grade one phonics instruction in Finland, Kenya, and South Africa is to establish a solid foundation for further development of reading and writing skills in the home language (Maliti & Makula, 2019: 62-69 ; Serem and Koskey ,2020: 101 ; Tainio et al., 2021: 204). Despite Finland's highly regarded education system, challenges in teaching phonics persist, such as consecutive similar letters, understanding graphemes and phonemes, and phonetic patterns (Tainio et al., 2021:7). Kenya and South Africa face difficulties in decoding words, phonic content, and phonetic patterns (Wawire, 2023:331; Wilsenach, 2019: 8).

In 2014, Finland introduced a National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, recommending systematic phonics instruction using authentic texts. Kenya implemented projects like Kenya Primary Education Development (PRIEDE) and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and South Africa initiated the National Development Plan (NDP) and EGRA to address phonics challenges. However, effective strategies are still needed to address these issues (Connell & Kanyi, 2023:14; Shalem, 2020:119).

Creating a conducive environment for teaching phonics is crucial. Teachers must provide differentiated support based on learners' phonemic awareness and literacy skills, incorporating play-based learning approaches (Weale, 2022:1). Recognizing diverse needs, teachers should differentiate instruction, tailoring it to individual learners' strengths and weaknesses (Thawinwong & Sanrattana, 2022:17). Despite various solutions, challenges persist, necessitating the need for additional effective strategies (Thawinwong & Sanrattana, 2022:18).

Countries face threats such as overemphasis on whole language, struggles in connecting sounds to graphemes, and reliance on scripted programs (Blevins, 2020:19; Kanjee, 2019:105; Ehri, 2019:177). Overcoming these threats requires creative teaching approaches and flexibility in adapting instruction (Chetty, 2020:99). Despite challenges, phonological-based training has proven beneficial, improving reading abilities among

learners in Finland, Kenya, and South Africa (Binks-Cantrell et al., 2021:71; UNESCO, 2019; Moats, 2019:66).

The study aims to contribute an effective phonics teaching strategy for Grade one in IsiNdebele, considering challenges faced in South Africa. The research recognizes the importance of designing intentional actions and creating a conducive environment to enhance the teaching and learning of phonics.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The research aims to develop an effective strategy for teaching phonics in Grade one isiNdebele classes. Phonics instruction is crucial for early literacy development, as it equips children with essential skills for comprehending and decoding written language (Hattie, 2020:16; Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). Noteworthy researchers, including Wawire (2023:331), Tainio et al. (2021:7), and Wilsenach (2019:8), have highlighted challenges faced by teachers in phonics education. Their studies reveal common difficulties in teaching appropriate phonic content, applying phonic skills, and navigating rules and patterns across the three countries. Solutions identified involve utilizing children's literature, authentic texts, peer interaction, sound training, simulation, and various projects like PRIEDE, EGRA, KICD, and involvement of NGOs and organizations (Connell & Kanyi, 2022:14; Silinskas et al., 2021:33; Aunio, 2020:101; Shalem, 2015:119).

The studies emphasize the need for teachers to create a conducive environment through cooperation, appropriate instructions, play-based approaches, and support for learners. Thawinwong and Sanrattana (2022:18) further assert that a well-organized and maintained learning environment positively influences learners' openness and motivation, provided it is appropriately managed.

Challenges identified by Chetty (2020:99), Ehri (2019:177), and Kanjee (2019:105) include repetition, overemphasis on whole language, struggles in connecting letters to corresponding graphemes, and a disconnect between phonetic patterns, rules, and their application in authentic language usage, including scripted programs for teachers.

Additionally, it is demonstrated that a balanced literacy strategy, incorporating both phonics education and other literacy components, proves most effective in fostering phonemic awareness (Moats, 2019:66).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

- How do you teach isiNdebele phonics in Grade one class effectively?

1.5 AIM

- the research aims to formulate an effective strategy to teach phonics in the isiNdebele home language in Grade one class.

1.6 OBJECTIVE

- To investigate challenges Grade one teachers encounter in teaching phonics in isiNdebele at Nkangala district
- To explore solutions in teaching phonics in isiNdebele in a Grade one class at Nkangala district
- To analyse conducive contextual factors in teaching phonics in isiNdebele in Grade one class at Nkangala district
- To identify possible threats in teaching phonics in isiNdebele in Grade one class at Nkangala district
- To investigate the effectiveness of the solutions to the challenges identified

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Posthumanism theory challenges the anthropocentric perspective that places humans at the centre of the world (Segalla, 2020:198; Suzuki, 1985). Donna Haraway's influential essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985) introduced the cyborg concept, transcending traditional gender roles and boundaries. According to Braidotti (2019:3), critical objectives of posthuman theory include rethinking the human-non-human relationship, exploring the impact of technology on our sense of self and agency, and envisioning more inclusive,

just, and sustainable forms of social and political organization. In education, posthumanism urges recognition and incorporation of various communication modes beyond traditional language (Treiman & Kessler, 2019:114).). Teaching phonics could entail utilizing visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and digital modalities to engage learners and support their phonics development.

Posthumanist ontology rejects rigid dualisms and hierarchical distinctions, such as human/technology or human/nature (Treiman & Kessler, 2019:116). Posthumanism recognizes that cognition and knowledge creation extends beyond individual human minds, involving interactions between humans, artefacts, and the environment (Sterling, 2020:11). In teaching phonics, this suggests that learning may encompass interactions among learners, instructional materials, technological tools, and the learning environment itself. Posthumanist epistemology challenges traditional ways of knowing, emphasizing the co-construction of knowledge through diverse perspectives, including those of non-human entities and technologies (Gherardi, 2021:4). In phonics education, this implies considering not only the perspectives of human learners but also how instructional technologies, cultural contexts, and ecological factors shape and contribute to phonics learning.

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework guiding my study is phonological awareness, a crucial element in teaching phonics that involves recognizing and understanding the sounds and sound patterns in spoken language (Saiegh-Haddad, 2019:1). Phonological awareness includes various skills like identifying and manipulating individual sounds (phonemes), syllables, and rhymes (Grofčíková & Máčajová, 2021:101). In the context of phonics instruction, the theory of phonological awareness emphasizes the importance of developing a strong awareness of the sound structure of language, as it is fundamental for learning to read and spell. Educators can enhance learners' phonological awareness skills by explicitly teaching them to identify, segment, blend, and manipulate individual sounds in words, which supports their ability to decode and encode words accurately.

The epistemology of phonological awareness involves how knowledge about this concept is acquired, understood, and applied. It includes understanding phonological awareness as a cognitive skill and the processes through which individuals acquire and develop this skill (Holcomb, 2023:2). Basic knowledge of phonological awareness is essential for teachers instructing isiNdebele as a home language, enabling them to grasp phonemic awareness and understanding of alphabets and sounds.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

Finland stands out as one of the international leaders in education. In Finnish schools, the approach to teaching phonics involves gradually introducing letter-sound relationships, emphasising developing phonemic awareness (Kjeldsen, 2019:20). The phonics instruction in Finland employs a multisensory method, engaging learners through various methods, including auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic approaches (Kjeldsen, 2019:21). Teachers utilize diverse activities such as games, songs, rhymes, and hands-on tasks involving physical objects to help learners grasp letter-sound relationships and enhance phonemic awareness. The teaching of phonics is seamlessly integrated into creating a rich linguistic environment that fosters a love for reading rather than being treated as a separate topic (Heinonen, 2019). Additionally, Finnish educators prioritize individualized teaching tailored to each learner's needs. Regular assessments of learners' phonics skills allow teachers to adapt lessons to ensure the continuous development of strong foundational literacy skills (Korpilahti, 2018:126).

In South Africa, studies have examined the effectiveness of phonics instruction. A 2020 study published in the South African Journal of Childhood Education discovered that a phonics-based reading program significantly improved the reading skills of Grade one learners in a township school. UNESCO emphasizes providing teachers with high-quality teaching materials and resources to enhance African education (UNESCO, 2019). Furthermore, a balanced literacy approach, incorporating both phonics instruction and other literacy components, has proven to be highly effective in promoting phonemic awareness (Moats, 2019:66).

1.10 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Origin of Participatory Action Research (PAR)

According to Galletta and Torre (2019:1), Participatory Action Research (PAR) represents an epistemological paradigm rooted in feminist and critical race theories, challenging traditional assumptions about knowledge creation in academia. According to Galletta and Torre (2019:1), PAR is crucial because it critically examines a philosophical view of knowledge as socially constructed through experience and authority. It also embraces an epistemology that acknowledges the liberating potential of critique and the possibility for change. The origins of PAR can be traced back to influential figures such as Kurt Lewin, Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals-Borda, and Robert Chambers. Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, laid the foundation for the participatory approach by emphasizing the active involvement and engagement of participants in the research process (Orlowski, 2019:33). PAR emerged in the social sciences and education in the mid-twentieth century, gaining prominence through the efforts of Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda, who advocated for collaborative research between scholars and communities in the 1970s (Rappaport, 2022:1). The primary goal of PAR is to transform power dynamics inherent in traditional research, fostering a more cooperative and equitable approach to knowledge generation and societal change. The relevance of PAR in phonics instruction lies in its ability to engage learners actively, encourage their participation, and cater to individual needs and environments.

PAR ensures that learners play an active role in teaching and learning. When included as active participants, learners' voices, experiences, and perspectives become integral to the teaching, learning, and decision-making processes. Its ontology emerged as a response to established research methodologies that often overlooked the voices and viewpoints of underrepresented communities and individuals. PAR's epistemological framework, grounded in critiques from feminist and critical race theory, challenges exclusive academic notions of knowledge (McDougall & Henderson-Brooks, 2021:20). This study employs a PAR approach aligned with posthumanism and phonological awareness theory, emphasizing collaboration and consequences that lead to change, learning, and understanding through action.

1.10.2 Research site

The research is conducted in a school in the sub-rural area of Nkangala in KwaMhlanga North East circuit within the Nkangala District of Thembisile Local Municipality in Mpumalanga Province. The selection of this circuit is based on the predominance of isiNdebele. The school falls under quintile three and accommodates over eight hundred learners with a staff of thirty. Poverty, high unemployment rates, and a significant number of illiterate individuals characterize the socio-economic status. The school faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure. The choice of this population is expected to be relevant to the study, offering valuable insights to address research challenges and achieve study goals. The criteria for selecting this population include the requirement that the school teaches isiNdebele, is situated in the Nkangala district, and is a public school.

1.10.3 Gaining entry

First, I sought approval from the Mpumalanga Department of Education (DoE). Once granted, I requested permission from my school principal, providing a draft consent letter outlining my intention to conduct a research project for my Master of Education in Early Childhood Education. I clarified to the principal the reasons behind selecting **this research** topic. Additionally, I communicated my intentions for the study to my colleagues. Furthermore, I sent a letter to the KwaMhlanga North East Circuit, informing them of my plans for the research.

1.10.4 Research team

The study research team consists of the school principal, subject head in the Intermediate Phase, HoD in the Foundation Phase, ten isiNdebele Foundation Phase teachers (four Grade one teachers, three Grade 2 teachers, and three Grade 3 teachers), one businessman, parents, one policeman, and a school librarian that are all based in the exact school location. The team will collaborate to design an effective strategy to teach isiNdebele phonics in Grade one. Co-researchers were informed about the topic, goals

of the study and their roles and responsibilities in the study. There were meetings with co-researchers once a month to check the progress of the research and the challenges faced, and the minutes of the meetings were kept. Daily lesson planning and lesson presentations were aligned with the CAPS document. Notes, videos, photos and recordings were taken and transcribed.

1.10.5 Vision and mission

The study's objective is to teach isiNdebele phonics effectively in first grade. A shared vision in phonics education seeks to establish a clear purpose and mutual understanding regarding the importance of phonics instruction in literacy development, emphasizing the crucial role of phonics skills in laying the foundation for reading abilities; this vision aims to ensure consistency in phonics instruction across various classrooms and grade levels. It is designed to align educators' approaches, methodologies, and instructional strategies for phonics teaching.

The envisioned approach also strives to enhance learners' achievements by improving their phonics skills, decoding abilities, and reading fluency. Ultimately, this contributes to overall advancements in reading comprehension and literacy outcomes. The shared vision fosters collaborative professional development among educators, creating a culture of continuous learning and improvement. The vision aims to encourage ongoing growth among educators through shared practices, idea exchange, and enhancing knowledge and skills in phonics instruction.

Furthermore, the shared vision facilitates partnerships between educators, families, and community members, reinforcing phonics learning beyond the classroom environment. It addresses individual differences, provides differentiated instruction, and ensures equitable access to phonics education for all learners, including those with diverse learning styles or language backgrounds. The collaborative efforts of educators and stakeholders are directed towards the shared goal of enhancing phonics teaching.

This unified vision provides a framework for decision-making, instructional planning, and continuous professional development within phonics education.

1.11 SWOT ANALYSIS AND ACTION PLAN

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning framework utilized to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with an individual, organization, or project (Mulyadi, 2019:1). This structured approach aids in comprehending internal and external factors influencing performance and decision-making. In the context of teaching phonics, educators employ SWOT analysis to gain a holistic understanding of inner strengths and weaknesses in instructional practices, along with external opportunities and threats affecting phonics teaching. This analysis informs instructional decision-making, identifies areas for improvement, and guides strategic planning to enhance phonics teaching.

The initial meeting gave co-researchers the advantage of openly discussing their weaknesses, fostering active engagement in the study. The qualifications and experiences of teachers emerged as powerful assets for the study. Collaborative teamwork proved instrumental in finding solutions to challenges encountered during the study. Team members delineated roles and responsibilities, receiving a copy of these assignments. Thorough records, including minutes and notes, were maintained during meetings.

1.12 DATA ANALYSIS

Magunje and Chigona (2021:7) describe Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an interdisciplinary approach to studying language and communication, aiming to scrutinize the construction, maintenance, and reproduction of power, ideology, and social structures through language use. They further alluded that CDA involves analyzing written, spoken, or visual texts to unveil underlying discursive practices, exposing concealed power relations, social inequalities, and ideological biases. CDA strives to reveal how language both shapes and is shaped by social and political contexts, examining linguistic features like vocabulary, grammar, metaphors, and rhetorical devices, as well as broader discursive strategies such as framing, intersexuality, and silences. By scrutinizing these

elements, CDA seeks to reveal how language is employed to legitimize or challenge dominant ideologies, construct identities, and uphold or challenge power structures.

CDA primarily concerns the construction of social issues and focuses on the broader historical, political, and social settings in which speech and writing occur, exploring how theories of reality and power relations can be encoded and implemented in language. Instead of focusing on what the text explicitly states, CDA investigates what the text accomplishes (Leotti, Sugrue & Winges-Yanez, 2021:1). For this study, data analysis will involve the use of various sources such as video, photos, audio recordings, scripts of learners' and co-researchers feedback, and lesson planning.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Additionally, ethical considerations encompass appropriate and transparent data usage, maintaining the confidentiality of the study's proceedings, and adhering to professional codes of conduct (Brown et al., 2020:3). This ethical dimension explicitly concerns the co-researcher's identity and trustworthiness. The participants' identities must remain undisclosed to the researchers. Historical records are kept confidential, prioritizing the privacy and confidentiality of the research school. The identities of the co-researchers were protected by using pseudonyms. Co-researchers were assured that any information they provided would be kept confidential and utilized solely for this study. They were informed about the research, allowing them to decide whether or not to participate. In the consent process, co-researchers were notified of their rights, the study's objectives, the methodology, and the benefits of participation. However, as a researcher, I acknowledge the importance of being transparent and forthright with my subjects, ensuring the study is comfortable, voluntary, and non-coercive.

Co-researchers were informed of their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw at any point. Before participating, co-researchers were required to sign a consent form. Additionally, it was assured that the study would not negatively impact their jobs but enhance their knowledge.

1.14 THE VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study plays a crucial role by addressing the most effective strategy for teachers to employ in teaching isiNdebele phonics to Grade one learners. Its impact extends to enhancing isiNdebele learners' performance, providing them with the skills necessary to become proficient readers and writers. This study proves beneficial in fostering language acquisition, expanding vocabulary, refining spelling abilities, and promoting independent reading and comprehension among learners.

Furthermore, the study contributes to improving teachers' skills, facilitating the sharing of these skills among educators. Teacher-learner interactions are expected to see improvement as a result. Additionally, the study is a valuable resource for the Department of Education, aiding in the training and disseminating of information related to phonics instruction. Schools can utilize the study to create developmental workshops within their peer groups. Higher institutions can incorporate this study into their training programs, easing the transition of learners into working environments.

The study's impact extends to creating a conducive learning environment for learners, and it can also play a role in facilitating schools to share information with parents on how they can support their children's learning at home.

1.15 RELEVANCY OF THE STUDY

This study aims to design the best phonics teaching strategy for Grade one learners in isiNdebele as their home language. Participatory Action Research is very relevant for this study as it has many advantages in teaching phonic. **Participatory Action Research (PAR) can offer significant advantages in teaching phonics in grade one by promoting engagement and ownership, tailoring interventions to the local context, facilitating continuous improvement, empowering collaboration, fostering action-oriented solutions, and grounding practice in research evidence.** In the context of phonics education, it can create cooperation between educators, pupils, and other stakeholders, enabling them to actively participate in the creation and improvement of phonics teaching approaches (Pelea, 2021:62). PAR allows educators and learners to collaborate on a standard

process of reflecting, experimenting, and solving problems, that result in the creation of effective phonics teaching methods suited to the pupil particular demands and situations (Davey, 2023:8; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

1.16 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 outlines the study's introduction, background, problem statement, research question, and objectives. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework and literature review. Chapter 3 presents the research design methodologies and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents data analysis, presentation, interpretation, and discussion of results. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, a summary of the findings, and outlined recommendations.

1.17 CONCLUSION

This study aims to design an effective strategy that can be used to teach isiNdebele home language effectively in Grade one classes. The chapter presented the study's background, problem statement, research question, aim and objectives, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and literature review, research design and methodologies and data analysis.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to devise an effective strategy for teaching isiNdebele as a home language to Grade one learners. The chapter delineates the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and literature review. The theory of posthumanism guides the study in accomplishing its objectives. Within the theoretical framework, the researcher investigates the origins, purposes, structure, steps, rhetorical/language aspects, epistemology, ontology, the role of a researcher, and the relationship between a researcher and co-researchers. The phonological awareness approach explores its historical origins, objectives, steps, and justification. In the literature review, the research addresses the challenges teachers face, various strategies employed, solutions implemented, conducive contextual factors, threats, and the effectiveness of the solutions.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is made up of theories presented by experts on the topic into which you want to conduct research, which you will use as a theoretical coat-hanger for the analysis of data and result interpretation (Kivunja, 2018:46). Swanson (2023:122) states directly, "The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study" (Kivunja, 2018:46). According to Kivunja (2018:46), the theoretical framework for a study is not a description of ideas regarding the topic. Instead, it is a synthesis of the ideas of researchers in your field of research as they apply to your planned study or dissertation, as you interpret those theories, and how you will utilise those theories to explain your data (Kivunja, 2018:46). According to Garvey and Jones (2021:2), whenever there is a large amount of data to be studied, a theoretical framework can help to orient attention to the phenomena of interest, leading to approaches to inquiry

that would otherwise be neglected. This study is guided by posthumanism theory and will result in an effective strategy for teaching isiNdebele phonics in Grade one.

2.2.1 Origin of posthumanism theory

Posthumanism is a philosophical and theoretical framework that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century, primarily as a response to the advancements in science, technology, and the changing relationship between humans and their environment (Haraway, 1991:77). According to Forlano (2017:7), post-humanism emerged in science fiction early in the 1970s. Ahab Hassan came up with the term "posthumanism" in 1977, intending to represent the merging of two contrasting elements of our reality: imagination and science, together with myth and technology (Jansen, Leeuwenkamp & Urricelqui Ramos, 2021:217). According to Jansen et al. (2021:217), posthumanism literally means "after humanism."

The term "posthumanism" can be traced back to the work of philosophers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, who critiqued the traditional humanist view that places humans at the centre of knowledge and power structures (Forlano, 2017:1). Braidotti (2019:11) explain that the more concrete foundation of posthumanism can be attributed to the works of several thinkers, notably Donna Haraway and Katherine Hayles. Donna Haraway's 1985 essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" is often considered a seminal text in posthumanist thought. In this essay, Haraway introduces the idea of the "cyborg" as a metaphorical figure that blurs the boundaries between human and machine, challenging traditional notions of gender, identity, and embodiment (Braidotti, 2019:11). He further states that Haraway's work opened up discussions about the entanglement of technology, biology, and culture in shaping the future of humanity.

In her book "How We Became Posthuman", published in 1999, Katherine Hayles further expanded on these ideas. She explored how the rise of information technologies and cybernetics was transforming the understanding of human subjectivity, embodiment, and consciousness (Braidotti, 2019:13). He further states that Hayles introduced the term "posthuman" to describe a condition where the human is no longer defined solely by its biological attributes but is intertwined with technology and digital data (Braidotti, 2019:13).

2.2.2 Objectives

According to Braidotti (2019:3), post-humanism theory aims to achieve critical objectives such as "rethinking the relationship between human and non-human entities, exploring how technology is changing our sense of self and agency, and imagining new forms of social and political organization that are more inclusive, just, and sustainable." Additional objectives involve critiquing and destabilizing traditional categories of gender, race, and class, examining the ethical implications of emerging technologies, and exploring the potential for radical social and cultural transformation (Braidotti, 2019:7). Ultimately, the goals of posthuman theory revolve around understanding and shaping the future of human existence in an era marked by rapid technological change and environmental crisis (Braidotti, 2019:7). In the realm of education, posthumanism encourages educators to acknowledge and incorporate various modes of communication and expression beyond traditional written and spoken language (Anderson, 2022:396). Teaching phonics could involve integrating visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and digital modalities to engage learners and support their phonics development.

Ferrando (2021:56) emphasizes that posthumanism challenges anthropocentrism and binary distinctions between humans and non-human entities. In teaching phonics, this objective may include fostering an inclusive understanding of language learning that considers diverse learners, including those with different linguistic backgrounds, abilities, or learning styles. According to Braidotti (2013:45), posthumanism acknowledges the significance of technology in contemporary society and its intersection with human existence. In teaching phonics, this goal could involve integrating suitable digital tools, applications, or resources to enhance phonics instruction and provide opportunities for learners to engage meaningfully with technology. Posthumanism promotes critical thinking and reflection on the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of human interactions with language and technology (Susen, 2022:80). In the context of teaching phonics, this goal might involve engaging learners in critical discussions about language power dynamics, representations, and the impact of technology on communication practices. Posthumanism underscores the agency and participation of learners,

recognizing them as active agents in their learning process (Susen, 2022:80). In teaching phonics, this objective could entail providing opportunities for learners to take ownership of their phonics development, make choices, and engage in authentic language experiences that promote their sense of agency and empowerment.

2.2.3 Epistemology

Posthumanist epistemology challenges traditional ways of knowing and emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge through diverse perspectives, including those of non-human entities and technologies (Gherardi, 2021:4). His vision revolves around the concept of "practice-based epistemology". This perspective challenges traditional views of knowledge as static and objective, instead emphasizing the dynamic and situated nature of knowledge construction within social practices. Posthumanism encourages educators to recognize and value multiple perspectives in knowledge construction (Gherardi, 2021:5). In the teaching of phonics, this means considering not only the perspectives of learners but also how instructional technologies, cultural contexts, and ecological factors shape and contribute to phonics learning. Posthumanism emphasizes the role of the body and lived experiences in knowledge formation (Gherardi, 2021:3). In teaching phonics, this epistemology suggests that learners' embodied experiences with language, sounds, and phonetic patterns should be valued, and opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning can enhance their understanding of phonics concepts.

Overall, Gherardi's vision of practice-based epistemology challenges conventional understandings of knowledge and offers a rich framework for studying the dynamic interplay between individual action, social context, and organizational learning. Gherardi's vision of epistemology challenges traditional views that separate knowledge from action, proposing instead an approach that recognizes the inseparability of knowing and doing. She suggests that studying how individuals and groups engage in practical activities can reveal insights into the ways knowledge is generated, shared, and transformed within everyday practices. In essence, Gherardi's argument highlights the importance of considering the context, social interactions, and embodied experiences that shape knowledge production. By focusing on the lived experiences and situated actions of

individuals and communities, Gherardi's epistemological perspective offers a rich understanding of how knowledge is constructed and enacted in real-world settings.

2.2.4 Ontology

Posthumanism, as an ontological framework, challenges traditional notions of human identity and agency, emphasizing the blurring of boundaries between humans, technology, and the environment (Zapata, Kuby & Thiel, 2018:481). According to Zapata et al. (2018:481), posthumanist ontology rejects rigid dualisms and hierarchical distinctions, such as human/technology or human/nature. In phonics, this ontology can encourage educators to move beyond a strict separation between human learners and instructional technologies, recognizing them as interconnected entities that mutually shape each other's learning experiences. Posthumanism acknowledges that cognition and knowledge creation are not solely confined to individual human minds but can be distributed across humans, artefacts, and the environment (Zapata et al., 2018:482). Regarding teaching phonics, this ontology suggests that learning and understanding phonics may involve interactions between learners, instructional materials, technological tools, and the learning environment itself. According to de Liaño and Fernández-Götz (2021:543), posthumanist ontology emphasizes the importance of embodiment and situated learning. It recognizes that the body and physical context are crucial in meaning-making and knowledge construction, highlighting the significance of engaging learners' bodies, sensory experiences, and the physical environment to facilitate phonics learning. Posthumanism recognizes that technology mediates human experiences and shapes human identities (de Liaño & Fernández-Götz, 2021:543). This includes instructional technologies, such as interactive phonics apps, digital games, or online resources, which can mediate the learning process and contribute to learners' phonics development.

2.2.5 Formats of posthumanism

Gladden (2019:148) classifies posthumanism into synthetic, analytic, theoretical and practical forms.

2.2.5.1 *Theoretical posthumanism*

Posthumanist pedagogy is an educational approach that draws from posthumanist theory to reshape traditional educational practices (Gladden, 2019:148). Gladden (2019:148) further posits that it challenges the centrality of the human and encourages a more inclusive, dynamic, and interconnected understanding of teaching and learning. Posthumanist pedagogy encourages the integration of various sensory experiences in learning (Gladden, 2019:148). When teaching phonics, educators could incorporate visual, auditory, tactile, and even digital elements to engage learners in diverse ways. It values embodied experiences (Field-Springer & Margavio Striley, 2018:2). In phonics, this could mean incorporating physical activities or movements that align with phonetic sounds, creating a more holistic learning process.

2.2.5.2 *Synthetic posthumanism*

Synthetic posthumanism could potentially refer to a theoretical framework that explores the intersection of posthumanist ideas with synthetic biology, artificial intelligence, or other forms of advanced technology (Gladden, 2019:149). Teachers and learners can discuss how pronunciation can change across cultures and dialects and encourage learners to appreciate linguistic diversity. Teachers can explore how learners' online interactions affect their language use and phonics skills.

2.2.5.3 *Analytic posthumanism*

Gladden (2019:149) states that analytic posthumanism manifests posthumanist techniques to identify underlying anthropocentric biases and posthumanist goals in human action. It can employ the questioning traditional norms of phonics. Discuss how language and phonetic systems have evolved over time and across cultures, emphasizing that there isn't a single standard way of pronouncing sounds.

2.3 ROLE OF RESEARCHER

The role of a researcher is to ensure that the study is conducted and that all co-researchers are valued. I will have to ensure that the behaviour of the co-researchers is professional and relevant. I will encourage co-researchers to express their thoughts, suggestions, and ideas for the study to be successful. I will ensure that all learners equally participate, not being discriminated against regarding their learning abilities, gender, race, socio-economic status and economic status for equal power relations. Provide space for others to lead, facilitate the research process, and allow co-researchers to share their knowledge.

2.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND CO RESEARCHERS

Researchers and co-researchers must have a relationship that promotes collaboration, mutual benefit, recognition, and a threatening environment, including trust and honesty. Braidotti (2019:32) contends that posthumanism allows us to reassess our human existence and explore ways to enhance our progress positively. The study places significant emphasis on mutual respect for its success. Respectful interactions play a crucial role in promoting effective communication, resolving conflicts, fostering cultural understanding and tolerance, and enhancing productivity (Einarsen, Mykletun, Skogstad & Salin, 2017:14). When individuals feel respected, they are more likely to express themselves openly, listen attentively, and engage in constructive dialogue, which in turn, leads to better comprehension and reduced misunderstandings (DeVito, 2015:4). The relationship between the researcher and co-researchers must be mutual, ensuring that the researcher does not perceive herself as superior to the co-researchers or look down on them.

2.5 THE RHETORIC /LANGUAGE

The rhetoric of posthuman theory encompasses the persuasive strategies, discursive practices, and communication methods utilized to convey posthumanist ideas and concepts (Braidotti, 2019:102). It involves how scholars and theorists of posthumanism

employ language, argumentation, and persuasive techniques to challenge human-centred perspectives, critique dualistic frameworks, and advocate for alternative understandings of human/non-human relations, embodiment, and technology (Braidotti, 2019:103). The researcher must foster comfortable language between themselves and the co-researchers. According to Bailey and Kurland (2002:385), employing relaxed language with colleagues is fundamental to effective communication and creating a harmonious workplace. It acknowledges the humanity of each individual and contributes to a collaborative, respectful, and inclusive organizational culture. Posthumanist rhetoric promotes non-anthropocentric perspectives by emphasizing non-human entities' agency, voice, and value (Braidotti, 2019:103). It utilizes rhetorical strategies to challenge anthropocentrism and advocate for more inclusive and ethical ways of engaging with non-human beings, technologies, and environments (Kurland, 2020:3). Therefore, creating comfortable conditions for both the researcher and co-researchers is essential; for example, one has the right not only to communicate verbally but also to interact through actions such as writing, sharing resources, and using technological gadgets.

2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework describes how a researcher understands the elements and/or variables involved in the study, as well as their connections to one another. This study is guided by phonological awareness as a conceptual framework (Luft, Jeong, Idsardi & Gardner, 2022:5). As the theoretical and conceptual are linked, the study findings enhance participatory knowledge, and the study is coherent (Luft et al., 2022:5). A theoretical framework assists in the explanation of a phenomenon using a unique lens for this study.

2.6.1 Historical origin of phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is a conceptual framework that guides the study. Phonological awareness is a crucial component in teaching phonics, which refers to the understanding and recognition of the sounds and sound patterns in spoken language (Saiegh-Haddad,

2019:1). The exploration of phonological awareness can be traced back to early linguistic studies that examined the structure of spoken language. The phoneme, a distinct unit of sound in language, became a central focus of linguistic analysis (Sapir, 1921:144). According to the International Literacy Association [ILA] (2019:2), phonological awareness (PA) is a multilevel ability of oral language that is often characterized as being sensitive to the sound (or phonological) structure of uttered words separate from their meanings (Blevins, 2019:15). In recent years, phonological awareness has become integral to literacy curriculum and instruction. It is considered a foundational skill for reading and writing development, leading to its inclusion in early childhood education programs (NELP, 2008:166).

2.6.2 Steps/sequence of the development of phonological awareness

According to Anthony, Lonigan, Driscoll, Phillips, and Burgess (2003), the development of phonological awareness follows a sequential pattern. Initially, as learners mature, they become increasingly attentive to smaller portions of words. Before venturing into writing, learners can identify and manipulate syllables. They progress to detecting and manipulating words before focusing on individual phonemes within words (Anthony et al., 2003:44). Subsequently, learners can discern between similar and different sounding words before manipulating sounds. Typically, learners can blend phonological knowledge before segmenting the phonological complexities of similar language (Anthony et al., 2003:44). Finally, in contrast to a stage theory of development, learners refine their already acquired phonological awareness skills while simultaneously acquiring new ones (Anthony et al., 2003:44).

2.6.3 Objectives of phonological awareness

According to Saiegh-Haddad (2019:5), phonological awareness has the following objectives:

1. Develop the ability to isolate, blend, segment, and manipulate individual phonemes, such as identifying the sounds in the word "cat" (/k/-/æ/-/t/) or blending /m/-/a/-/p/ to form the word "map." IsiNdebele: vala (vuu/a/l/a).
2. Recognize and manipulate syllables within words, like counting the syllables in "banana" (three syllables: ba-na-na) or segmenting "butterfly" into syllables (but-ter-fly). IsiNdebele: thulani (thu-la-ni).
3. Recognize and generate rhyming words, for instance, identifying rhymes like "cat" and "hat" or coming up with a word that rhymes with "dog." IsiNdebele: sula and vula.
4. Break words into individual phonemes and blend them together, such as segmenting "dog" into /d/-/o/-/g/ or blending /s/-/u/-/n/ to form "sun." IsiNdebele: sela (s/e/l/a).
5. Use phonological awareness to decode unfamiliar words during reading, applying skills to sound out words like "cat" in a text.
6. Use phonological awareness to encode words accurately during spelling and writing, employing knowledge to spell "fish" as /f/-/i/-/sh/ instead of "fsh.". IsiNdebele: umma instead of uma.
7. Develop a strong foundation for vocabulary acquisition by understanding words' phonemic structure and recognizing that "jump" and "jumps" share the same root word. IsiNdebele: imbuzi and iimbuzi.
8. Improve reading fluency by effortlessly recognizing and decoding words reading sentences smoothly and accurately due to strong phonological awareness skills facilitating word recognition.

By achieving these objectives, learners will build the foundational skills necessary to become proficient readers and writers. The provided examples illustrate the significance of phonological awareness theory in phonics instruction.

2.6.4 Justification of phonological awareness

According to ILA (2019:2), enhancing phonological awareness in young children can positively impact their language and literacy development, aiding them in pronunciation and spelling, especially with alphabet knowledge and vocabulary.

Children express Phonological Awareness (PA) through three task categories that vary in complexity: detection (identifying similar sounds), syndissertation (combining smaller language units into syllables or words), and analysis (manipulating linguistic components or generating examples) (ILA, 2019:3). As PA knowledge obtained in one language is transferable to another (Dickinson, McCabe, Clark-Chiarelli & Wolf, 2004; López & Greenfield, 2004; Chiappe & Siegel, 1999; Durgunoglu, Nagy & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993), phonological awareness is crucial for the literacy development of emergent bilinguals. For instance, once a learner comprehends sounds in one language, this knowledge can be applied to all the languages the learner is acquainted with.

2.7 RELATED LITERATURE

2.7.1 Challenges that hinder the effective teaching of phonics

Phonics is defined by the National Reading Panel and the Center for Education (2010) as a method of learning the relationships between letters and sounds and applying them to reading and writing. The phonic level helps learners associate letters and sounds (Ehri, 2020:58).

2.7.2 Inappropriate sequences of phonic content

Teachers encounter difficulties adjusting their teaching methods due to the inappropriate sequencing of phonics content (Malale & Zwane, 2018:7). Many teachers struggle with teaching the correct sequence of letters and chronological sequencing skills (refer to Chapter 4 for more details).

Research indicated that Grade one learners in a primary school faced challenges with letter recognition, particularly in distinguishing between letters such as 'b' and 'd', 'p' and

'q'. Swanepoel, as cited in Mubanga, Musenge, and Mubanga (2020:187), emphasized that addressing phonological awareness deficiencies is crucial for overcoming reading and spelling difficulties, especially in the early stages of reading development. Proper training significantly enhances reading and spelling abilities. An improper sequence may introduce complex phonetic concepts before foundational ones, causing confusion and impeding learners' understanding (Bear, Templeton & Johnston, 2018:44) (refer to Chapter 4).

In Finland, some teachers prioritize creating meaningful, engaging, and contextualized learning experiences when teaching phonics content rather than using a systematic and logical progression (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:73). However, research by Bowers, 2020: 682) suggests that a systematic and sequential approach to phonics instruction significantly benefits early readers. A less structured approach might lead to difficulties decoding unfamiliar words, impacting reading fluency and comprehension (Spear-Swerling, 2019: 207). Despite the Finnish education system's holistic language approach, learners may struggle with decoding skills without exposure to a systematic phonics instruction method. This hinders their ability to break down words into their phonetic components (Holopainen, Ahonen & Lyytinen, 2000:3).

In Kenya, some teachers teach advanced phonic content that does not align with the term and phonics that should be taught at that time, including teaching double consonants before completing all single consonants (Anyiendah, Odundo & Kibuyi, 2020:52). A study by the Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in 2019 emphasized the impact of inconsistent phonics instruction on reading abilities among primary school learners (Wawire, 2021:247). Without a structured and sequential approach to teaching phonics, learners face difficulties recognizing letter-sound correspondences, blending sounds to form words, and applying phonetic strategies to unfamiliar words (Wawire, 2021:247).

In South Africa, some teachers focus on a phonic sequence that relies solely on rote memorization of phonetic rules without providing opportunities for practical application, leading to a shallow understanding of phonic content (Moats, 2019:7).

2.7.3 Unable to understand the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

Teaching the graphemes (letters or letter combinations representing specific sounds) of a learner's home language in the early grades can present challenges, especially when the home language differs significantly from the language of instruction.

The phonics approach is introduced to learners to help them identify unfamiliar words in text. It involves associating letter sounds with reading establishing the connection between written sounds (graphemes) and spoken language sounds (phonemes) (Ehri, 2020:55). Unlike acquiring letter names, metalinguistic understanding of how graphemes represent sounds (letter-sound knowledge) will likely transfer positively. Once learners grasp systematic relationships between graphemes and phonemes, this understanding becomes valuable when learning letter sounds in a different language.

The Finnish language has a unique phonetic structure with multiple vowel harmony rules, consonant gradation, and exceptions. Explaining these intricacies to learners can be challenging for teachers, especially if they lack comprehensive training (Ehri, 2020:55). Teaching the accurate pronunciation of Finnish words and explaining variations in sound patterns based on different contexts can be demanding. Teachers encounter difficulties effectively conveying these nuances to learners, particularly non-native speakers (Välijärvi & Sulkunen, 2016:1).

A study by Wawire (2021:248) highlighted several challenges teachers face in understanding phonetic rules in Swahili. Being a Bantu language, Swahili's phonological structure involves vowel harmony, nasalization, and complex consonant clusters, which can be challenging for teachers to grasp and convey to learners (Wawire, 2021:248).

One challenge arises from the multiple phonetic realizations of sounds in Swahili. The presence of numerous allophones (different variations of a phoneme) can lead to confusion, as these variations might not always follow consistent patterns or rules (Wawire, 2021:248).

In South Africa, some teachers struggle to comprehend the fundamental principles of phonetic rules, especially the intricate relationship between graphemes and phonemes

(Moats, 2019:39). Many languages in the region contain words that don't strictly adhere to phonetic rules, such as irregularly spelt words or those with silent letters, which may confuse learners attempting to apply phoneme-grapheme relationships (Moats, 2019:41). In some cases, learners have been exposed to informal or colloquial speech, leading to inconsistencies in pronunciation and associated phonetic representations (Ehri, 2013:3). This can result in incorrect phoneme-grapheme associations when attempting to write words (Ehri, 2013:3).

2.7.3.1 Problem with the application of phonetic patterns

Learners in a classroom often come from diverse linguistic backgrounds, each with its own set of phonetic patterns. Teaching phonics becomes challenging when addressing the needs of multilingual learners (Echevarria & Graves, 2017:11). Teaching phonics can be problematic when learners encounter these irregular words. Home languages have a complex spelling system with irregularities and exceptions. Teaching encoding skills becomes challenging when learners discover words that don't follow standard phonetic patterns (Rasinski & Padak, 2018:97). Striking a balance between teaching phonics and fostering comprehension can be challenging. Overemphasizing phonetic patterns might lead to neglecting meaning-making skills (Ganske, 2018:177). The phonetic patterns of the second language may differ significantly from the learners' native language. This can lead to difficulties in pronouncing sounds accurately and transferring phonetic rules. For example, in the word “*umuntu*”, the sound “*nt*” is pronounced- as “*nd*” in isiNdebele but in other languages, it is pronounced as it is written.

"u" (sound: oo, like in "moon")

"m" (sound: mm, like in "mother")

"u" (sound: oo, like in "moon")

"n" (sound: nn, like in "nose")

"t" (sound: nd, like in "and then")

"u" (sound: oo, like in "moon")

In Finnish schools, teachers had difficulty presenting the language's complex phonetic patterns, especially when considering the complexity of harmony between vowels and consonant gradation (Ruuska, 2020:24). Some learners, particularly those from immigrant families or with minimal exposure to the Finnish language at home, have difficulty grasping these phonetic nuances (Ruuska, 2020:25). According to Koskinen and Blum (2018:586), learners have unique learning styles, strengths, and challenges. Some learners struggle with phonemic awareness, making it difficult to grasp phonetic patterns (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:586).

The Swahili language features intricate phonological structures, including tonal elements and complex vowel harmony rules (Gangji, 2012:11). Swahili is a tonal language, meaning that the pitch or tone of a syllable can change the meaning of a word. Swahili exhibits vowel harmony, where vowels within a word tend to harmonize in terms of frontness or backness. This means that the vowels in a word often belong to the same class, either front or back vowels. Understanding and effectively teaching these complexities pose a challenge for educators. Teaching Swahili phonetic patterns become challenging due to the intricate nature of language sounds, particularly with its complex phonological systems (Gangji, 2012:11). He added that understanding and effectively teaching these patterns, including irregularities or exceptions, is challenging.

South Africa, being a multicultural nation, presents teachers with a diverse range of linguistic backgrounds among learners (Mabizela et al., 2020:6). Teaching phonetic patterns to learners with varying native languages or dialects requires sensitivity to these variations and the ability to adapt instruction accordingly (Mabizela et al., 2020:12). Teachers need to be attuned to cultural differences in pronunciation and dialects within South African languages (Moats, 2019:73). Striking a balance between standardizing phonetic patterns and accommodating cultural diversity and speech variations has proven challenging (Moats, 2019:73). The challenge lies in balancing explicit phonics teaching with a holistic approach to language learning (Moats, 2019:77). Integrating phonics instruction across different subjects poses a challenge, as teachers must find opportunities to reinforce phonetic patterns in diverse contexts (Ehri, 2022:54). Finding the right balance between teaching phonetic patterns and fostering overall language proficiency is crucial.

2.7.3.2 Lesson plans that are not adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners

Early grade classrooms often consist of learners with varying levels of phonetic knowledge (Tomlinson, 2017:17). Creating phonics lesson plans to accommodate diverse learning styles, abilities, and the needs of learners can be challenging (Tomlinson, 2017:17). Poorly planned assessments might provide unreliable information that hinders educators' ability to make informed decisions about instructional strategies and interventions to assist learners in learning of phonics (Chall, 1983). Teachers need to be able to plan appropriate lessons and adapt them to meet every learner's educational needs.

The Finnish education system emphasizes natural language acquisition. Designing a phonic lesson plan that aligns with natural language philosophy while still addressing phonological skills is challenging (Saarela, 2021:11). Phonics instruction often relates to the phonological patterns of a specific language. Developing phonics lesson plans relevant to the Finnish language structure and its unique phonemes poses a challenge (Välijärvi & Sulkunen, 2016:1).

In Kenya, integrating phonics instruction with other reading and writing skills is challenging, as teachers need to find ways to seamlessly connect decoding and encoding skills with broader literacy activities as there are different languages to which learners are exposed (Anyiendah, Odundo & Kibuyi, 2020:52). Designing effective assessment methods to measure learners' phonics skills and monitoring their progress over time becomes challenging, especially in larger classes. Therefore, designing lesson plans that align with curriculum standards and learning objectives can be complex, particularly when integrating phonics instruction seamlessly (Anyiendah et al., 2020:52).

In South Africa, most teachers' lessons are planned in a traditional class with the typical learner in mind. A one-size-fits-all approach is often the only option for every learner to learn the subject matter. This can be due to time to cover the content. Poorly designed assessments do not accurately measure learners' phonics skills, leading to inaccurate results and an inability to effectively identify areas for improvement (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2003:17). In many South Africans schools, the phonics assessment

does not align with the curriculum or learning objectives, leading to a mismatch between what is taught and what is assessed (Fleisch, 2023:9).

2.7.4 Problem in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

Hall (1973:57) introduced the concept of encoding as the process of spelling words by translating sounds into letters. In early-grade classrooms, learners often have diverse language backgrounds and abilities, making differentiated instruction for encoding challenging (Johnson & Smith, 2020:4). Encoding skills necessitate a robust vocabulary foundation, as learners must be familiar with the sounds and corresponding letters for the words they intend to spell. Remembering phonetic rules, patterns, and exceptions is crucial for encoding, and some learners may find it challenging to retain and apply this information (McQuillan & Tse, 2018:44).

Similarly, Hall (1973:57) defined decoding as reading words by translating letters into sounds. Many home language words deviate from regular phonetic patterns, featuring irregular spellings that make decoding more challenging. "Sight words," with irregularities that require recognition on sight, present a particular challenge. Hayes-Harb and Barrios (2021:11) note that "about half of the words in the home language are irregular, meaning they can't be decoded using basic phonics rules." Decoding is just one aspect of reading; understanding the meanings of the decoded words is equally important. Vocabulary and background knowledge gaps can hinder comprehension, emphasizing the importance of building a rich vocabulary and background knowledge (Hayes-Harb & Barrios, 2021:331).

The development of reading fluency involves reading smoothly with appropriate pacing and expression. Struggling readers may face challenges in decoding words slowly and laboriously, impacting comprehension. Rasinski (2014:23) emphasizes that "fluent reading requires automatic word recognition, and challenges arise when decoding remains effortful and time-consuming."

In Finland, decoding words in early grades poses a challenge for young readers as they learn to decipher and comprehend written language (Spring, 2019:1). This process involves translating printed letters into spoken language and then understanding the

meaning of the words (Spring, 2019:1). Challenges associated with this process have been studied and discussed in the field of education (Spring, 2019:2).

Kenya, a multicultural and multilingual country with 67 spoken languages (Ethnologue, 2018:46), has Kiswahili and English as the most widely spoken. A learner from Kenya typically speaks at least three languages: their mother tongue at home, the primary language spoken in their society (Kiswahili), and English as an additional language (Nyaga & Anthonissen, 2012; Uwezo, 2011). Mwanamukubi (2013), citing Mando, notes that a lack of phonological awareness and phonetic coding abilities often drives reading difficulties. Chansa-Kabali (2015:16) investigated factors influencing reading skill acquisition in a family setting and found that reading resources predicted orthographic awareness rather than decoding. The study also identified family situations, absenteeism, and tardiness as significant influences on learners' reading ability.

In South Africa, a fundamental challenge for early readers is developing phonemic awareness, the ability to recognize and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words (National Reading Panel, 2000:11). Many teachers face the challenge of neglecting to develop phonemic awareness skills before moving on to phonics, impacting learners' ability to decode and encode words effectively (National Reading Panel, 2000:11). Flege and Bohn (2021:7) assert that learning to read is dependent mainly on the development of phonemic awareness and phonics skills, enabling children to map sounds to letters and recognize words.

2.8 SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES

2.8.1 Inappropriate sequences of phonic content

Finnish schools employ Peer Interaction and Authentic Texts to address the teaching of a second language. In communicative classrooms and online classes, peer contact is utilized through paired and group tasks as an educational technique (Sato, 2021:146). Various factors influence peer interaction patterns, such as activity type, pairing patterns based on learner knowledge, interaction medium (oral vs. writing, in-person vs. computer-mediated), and learner connections (Sato, 2021:155).

Authentic texts refer to actual written materials used in everyday life, like books, newspapers, and signs (Kholisah, 2023:17). They engage learners in the target culture and facilitate vocabulary acquisition, similarly to how the brain learns one's native language (Kholisah, 2023:17). In Finland, a whole language concept is introduced, focusing on teaching language skills following learners' strengths and weaknesses. This approach advocates learning in an authentic environment with natural materials, creating an open and supportive atmosphere for teachers to provide feedback on curriculum materials and instructional methods. Teachers are encouraged to voice concerns about inappropriate content and seek assistance from colleagues if needed.

In Kenya, regular classroom observations are conducted to monitor teaching practices, enabling the identification of inappropriate content and providing an opportunity for timely intervention and support.

In South Africa, experienced teachers offer guidance and share practical strategies for phonics instruction to maintain consistency and quality. Inexperienced teachers are encouraged to share the information acquired at universities and colleges. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has implemented structured pedagogical interventions like the Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) and the Primary School Reading Improvement Programme (PSRIP), including an Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS). These programs aim to enhance teachers' content knowledge, increase first graders' home language and English First Additional Language (EFAL) fluency, and improve teaching methods and learner performances (Kotze et al., 2018; De Clercq & Shalem, 2015).

Kenya and South Africa utilize the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) for various purposes. EGRA is a baseline for early reading acquisition, guides instructional program content, and evaluates programs. EGRA employs intervention strategies, including a parent intervention to support early-grade reading at home, using baseline, midline, and end-line learner testing to provide evidence of the impact of intervention models relative to the control group (Cilliers et al., 2019:4).

2.8.2 Teachers unable to understand the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

Koskinen and Blum (2018:587) outline various activities to teach phonetic rules in Finnish schools effectively. One approach uses Phonics Peers, where teachers pair learners with different phonics abilities to create collaborative learning environments. Stronger readers support and mentor peers with weaker phonics skills, leading to mutual benefits (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:587). Authentic texts play a crucial role, allowing learners to observe how linguistic objects interact and preparing them for real-world interactions. Finnish teachers incorporate phonics concepts naturally into storybooks, even if not explicitly teaching phonics, by selecting books with sound repetitions, alliteration, and phonetically regular words (Spring, 2019:1).

In Kenya, teachers use age-appropriate magazines and newspapers to identify words that follow specific phonics rules. Learners then cut out words or images containing certain sounds or letter patterns (Spring, 2019:1).

In South Africa, teachers conduct word sorting activities, wherein learners collaboratively categorize words based on their phonics patterns. This collaborative approach enables learners to discuss and reinforce their understanding of phonics rules (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:589).

2.8.3 Teachers unable to understand the principle of phonetic patterns

In Finland, teachers engage learners in small-group activities featuring phonics chants and rhymes. Pairs or groups practice these chants and rhymes, even creating their own based on their learning phonetic patterns (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:588). Additionally, they visit local libraries, shops, or community centres to locate authentic texts like event flyers, posters, or bulletin boards in Finnish, providing contextual material for phonics learning.

In Kenya, phonics games are employed, with learners working in pairs or small groups to enhance their phonics skills. Activities involve taking turns reading words with specific phonetic patterns or engaging in phonics-based board games (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:587).

In South Africa, teachers utilize recipes and cooking instructions to identify words with specific phonics patterns (Nunan, 2018:54). This practical and engaging approach allows learners to apply their phonics knowledge effectively (Nunan, 2018:54). Encouraging learners to write short stories or paragraphs further reinforces phonics skills by using them to their writing (Nunan, 2018:54).

2.8.4 Teacher's inability to create adapting lesson plans to meet the diverse needs of learners

Peer interaction and cooperative learning: Teachers having poor knowledge in applying phonic skills (encoding and decoding).

Peer Reading: Learners are encouraged to participate in peer reading activities, where they take turns reading to each other. This approach allows them to apply their phonics knowledge in a meaningful context while developing fluency and comprehension (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:588).

In Finland, teachers receive ongoing professional development and training in differentiated instruction and inclusive teaching strategies (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017:63). This training enhances their ability to design lessons that cater to various learning styles and skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017:63). Each school in Finland has a reading specialist dedicated to first grades during the first term of the year, assisting teachers (Korkeamäki & Dreher, 1993:478). These reading specialists also contribute to the creation and adaptation of weekly informal tests, focusing on aspects such as recognizing sounds and letters at the beginning, middle, and end of words, as well as distinguishing between short and long vowels and double and single consonants (Korkeamäki & Dreher, 1993:479).

The Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS) has been implemented in South Africa to build evidence about effective methods for improving early-grade reading in schools. The project employs formal impact evaluation methodologies, including randomized experiments, and utilizes mixed methods, such as classroom observation and detailed case studies. This approach aims to provide both quantitative estimates of the impact of

interventions on home language and English as a First Additional Language, as well as insights into where, how, and why different elements of interventions are practical (Fleisch, 2018:6). The ongoing second early grade reading study within EGRS focuses on measuring the cost-effectiveness of three early grade reading intervention models. The first two interventions with teachers constitute an "education triple cocktail," consisting of tightly aligned scripted lesson plans, quality learning materials, and capacity building (Fleisch, 2018:11).

2.8.5 Teachers with poor knowledge of applying phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

Developing effective strategies for deciphering unfamiliar words is essential. Some learners may rely solely on phonics, while others might encounter challenges in consistently applying phonics rules. Gough and Hillinger (1980) underscored the importance of learners having a variety of word recognition strategies, including phonics, analogy, and sight word recognition, to decode words successfully.

Since the 1970s, Finland has adopted a systematic phonics approach, considered highly effective for teaching letter-sound correspondences. Auditory discrimination exercises, such as listening to the beginnings and endings of words and engaging in phonological blending and segmentation tasks, have been implemented. This approach is beneficial as it helps learners easily and thoroughly grasp letter-sound correspondences, improving their word recognition and spelling skills (O'Connor, 2014: 37).

Kenya and South Africa have incorporated the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) method to teach decoding and encoding skills. EGRA developers included a syllable identification measure alongside letter names or sounds. This measure is employed in languages with primarily open (vowel-final) syllables or where reading pedagogy emphasizes syllabic combinations. According to EGRA, decoding skills are taught through the letter identification subtask, assessing children's ability to recognize the grapheme features of each letter and accurately associate it with its corresponding name or sound (Gove & Cvelich, 2011:13). Additionally, the no word reading subtask, a core EGRA component, indirectly gauges children's ability to decode unfamiliar words and

syllable identification is used in contexts emphasizing syllabic combinations (Gove & Cvelich, 2011:14). Dictation is employed to have learners listen to letter sounds, words, and/or short sentences and then write them down (Gove & Cvelich, 2011:14).

2.9 CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS IN TEACHING PHONICS EFFECTIVELY

Establishing a conducive classroom atmosphere for phonics instruction is a crucial task for teachers to ensure that each learner receives appropriate guidance based on their level of phonemic awareness and literacy abilities (Weale, 2022:1). Weale (2021) emphasizes the use of play-based learning methodologies to create a comfortable and enjoyable environment, fostering exploration and learning for children.

Thawinwong and Sanrattana (2022:17) argue that the traditional learning environment, characterized by rows of tables and a teacher at the front with a blackboard or whiteboard, is no longer effective. They advocate using play-based learning approaches to make the learning environment comfortable and enjoyable, positively impacting learners' curiosity and motivation (Thawinwong & Sanrattana, 2022:17).

In Finland, incorporating games, stories, and interactive activities has made learning enjoyable and effective (Weale, 2022:1). Creating an engaging and positive learning environment is crucial to fostering motivation and interest in learning phonics. Peer collaboration is encouraged, with learners paired to write simple sentences or stories using words with specific phonetic patterns, reinforcing their phonics knowledge in writing (Koskinen & Blum, 2018:589).

Building relationships among teachers in Kenya helps establish mutual respect. Teachers, by understanding learners' characteristics and fostering positive interdependence through effective cooperative learning, contribute to creating a conducive learning atmosphere (Yusuf & Pattisahusiwa, 2020:1; Anyaogu, 2016:4). Anyaogu (2016:4) highlights that a conducive learning atmosphere encourages and promotes learning, emphasizing the importance of inspiration and motivation over mere memorization.

South African schools utilize praising words as an encouraging, motivating, and affirming method to create a conducive environment, representing positive appraisals of learners' work or conduct (Benson-Goldberg & Erickson, 2021:1).

2.10 ANTICIPATED THREATS AND HOW TO CIRCUMVENT THEM WHEN TEACHING PHONICS

The inability to assist learners with their schoolwork or a lack of knowledge on how to assist them in reaching their full potential has been a threat faced by many teachers (Viberg, Andersson & Wiklund, 2021:24).

According to Blevins (2020:9), Finland's teachers tended to overemphasize the whole language approach over the balanced method, which emphasizes context and meaning, which occasionally leads to less attention on explicit phonics instruction.

In Kenya, teaching second-language phonics has posed a threat to learners who are not competent in the language, as they fail to relate the sounds of second-language letters to their corresponding graphemes (Kanjee, 2019:105). According to Ehri (2019:177), the threat in South Africa is an overreliance on scripted programs and materials, which has reduced teacher creativity and flexibility in adjusting teaching to meet the requirements of individual learners. They are frequently pulled between what they should do and what they believe is best for their learners (MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen & Palma, 2004: 22). These initiatives transform teachers' roles in the classroom from professionals into information transmitters (Manzano Vázquez, 2018:390). This results in a one-size-fits-all strategy that is ineffective for all learners (learners with barriers or who are less gifted). However, some complaints and concerns have risen about teaching phonics in South Africa. Some teachers point out that a one-size-fits-all approach to phonics is not beneficial for all learners, especially those who speak languages with different phonetic patterns than isiNdebele (Sibanda, 2018:61).

2.11 SUCCESS INDICATORS OF THE STUDY

Phonology-based instruction consistently proves advantageous for developing crucial reading skills like phonemic awareness and non-word reading among primary school learners in Finland (Aunio, 2020:111). The research indicates that the language children are exposed to; Finnish in this case directly influences their early phonological development (Aunio, 2020:111).

A study evaluating the effectiveness of phonics teaching in Kenyan schools found that explicit and systematic phonics instruction led to improved reading achievement among learners (Binks-Cantrell, Washburn & Joshi, 2021: 56). The analysis demonstrated that the initial year of implementing phonics through PRIEDE, EGRA, and the Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) had positive impacts on critical outcomes: oral reading fluency, the percentage of learners reading at a proficient level, and comprehension skills (Piper, Zuilkowski, Dubeck, Jepkemei & King, 2018: 56).

In South African schools, research published in the South African Journal of Childhood Education in 2020 revealed that a phonics-based reading program significantly enhanced the reading ability of Grade one children in a township school. Additionally, findings suggest that a balanced literacy strategy, incorporating both phonics teaching and other literacy components, is most effective in fostering phonemic awareness (Moats, 2019:66). According to a UNESCO report (2019), providing teachers with access to high-quality teaching materials and tools is crucial for enhancing educational quality in Africa.

2.12 CONCLUSION

The chapter reviewed related literature informed by the study's objectives, the challenges faced in teaching phonics solutions employed, conducive conditions, and threads and success indicators of the strategies used internationally in Africa and South Africa. Posthumanism is the theoretical framework that guided the study and phonological awareness as a conceptual framework.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research aims to formulate an effective strategy to teach phonics in the isiNdebele home language in Grade one class. The objectives are as follows:

- To investigate challenges Grade one teachers encounter in teaching phonics in isiNdebele at Nkangala district
- To explore solutions in teaching phonics in isiNdebele in a Grade one class at Nkangala district
- To analyse conducive contextual factors in teaching phonics in isiNdebele in Grade one class at Nkangala district
- To identify possible threats in teaching phonics in isiNdebele in Grade one class at Nkangala district
- To investigate the effectiveness of the solutions to the challenges identified.

This chapter delves into the research design and methodology employed to craft an effective strategy for teaching isiNdebele phonics in Grade one. Participatory Action Research (PAR) is the chosen methodology because it incorporates social aspects that influence real-life experiences, fostering close relationships between researchers and co-researchers. Data analysis is conducted through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a method employed to unveil underlying power dynamics, ideologies, and societal implications within language use. The objective is to raise awareness, challenge prevailing discourses, and encourage more equitable communication practices. The chapter further elucidates the composition of the research team and provides in-depth information on the criteria for selecting co-researchers, including their profiles. It outlines how PAR is implemented, emphasizing its foundation on an emancipatory agenda and its transformative orientation (Nhlapo, 2021:24).

3.2 PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH METHOD AS A RELEVANT METHODOLOGY

PAR's key strength is its strong emphasis on practical application. Through collaborative efforts between researchers and co-researchers, actionable strategies and interventions are developed to tackle the identified issues within the study directly (Jones & Brown, 2022:177). This attribute is particularly pertinent in teaching phonics, where the ultimate aim is to enhance instructional practices (Jones & Brown, 2022:177). The suitability of employing PAR to achieve study objectives, particularly in education and phonics instruction, stems from its effectiveness in addressing complex and context-specific challenges. PAR is well-suited for research in educational settings where collaboration, engagement of stakeholders, and the direct application of findings are integral (Jones & Brown, 2022:177).

PAR facilitates a profound and contextual comprehension of the issues under investigation. Considering the wide variation in educational settings related to phonics instruction, PAR allows researchers to tailor their approach to the specific needs and challenges of a particular school or community (McIntyre, Hulan & Layne, 2011:3). The empowerment of stakeholders, including teachers, learners, and parents, is a central focus of PAR, a feature particularly relevant in the context of phonics teaching (Tarhan, Karaman, Lauri & Aerila, 2019:44). Involving these stakeholders as active participants empowers them to contribute insights and take ownership of the research process, a crucial aspect in the realm of phonics teaching (Johnson, 2021:108).

PAR strongly emphasises community engagement, making it well-suited for contexts where phonics education is a community concern (Johnson, 2022:108). Engaging parents and community members in the research process can lead to a more inclusive and practical approach to phonics education (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003:18). The holistic examination of problems, considering various perspectives and contexts, is a distinctive advantage of PAR in addressing complex issues (Ayaya, Makoelle & van der Merwe, 2020:5). Given that PAR is an iterative process, it supports continuous improvement, a crucial aspect in educational settings where the need for adapting and refining instructional practices is ongoing (Ayaya et al., 2020:5).

3.3 HISTORY ORIGIN OF PAR

PAR, a research approach highlighted by collaboration between researchers and the subjects under study, is designed to address real-world problems and instigate positive social change (Jones & Brown, 2022:168). Its roots can be traced back to the pioneering work of Kurt Lewin, a German-American psychologist, who laid the groundwork for this methodology (Jones & Brown, 2022:168). While Lewin didn't explicitly use the term "PAR," his emphasis on participant involvement in the research process to drive social change laid the foundation for the participatory approach (Ayaya et al., 2020:4).

In the 1940s and 1950s, Lewin's focus on understanding and altering social behaviour through action and reflection challenged the notion of conducting research in isolation, advocating for active participant engagement (Jones & Brown, 2022:169). The concept of "action research" introduced by Lewin became the precursor to what is now known as PAR (Campos & Anderson, 2021:42). Further development and popularization of PAR occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, attributed mainly to Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator (Campos & Anderson, 2021: 42). Freire stressed the significance of active community participation in the research process, aiming to empower individuals and catalyse social transformation (Wallerstein, Duran, Oetzel & Minkler, 2017:6). His work on critical pedagogy also significantly contributed to the evolution of PAR, promoting conversation, collaboration, and the active involvement of oppressed populations in their liberation movements (Wallerstein et al., 2017:6).

3.4 OBJECTIVES OF PAR

One of the central objectives of PAR is to empower marginalised or disadvantaged communities by involving them in the research process (Schubotz, 2019:7). This empowerment can take various forms, including increased self-confidence, improved decision-making abilities, and enhanced community leadership (Schubotz, 2019:7). PAR seeks to identify and address social inequalities, injustices, and systemic issues (Greenwood & Levin, 2007:17). It aims to facilitate transformative change in the lives of individuals and communities by addressing the root causes of problems and advocating for policy changes (Greenwood & Levin, 2007:17). PAR aims to create relevant and

context-specific knowledge. It emphasizes the co-creation of knowledge through collaboration between researchers and participants, ensuring that research findings are applicable and meaningful to the community (Hall, 2017:17). PAR is not solely focused on generating knowledge; it also aims to develop practical solutions to real-world problems community (Hall, 2017:17). The research process involves taking action, learning from it, and making iterative improvements (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:301). It also actively engages community members in all research stages, from problem identification to data collection and analysis (Mey & van Hoven, 2019:323). This participation fosters a sense of ownership and ensures research relevance (Mey & van Hoven, 2019:323). PAR emphasizes continuous reflection and learning throughout research (Mey & van Hoven, 2019:324). It encourages participants and researchers to critically examine their assumptions, values, and actions to improve the study and the outcomes (Mey & van Hoven, 2019:324). PAR seeks to build the capacity of individuals and communities to take control of their development (Merkel & Kieffer, 2023:2083). This involves developing skills, knowledge, and resources that enable communities to address their challenges independently (Merkel & Kieffer, 2023: 2083).

PAR seeks to improve the teaching and learning of phonics by involving educators and learners in designing, implementing, and evaluating phonics teaching strategies that are effective and culturally relevant (Tshelane, 2013:401). PAR aims to empower teachers with the knowledge and skills to adapt phonics teaching to the unique needs of their learners. It encourages teachers to reflect on their practices and make informed decisions (Tshelane, 2013:401). Ultimately, the goal of PAR in a phonics context is to enhance literacy outcomes for learners. By involving all stakeholders in the research process, PAR aims to identify effective strategies for improving phonics skills and overall literacy (Tshelane, 2013:401). PAR emphasizes the active involvement of learners in their learning. It encourages learners to provide input on their phonics learning experiences, making education more learner-centred (Whyte, 1989:88). PAR can help identify and address disparities in phonics teaching and literacy outcomes among different learner groups. It strives to promote equity and inclusion in education (Cammarota & Fine, 2008:18).

3.5 FORMATS OF PAR

3.5.1 Action Research (AR)

Action Research (AR) serves as the umbrella term for a set of research methodologies systematically analysing a specific social condition while concurrently advocating for democratic change and collaborative engagement (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:99). This approach involves participants, who are also members of the research community, adopting a self-reflective, systematic, and critical stance towards inquiry (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:99). The primary objective is to identify problematic situations or issues that participants deem worthy of investigation to bring about informed and significant adjustments in practice (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:99).

AR stands out due to its dynamic nature, flexibility, interchangeability, and iterative processes (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:100). The distinctive feature of AR lies in its spiral cycle of action and study, encompassing four pivotal phases: plan, act, observe, and reflect (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:100).

3.5.2 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

PAR is a research approach that directly involves individuals or communities in the research process, aiming to empower them to address their concerns and instigate positive social change (Rasyid, 2020:4). In contrast to traditional research methods, where researchers often maintain a distant, observational role, PAR promotes collaboration between researchers and the community under investigation, blurring the lines between the roles of "researcher" and "participant" (Burns, 2009:6). Within the PAR framework, community members or stakeholders aren't mere subjects or data sources; instead, they actively participate as co-researchers (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:101). They collaborate with academic or professional researchers to identify research questions, shape the study design, collect and analyse data, and implement actions based on the research findings (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:102). This approach places a high value on local knowledge, perspectives, and lived experiences, making it especially apt for addressing issues directly impacting the community (Zuber-Skerritt, 2021:102).

3.5.3 Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)

Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) is a collaborative research method that actively involves all stakeholders throughout the entire study process, from data generation and analysis to sharing findings (Swanson & Leader, 2023:22). This approach is designed to address practical needs within a community and significantly reshapes the roles of both researchers and the individuals being studied (Swanson & Leader, 2023:22). The CBPAR framework begins with identifying community challenges, implementing planned actions, and then supporting or enhancing those actions through community-based and participatory research (Swanson & Leader, 2023:22). The fundamental principles and ideals of the CBPAR framework ensure that community members actively participate in the research to generate outcomes that can be applied to bring about positive changes in their respective communities (Swanson & Leader, 2023:22).

3.6 STEPS AND STAGES OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (PAR)

Teaching phonics through PAR entails a systematic inquiry and collaborative process involving researchers, educators, and stakeholders to enhance phonics instruction (Morales & Mertler, 2019:317). The specific steps and stages of PAR may vary based on the particular context and research objectives. Here, I present a framework for implementing PAR in teaching phonics (Morales & Mertler, 2019:317).

3.6.1 Step 1: Identification of the Issue

The PAR procedure commonly starts by recognizing a pertinent issue or challenge in phonics instruction (Smith et al., 2023:69). This concern is frequently pinpointed through collaborative efforts involving teachers, learners, parents, or community members. Regarding phonics teaching (Smith et al., 2023:69), we commenced the process by collectively identifying a pivotal issue: the necessity to enhance phonics instruction for improved early literacy outcomes.

3.6.2 Step 2: Planning and Research Design

Researchers and co-researchers collaborate to strategize the research and formulate a research design. This phase encompasses deliberations on data collection techniques, timelines, and ethical considerations (Smith et al., 2023:69). In the planning phase of our phonics teaching initiative, we participated in discussions with teachers and parents to develop our research plan jointly. Collectively, we deliberated on research questions and determined the most effective approach, incorporating observations, to address our concerns.

3.6.3 Step 3: Data Collection

The researcher and co-researchers gather data following the research design, typically involving activities like classroom observations, surveys, interviews, and document analysis (Smith et al., 2023:69). The data collection process is characterized by active collaboration, with all stakeholders playing an integral role (Smith et al., 2023:70). During the data collection phase, we worked closely with teachers and learners, conducting classroom observations collaboratively to gain insights into current phonics practices and learner experiences.

3.6.4 Step 4: Data Analysis

Data collected are analysed collaboratively. Researchers work alongside co-researchers to interpret the data, identify patterns, we identified areas where phonics teaching could be enhanced, discussed the implications of our findings and draw meaningful conclusions.

3.6.5 Step 5: Action Planning

Based on the research outcomes, researchers and co-researchers create action plans to address the identified issues (Smith et al., 2023:88). These plans consist of specific strategies and interventions designed to improve phonics teaching (Smith et al., 2023:88).

After analysing the data, we collaboratively developed action plans to enhance phonics teaching in our school, which include the implementation of professional development initiatives and adjustments to the curriculum.

3.6.6 Step 6: Implementation of Actions

The researcher and co-researchers put the action plans into effect. This phase encompassed alterations in phonics teaching practices, teacher training, or curriculum adjustments, as determined during the action planning stage (Smith et al., 2023:89). During the implementation phase, we collaborated closely with educators to enact our action plans, which involved delivering training and support to teachers and making necessary adjustments to phonics teaching throughout the school.

3.6.7 Step 7: Reflection and Evaluation

The researcher and co-researchers reflected on the outcomes of the implemented actions and evaluated their effectiveness (Smith et al., 2023:207). This step informed further iterations of the PAR process. Through ongoing reflection and evaluation, we assessed the impact of our interventions on phonics teaching and learner learning. We engaged in dialogues to gather feedback and refine our approach.

3.6.8 Step 8: Dissemination

The researcher and co-researchers shared the outcomes and lessons learned from the PAR project with the broader educational community. This included presentations, reports, or workshops. To ensure our findings reached a wider audience, we organized workshops and disseminated our research outcomes to educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

The PAR process was iterative, meaning that the findings and actions taken in one cycle informed subsequent cycles of inquiry and improvement. Researchers and co-

researchers continued to collaborate to refine and enhance phonics teaching practices based on going reflections and evaluations.

3.7 ONTOLOGY

Ontology within the framework of PAR in teaching phonics encompasses the fundamental assumptions and beliefs regarding the nature of reality, knowledge, and the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:66). This ontological standpoint posits that reality is socially constructed. Knowledge is situated within specific contexts, co-constructed by individuals involved in the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:16). In the realm of phonics teaching; this implies that knowledge about effective teaching practices is not isolated but is collaboratively developed through interactions among teachers, learners, and researchers.

The ontological foundation of PAR often integrates a commitment to democratic and participatory processes, assuming that knowledge generation and decision-making should include all stakeholders, such as teachers, learners, and community members (Reason & Bradbury, 2019:14). PAR acknowledges the contextual influence on teaching and learning experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:61). The ontological standpoint posits that knowledge is context-specific. Phonics teaching should adapt to the unique context of each classroom or educational setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:61). In teaching phonics, PAR operates on the ontological premise that knowledge is a socially constructed product, shaped through social interactions, with participants actively co-constructing knowledge through dialogue and collaboration (Reason & Bradbury, 2019:14).

The ontology may emphasize the significance of the learning context, suggesting that the effectiveness of phonics teaching can be influenced by the cultural, social, and educational context in which it occurs (Reason & Bradbury, 2019:16). It may underscore the role of empowerment and agency in PAR (Reason & Bradbury, 2019:14), assuming that individuals and communities possess the agency to influence and shape phonics teaching practices and policies, with PAR serving as a tool for empowering stakeholders in this process (Reason & Bradbury, 2019:16).

In the teaching of phonics, ontology aligns with a constructivist view of learning, where learners actively construct phonics knowledge through social interactions (Reason & Bradbury, 2019:16). The importance of multiple perspectives is recognized, acknowledging that teachers, learners, and parents may hold diverse beliefs and experiences related to phonics (Smith et al., 2023:115). Furthermore, ontology underscores the contextual nature of learning, emphasizing the impact of the educational environment on phonics teaching practices (Jones & Brown, 2022:55). This perspective aligns with the empowerment and agency-focused approach of PAR, seeking to empower stakeholders to shape and enhance phonics teaching within their communities (Johnson, 2022:222).

In summary, the ontology of PAR in teaching phonics is grounded in social constructivism, human agency, contextualism, the emergence of knowledge, and democratic engagement (Johnson, 2022:223). These ontological assumptions guide the research approach in this context, emphasizing the active involvement of participants in co-creating knowledge about effective phonics teaching (Johnson, 2022:223).

3.8 EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology in the context of PAR in teaching phonics pertains to how knowledge is produced, validated, and comprehended within this research approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:17). The epistemological considerations within PAR often highlight collaboration, experiential learning, and the acknowledgement of diverse forms of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:17). In teaching phonics through PAR, experiential knowledge, acquired through the direct experiences of teachers, learners, and other stakeholders involved in phonics teaching, is highly valued. This epistemological standpoint recognizes the invaluable insights and expertise of those actively engaged in teaching and learning phonics.

PAR is rooted in collaborative knowledge production, acknowledging that knowledge is not solely generated by researchers but is co-constructed with the active participation of teachers, learners, and the broader educational community. Knowledge is seen as a collective effort. The epistemology of PAR in teaching phonics underscores the

significance of local and contextual knowledge, valuing the perspectives of individuals and communities. It emphasizes that knowledge about effective phonics teaching may vary depending on specific contexts. PAR aims to generate practical and actionable knowledge leading to positive changes in phonics teaching (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:70). The epistemological focus is on knowledge that is theoretically sound and applicable in real-world educational settings.

In this study, we embraced an epistemological stance grounded in collaborative knowledge production and the recognition of experiential knowledge. This approach enabled us to involve teachers, learners, and parents as active co-researchers, leveraging their practical experiences to inform our understanding of effective phonics pedagogy. By placing value on local and contextual knowledge, our findings were tailored to the specific needs of our educational community, aligning with the PAR framework. Moreover, our epistemological standpoint encouraged critical reflection on existing practices, paving the way for actionable knowledge that could be applied to enhance phonics teaching in our school setting.

3.9 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In PAR, the role of the researcher is versatile and interactive. Researchers within PAR are not distant observers but actively engage in the research process alongside participants, intending to create meaningful change in collaboration with the community or stakeholders. They function as facilitators of cooperation, bringing together various stakeholders, including teachers, learners, parents, and community members, to jointly identify issues, set research agendas, and co-create knowledge (Morgan et al., 2020:41).

Within PAR, researchers take on the role of co-researchers, working side by side with participants to collect and analyse data. This collaborative approach ensures that the knowledge generated is contextually relevant and incorporates diverse perspectives (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Researchers may provide resources, such as research methodologies, data analysis tools, and educational materials, to empower participants in the research process and build their research capacities (Reason & Bradbury, 2008:62).

Researchers also play the role of a critical friend, encouraging stakeholders to reflect critically on their practices, challenge assumptions, and explore alternative approaches to issues in phonics education (Bradbury, 2015:22). They often advocate for social change by helping participants develop and implement action plans and interventions based on the research findings, supporting the community in addressing the identified issues in phonics education (Stringer, 2008:33:33).

Additionally, researchers in PAR may serve as knowledge brokers, facilitating knowledge exchange between stakeholders, such as educators, policymakers, and the community, to create a shared understanding of the issues and potential solutions (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006).

In the study, the researcher played a pivotal role as a facilitator of collaboration, working closely with co-researchers to identify critical issues and co-create research agendas (Morgan et al., 2020:42). As co-researchers, active involvement in data collection and analysis ensured that the knowledge generated reflected the context and diverse perspectives within the educational community (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:81). Furthermore, the researcher acted as a critical friend, challenging assumptions and encouraging the exploration of innovative approaches to phonics education (Bradbury, 2015:101). The researcher's collaborative and action-oriented role was instrumental in driving positive changes in phonics teaching practices.

Embracing the multifaceted roles of a researcher, we functioned as facilitators, creating a collaborative space for teachers, learners, and parents to share their experiences and insights (Smith et al., 2023:206). Assuming the roles of collaborators and co-learners, we recognized that participants were not mere subjects but active partners in the research process (Heron & Reason, 2008:32). Additionally, advocating for participant empowerment, we supported stakeholders in setting the research agenda and making informed decisions to enhance phonics education in our community (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003:111). Our role as knowledge brokers allowed us to translate research findings into actionable recommendations for improving phonics teaching (Checkoway, 2011:340). Throughout the research, we remained critical reflective practitioners,

continually examining our biases and positions of power to ensure ethical and equitable research relationships (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:83).

3.10 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE RESEARCHER AND CO RESEARCHERS

In PAR, the relationship between researchers and co-researchers is fundamentally collaborative and characterized by shared decision-making, mutual respect, and a commitment to working together to address a particular issue or problem. This relationship is central to the success of PAR and is often characterized by a sense of partnership and empowerment. In PAR, decision-making is a shared responsibility. Researchers and co-researchers collaborate to determine research questions, methods, and the course of action. Decisions are made collectively, ensuring that the research aligns with the needs and goals of the community. A commitment to empowerment characterizes the relationship. Researchers empower co-researchers by providing the tools, knowledge, and support needed to participate actively in the research process. Co-researchers, in turn, are assigned to influence and drive changes in phonics teaching practices (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). Effective communication is essential in the researcher-co-researcher relationship. Researchers create an open and inclusive environment where all voices are heard. Co-researchers are encouraged to express their thoughts, concerns, and ideas freely, fostering a sense of ownership over the research (Whyte, 1991).

We worked hand-in-hand with teachers, learners, and parents as equal partners, recognizing their unique expertise in the research process. Shared decision-making was a core principle, and together, we determined the research questions, methods, and strategies for improving phonics education (Stringer, 2008:33). Our commitment to empowerment was evident in our efforts to provide co-researchers with the tools and knowledge needed to actively participate and effect change in phonics teaching practices. Throughout the research, open and inclusive communication allowed for a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives (Whyte, 1991).

3.11 RHETORIC/ LANGUAGE

The language and rhetoric employed in PAR teaching phonics often stress inclusivity, collaboration, and empowerment. These rhetorical choices play a crucial role in fostering stakeholder engagement and participation. In phonics education, PAR frequently utilizes collaborative language, emphasizing the involvement of various stakeholders, including teachers, learners, parents, and the community. Phrases like "collaborative inquiry," "joint exploration," and "shared decision-making" underscore the collaborative nature of the research process.

The rhetoric of PAR in teaching phonics commonly employs empowering language to convey that participants possess agency and the ability to effect change. Terms such as "empowerment," "voice," and "participation" are prevalent in PAR literature, emphasizing the role of individuals and communities in shaping their phonics teaching practices. As an action-oriented approach, PAR's language focuses on concrete steps to enhance phonics teaching. Phrases like "action plans," "implementing change," and "transformative practice" highlight the commitment to making tangible improvements based on research findings.

Reflective language is also utilized in PAR to encourage critical thinking and self-reflection among participants. Terms such as "critical reflection," "self-examination," and "self-awareness" convey the idea that participants are encouraged to examine their practices and beliefs about phonics teaching critically. Furthermore, PAR rhetoric promotes inclusivity and equity by using inclusive language to acknowledge participants' diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. This includes phrases such as "inclusive participation," "diverse voices," and "equitable representation."

Our study adopted language and rhetoric rooted in inclusivity, collaboration, and empowerment. We used inclusive language to engage teachers, learners, parents, and community members as equal partners in our inquiry (Smith et al., 2023:23). This collaborative tone was evident in our discussions of co-creating knowledge and working together to improve phonics pedagogy (Jones & Brown, 2022). Furthermore, our rhetoric emphasized empowering vocabulary, highlighting participants' agency to drive change in phonics teaching practices (Johnson, 2021). This action-oriented and reflective discourse

allowed us to develop community-driven interventions and transformative practices that positively impacted our local phonics education context. The team also chose to communicate in isiNdebele and Sepedi, languages that made everyone comfortable and facilitated effective communication.

3.12 THE RESEARCH SITE

The school selected for the investigation is located in the sub-rural area of KwaMhlanga in the Themabelthu zone within the KwaMhlanga North East circuit of the Nkangala district. Situated in the Mpumalanga province, it falls under the Thembisile local municipality. This primary school accommodates learners from Grade R to Grade 7 and is adjacent to a community church and a car wash. Each class has over forty learners, and the school employs twenty-two teaching staff members and seven non-teaching staff members. The school's highest qualification among its staff is a master's degree in management. The predominant language used is isiNdebele. The school is classified under quintile three with more than eight hundred learners, indicating a lower socio-economic status. There are a total of thirty staff members.

The school receives substantial support from the local clinic, with nurses regularly visiting. Additionally, the orphanage centre provides funds for underprivileged learners. Local pastors contribute by offering prayers during school assemblies, and business owners in the community frequently make donations. Some teachers commute from the Gauteng province daily. The selection of this school was based on the use of isiNdebele as the language of teaching and learning. Grade one is an entry grade, where all learners are expected to master phonics concepts to facilitate reading and writing abilities.

3.13 GAINING ENTRY

Gaining entry often referred to as "gaining access," represents a crucial initial step in conducting a study, particularly in research involving human participants or organizations (Whyte, 1991:63). This process entails establishing trust, obtaining permission, and fostering relationships with individuals or groups who will be involved in the research

(Whyte, 1991:63). The act of gaining entry consists of the cultivation of relationships and acquiring an understanding of the research context. He further stated that the contextual understanding is vital for designing research instruments, adjusting methodologies, and effectively interpreting findings.

In gaining entry, I sought permission from various stakeholders, including the Nkangala district, circuit manager, school principal, SGB, teachers, and parents of learners. I submitted letters of consent and ascent for minors, with all co-researchers signing the letters. I explained the study's objectives and the reasons behind its implementation. Additionally, I sought permission to capture visual and audio recordings during our collaborative efforts. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point if they no longer wished to continue, although such instances were not encouraged.

Establishing trust and cooperation within the school community proved vital for acquiring accurate and meaningful data regarding phonics teaching practices (Johnson, 2021). Access to the school environment enabled us to contextual understand existing phonics practices, adapt our research methods accordingly, and practically implement our research activities, including classroom observations and surveys (Stringer, 2008:33). This entry into the educational context was indispensable for the successful execution of our study.

3.14 CREDENTIALS AND ROLES OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

In this section, the role of co-researchers is discussed concerning the benefits of the study. The roles of the coordinating team, namely the study coordinator, principal, teachers, learners, HoD, parents, circuit manager, and school librarian, were chosen and explained below.

3.14.1 The researcher

The researcher's role has been previously discussed (refer to section 3.2.7). However, this section explicitly outlines my role as the study coordinator, emphasizing the specific functions I performed in this research. Beyond initiating the study, I assumed the team

leader position and coordinated a co-researcher group. My role is also delineated concerning the CER theoretical framework, involving coaching the research and connecting it to PAR. Following the receipt of ethical clearance, I convened the initial preparatory meeting with potential co-researchers invited to join the study. I facilitated PBL workshops, conducted research alongside the team, coordinated the team's activities, participated in collaborative planning meetings, and recorded data generated during these sessions and lesson observations. The collected data were subsequently analysed and interpreted collaboratively with the research team. Additionally, I ensured compliance with ethical clearance processes throughout the study.

3.14.2 The teachers

Teachers play a pivotal role as co-researchers, leveraging their expertise and firsthand experience in phonics teaching for collaborative inquiry. Actively engaging with other stakeholders, including researchers, learners, parents, and community members, teachers contribute their unique perspectives, experiences, and insights to shape the research process (Stringer, 2008:33). Teachers also play a crucial role in disseminating research outcomes within the educational community by sharing findings, best practices, and lessons learned with colleagues, administrators, and parents (Stringer, 2008:33). Notably, the highest qualification teachers in this study attain is a master's degree.

All teachers in the school volunteered to participate in the study, irrespective of the grade or subjects they teach, with a specific focus on Grade one teachers instructing isiNdebele as a home language. The study's scope encompasses all teachers, and their willingness to contribute is vital for sharing their phonics knowledge. The teaching staff comprises twenty-two individuals, consisting of nineteen females and three males, all Black. Eighteen teachers identify as Christians, while four do not. The Grade one classes are divided into A, B, and C, all managed by female teachers. The collective teaching experience among these educators ranges from 5 to 23 years. Notably, one teacher initially trained to teach Sepedi has been teaching isiNdebele for 18 years.

3.14.3 The principal

The role of a principal in PAR is crucial, given their leadership positions within educational institutions and their potential impact on policy decisions and the implementation of research findings. In the case of this study, the school principal is a Black female with thirty-five (35) years of teaching experience. She served as both a departmental head and deputy principal for six (6) years, followed by twelve (12) years as a deputy principal and thirteen (13) years as a principal, holding a Master's degree in Leadership and Management as her highest qualification.

Principals assume various significant roles in PAR, encompassing support for the research process, facilitation of collaboration, and advocacy for changes based on research outcomes. They play a crucial role in ensuring that researchers have access to necessary data and information within the school or institution, fostering transparency and providing essential support for data collection (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003:113). Principals can actively encourage and promote the involvement of teachers and staff in the research process, advocating for their participation and recognizing the significance of their insights and contributions (Heron & Reason, 2008:367). Additionally, the principal was pivotal in informing all school stakeholders about the study.

3.14.4 The learners

Learners are often regarded as co-researchers rather than mere subjects in research endeavours. They collaborate with researchers and educators, actively contributing to co-creating knowledge, participating in data collection, and analysing findings. This collaborative approach recognizes and values learners' expertise within the context of their own experiences (Whyte, 1991;77).

The study focuses on the isiNdebele Grade one class, consisting of three classes with 43 learners each, totalling 129 learners. Their ages range from 5 to 7 years, comprising seventy (70) girls and fifty-nine (59) boys, all of whom are of Black ethnicity. Within the school, there are 28 repeaters. Learners were assigned pseudonyms to protect their

identities. These learners come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, where many of their parents are unemployed, while others work as domestic workers.

Learners are integral to research (Smith, 2023:233). They actively function as co-researchers, collaborating with teachers and other stakeholders to identify challenges in phonics learning (Whyte, 1991). The voices and perspectives of learners take centre stage in our research, influencing the research agenda and shaping our comprehension of effective phonics teaching (Heron & Reason, 2008:366). Active participation empowers learners to assume ownership of their learning experiences and contribute to decision-making processes (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003).

3.14.5 The school librarian

School librarians play a crucial role in disseminating research findings by assisting co-researchers in creating and sharing reports, presentations, or educational materials that effectively communicate the research outcomes (Todd, 2015:8). Librarians can contribute to the data collection by providing access to relevant databases, research tools, and surveys. Additionally, they may offer support in organizing and managing the data collected (Henriksen, 2022:10).

The school librarian in this context is a black male who has served as a librarian for three years. He holds a degree in human resources and has strong ties to the local community, residing within walking distance.

3.14.6 The parents

Parents are residents of the same community as the school, and the overall socio-economic status is poor. Many parents are unemployed, and a significant number are single parents. While some parents possess literacy skills, the community is known for crime-related activities. Parents were crucial and active stakeholders in their children's education. They engaged in collaborative decision-making, contributing to identifying research priorities and actively participating in co-creating research plans. Additionally, parents provided valuable data through surveys and interviews, offering insights into

home literacy practices and parental perspectives. Their involvement extended beyond data collection, as they actively advocated for the significance of the research findings within the school community.

3.15 COMMON VISION

Our shared objective is enabling teachers to teach isiNdebele Grade one phonics effectively. The research team formulated this common vision during our initial group meeting, where we engaged with various stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community leaders. Early involvement from all participants ensured that diverse perspectives were considered in shaping our collective vision. The primary focus of our discussions was the challenges teachers face in teaching phonics effectively.

We facilitated collaborative discussions to define the specific issue or problem the research aimed to address. Participants were encouraged to share their perspectives and insights. Through a series of participatory workshops and community meetings, we collectively identified the issue of low literacy rates in our community. The input from our stakeholders played a crucial role in shaping the research goals. As the study progressed, we held periodic meetings with stakeholders to revisit and refine our joint vision statement. This ongoing dialogue allowed us to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain alignment with our overarching objectives.

3.16 DATA GENERATION METHOD

3.16.1 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis involves a thorough examination of internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) factors during situational assessment and strategic policy formulation (Weihrich, 1982). Numerous studies have demonstrated that SWOT analysis is instrumental in assisting organizations in addressing strategic challenges and making successful decisions (AlMarwani, 2020:3; Kapoor & Kaur, 2017; Hill & Westbrook, 1997).

We identified resources, activities, responsibilities, and timeframes to meet the study's objectives. The teaching staff, recognized for their expertise in teaching phonics due to their professional training, were identified as crucial contributors. The research team unanimously agreed on utilizing SWOT analysis as an effective strategic tool to formulate a strategy for teaching phonics in isiNdebele in Grade one. Various data collection methods, such as videos, voice recordings, note-taking, and observations, were determined to be effective.

We employed SWOT analysis as a data generation method to systematically evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with current phonics practices in our educational context. This approach facilitated in-depth qualitative data gathering through engaging discussions with teachers, parents, and learners. These discussions covered positive aspects of phonics teaching (strengths), areas requiring improvement (weaknesses), potential avenues for enhancement (opportunities), and external challenges to consider (threats).

Meetings with different co-researchers were held at various times, where we explained the research goals to practitioners. Detailed minutes and attendance registers were maintained for all meetings. A strategic plan was developed to outline priorities, responsibilities, actions, time frames, and resources for each activity, guiding and monitoring the data collection process. A SWOT analysis was also conducted to highlight opportunities, weaknesses, strengths, and potential threats in collecting data. This SWOT analysis complemented our other data collection methods, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.16.1.1 Strength

Strengths were identified: experienced and knowledgeable researchers, strong partnerships or collaborations among the co-researchers, cooperative learners, relevant qualifications, and SGB, who is studying to obtain her B.Ed. Foundation specialising in isiNdebele, attended workshops; knowledge of CAPS document, support from principal and community learners, team-teaching, and collaboration.

3.16.1.2 Weaknesses

Weaknesses were identified, namely: limited research team resources, such as personnel or funding, insufficient access to or information, time constraints, lack of specific research skills or expertise, some co-researchers have never been involved in research, Trained with other languages rather than isiNdebele and age and literacy levels of some parents/guardians.

3.16.1.3 Opportunities

Opportunities were identified: emerging research areas of interest, availability of new technologies or research methods, collaboration opportunities with other research groups, and potential for research impact on policy or practice.

3.16.1.4 Threats

Identified threats include budget constraints, changes in regulations affecting research protocols, availability issues with co-researchers, waning interest from some participants, learners' non-attendance during school holidays, lack of participation from certain co-researchers due to other commitments, and limited attendance during school closures, with only the principal and practitioners showing up for meetings. Challenges also arose in scheduling meetings due to early departures and additional school-related commitments, discomfort among learners and co-researchers who felt less knowledgeable than teachers, disconnection in teaching the principles of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes), poor memorization skills, inadequate materials and resources, learners with diverse needs, and teachers lacking professional training in using EGRA.

3.17 INSTRUMENT OF DATA GENERATION

3.17.1 Videos and voice recording

The co-researchers recorded spoken words and observable actions of teachers using videos and recordings, and they were helpful references for clarity after the meetings.

3.17.2 Observations and discussions

All stakeholders were allowed to observe and review through discussions. Each took notes and later studied as a team. Co-researchers shared what they knew and felt was effective and how it could be done.

3.17.3 Analysis of teaching documents or portfolios

The team analysed lesson planning documents, assessment records and children's portfolios. Learners' books were checked for caps alignment, and that assisted the teacher in doing new lessons. Transcription and transcribing were done.

3.18 PRIORITIZATION OF CHALLENGES

3.18.1 Strategic planning

Through a collaborative effort involving administrators, faculty, and stakeholders, we conducted strategic planning to articulate our educational mission, establish clear objectives for learner achievement, and delineate the strategies necessary to enhance curriculum, teaching methods, and learner support services. This strategic plan served as our guiding framework, ensuring all our endeavours aligned with our long-term academic excellence and learner success goals.

The planning process for effective phonics teaching unfolded, involving formulating research questions, establishing a vision, and selecting PAR as the problem-solving technique. The research team was formed, and norms were discussed.

Introduction sessions on phonics teaching were conducted for co-researchers, during which the team analysed the current situation and identified challenges in effectively teaching isiNdebele phonics. Discussions encompassed successful stories and challenges encountered by teachers in teaching isiNdebele phonics effectively in Grade one.

Co-researchers engaged in reflective discussions on continuously conducted lesson observations and presentations, aiming to reach a common interpretation of the events during the lesson presentations. Opportunities were provided for co-researchers to share insights on how lessons could be improved or presented differently. Diverse views were expressed, leading to a collective agreement on the lesson's success through reflections on learners' written work and feedback.

Reflections extended to what co-researchers learned and what differed from previous lesson presentations and observations. Learners were also allowed to reflect on their learning experiences. Meetings were conducted as planned, with communication in isiNdebele, Sepedi, and English, reflecting the community's linguistic dominance. Conversations during meetings were recorded for later analysis. Co-researchers actively shared their thoughts and views during the meetings, contributing to data gathered through observations and lesson presentations. Co-researchers provided comprehensive reports on the entire process, highlighting successes and areas for improvement. The research team collectively brainstormed strategies for teaching isiNdebele phonics in Grade one, with co-researchers agreeing that the practices appeared effective.

3.18.1.1 Priorities

The study prioritizes the following aspects: assisting teachers in teaching appropriate sequencing of phonic content, helping teachers with understanding the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes), assisting teachers with knowledge of the application of phonetic patterns, assisting teachers in creating lesson plans that are adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners, assisting teachers with knowledge in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding).

Table 3.1: PRIORITY 1: Assisting teachers to teach appropriate sequencing of phonic content

Activity	Responsibility	Monitoring	Resources	Evaluation	Time frame
Development workshop where team-teaching took place. Co-researchers are given a platform for sharing of ideas.	Research coordinator and co-researchers	Research coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff room • Classroom where the lesson takes place • Writing books • Pens • IsiNdebele authentic texts • Chalks, chalkboard 	Participants, attendance, brainstorming and development of team norms and action plan	One-hour meetings twice a week For three months

Table 3.2: PRIORITY 2: Assisting teachers with understanding the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

Activity	Responsibility	Monitoring	Resources	Evaluation	Time frame
Developmental workshop from a teacher of a different school to share skills then developmental workshops among the school teachers.	Research coordinator and co-researchers	Research coordinator and co-researchers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffroom • Classroom • Chalk, chalkboard • word cards • Ball • Bag • Worksheets • pencils, • books 	Co-researchers will reflect on what went well and what did not go and how to improve that through re-planning	One hour. Twice a week for three months

Table 3.3: PRIORITY 3: Assisting teachers with knowledge of the application of phonetic patterns

Activity	Responsibility	Monitoring	Resources	Evaluation	Time frame
Developmental workshop where co-researchers divided themselves into three groups	Co-researchers and research coordinator	Co-researchers`	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff room • Classroom where lessons are presented • Sound charts • Written rhymes • Written chants • Word puzzles • Word card • Writing pens and books • Chalks, chalkboard 	Co-researchers will reflect on what went well and what did not go and how to improve that through re-planning	One hour. Twice a week for three months

Table 3.4: PRIORITY 4: Assisting teachers in creating lesson plans that are adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners

Activity	Responsibility	Monitoring	Resources	Evaluation	Time frame
A professional developmental workshop by an isiNdebele language specialist and co-researchers divided themselves into three groups.	The research coordinator, co-researchers and two volunteered learners	Research coordinator, co-researchers and two volunteered learners. Lesson reflection will be done twice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff room • Classroom where lessons take place. • Laptops • Lesson plans templates 	Co-researchers will reflect on what went well and what did not go and how to improve that through re-planning	One hour. Twice a week for three months

		a week after each lesson observation			
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Table 3.5: PRIORITY 5 Assisting teachers with knowledge in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

Activity Phase 4	Responsibility	Monitoring	Resources	Evaluation	Time frame
Professional developmental workshop done by the HOD	Research coordinator, HOD, co-researchers	Research coordinator, co-researchers and two 3 volunteered learners. Every after-lesson observation of the lesson will be assessed through class activity and discussions among the stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff room • Classroom where the lesson presentation is taking place. • EGRA booklet • Assessment activity. 	Co-researchers will reflect on what went well and what did not go and how to improve that through re-planning	One hour. Twice a week for three months

3.19 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to analysing language and discourse that focuses on uncovering power relations, ideologies, and social structures embedded within texts and spoken or written communication (Fairclough, 2003).

3.19.1 History origin of CDA

3.19.1.1 Foundations in Linguistics and Semiotics

CDA has its roots in linguistics and semiotics. Early work by scholars like Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) laid the foundation for the study of language as a social and cultural

phenomenon (Catalano & Waugh, 2020:2). In his book "Course in General Linguistics," Saussure emphasized the importance of understanding language in its social context. Saussure's concept of the linguistic sign, which consists of a signifier (the sound pattern or written form) and a signified (the concept or meaning), underscores the importance of understanding the arbitrary relationship between sounds and meanings in language. This understanding is fundamental in teaching phonics, as it emphasizes the need for learners to recognize and decode the relationship between written symbols (graphemes) and their corresponding sounds (phonemes). This idea of studying language in context became a fundamental principle in CDA (Catalano & Waugh, 2020:2).

3.19.1.2 *Marxism and Ideology*

The Marxist tradition played a significant role in the development of CDA. The Frankfurt School, particularly the work of scholars like Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse, influenced the critical perspective on language and ideology (Cole, 2022:7). These scholars emphasized the role of ideology in shaping discourse and argued that language could be a tool of power and control (Beetz, Herzog & Maesse, 2021:108).

3.19.1.3 *Norman Fairclough and the Emergence of CDA*

One of the key figures in the development of CDA is Norman Fairclough. In the late 20th century, Fairclough's work contributed significantly to the formalisation of CDA as an approach to analysing language in its socio-political context (Simpson, Mayr & Statham, 2018:103). Fairclough's book "Language and Power" (1989) is a seminal text that outlines the principles and methodologies of CDA (Simpson, Mayr & Statham, 2018:108). He argues that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a site where power relations are negotiated, constructed, and contested. He also advocates for a critical approach to discourse analysis that seeks to uncover hidden power relations, ideologies, and social practices embedded within language use

3.19.1.4 Feminist and Poststructuralist Influences:

CDA also drew inspiration from feminist and poststructuralist scholarship. The work of theorists like Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Donna Haraway challenged traditional notions of power and identity (Leitch, Cain, Finke, McGowan, Sharpley-Whiting & Williams, 2018:99). These authors argue that CDA provides a powerful framework for examining the ways in which language functions as a site of power and ideology within literary texts. They highlight the importance of analysing both the linguistic features of texts and the socio-political contexts in which they are produced and consumed. By adopting a critical approach to discourse analysis, scholars can uncover the underlying power dynamics, ideologies, and social inequalities embedded within literary representations. These ideas were integrated into CDA, leading to a more nuanced understanding of how language constructs and reinforces social hierarchies (Leitch et al., 2018:99).

3.19.2 Objectives of CDA

CDA endeavours to unveil and scrutinize power relations inherent in discourse, aiming to comprehend how language functions to establish, perpetuate, or challenge power structures within society (Fairclough, 1989). Educators and researchers can utilize CDA to analyse the power dynamics embedded in phonics teaching materials, curriculum decisions, and teaching methodologies. It illuminates how specific phonics approaches may favour particular dialects or social groups, potentially reinforcing linguistic inequalities (Fairclough, 2003).

In examining discourse, CDA seeks to scrutinize and critique the ideologies present, striving to reveal hidden or implicit ideologies and their impact on shaping social reality (van Dijk, 1998). Applied to phonics teaching materials and methods, CDA critically assesses the underlying ideologies and beliefs, exposing how these ideologies may influence learners' perceptions of language and language varieties (Luke, 2012:4).

Aligned with a concern for social justice, CDA investigates how discourse contributes to social inequality, discrimination, and marginalization (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:131).

Through a detailed analysis of language use, including linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and discursive practices, CDA explores how these elements contribute to constructing meaning and power (Fairclough, 2001). Educators can use CDA to guide the development of phonics teaching that is inclusive and sensitive to linguistic diversity, identifying opportunities to incorporate diverse phonological patterns and variations in instruction (Creese, 2000).

CDA promotes critical awareness among researchers and the broader public, empowering individuals to critically engage with discourse and challenge dominant narratives (van Leeuwen, 2008). In the context of phonics teaching, CDA encourages critical thinking about language and its societal role, prompting learners to question linguistic norms, challenge stereotypes, and develop a deeper understanding of phonological patterns across different communities (Bourdieu, 1991).

With an inclination towards contributing to social change, CDA exposes injustices and advocates for more equitable discursive practices (Wodak, 2001). Viewing discourse as a form of social practice, CDA explores how language and communication shape social phenomena (Fairclough, 1992). By adopting a CDA-informed approach, educators empower learners to become more conscious of the social implications of phonics learning, fostering informed language choices and a greater appreciation for linguistic diversity (Pennycook, 2007).

3.19.3 Three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Fairclough (1995:97) states that CDA is applied at three levels: text, discursive practice, and social analysis.

3.19.3.1 *Textual Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

The initial aspect of Fairclough's CDA involves a thorough scrutiny of the linguistic components within the text, encompassing the analysis of words, phrases, grammar, and rhetorical devices. In the text being examined, identifying phrases that endorse a particular ideology or reinforce power imbalances is possible (Mullet, 2018:117).

Furthermore, an essential focus in this dimension is on how language is employed to establish meaning and shape reality within the text. For example, one might identify a phrase emphasizing the superiority of a specific social group, revealing the discursive strategies employed to uphold power dynamics within the text (Fairclough, 2003). According to Mahlomaholo (2012:51), CDA is applied to extract deeper meaning from the text beyond mere sentence structures.

3.19.3.2 *Discursive practice*

The second facet of Fairclough's CDA involves exploring the discursive practices and strategies present in the text. This extends beyond linguistic elements and delves into how language presents issues, shapes viewpoints, and perpetuates power relations. Discursive analysis scrutinizes patterns of representation, exclusion, and inclusion of various voices and groups. By recognizing the discursive strategies employed to legitimize or marginalize specific perspectives, we can unveil the power structures and ideological biases embedded in the discourse (Fairclough, 2001:88). Examine the discursive practices utilized in phonics instruction, encompassing interactions between teachers and learners and the discourse within the classroom. Evaluate how power dynamics, language choices, and social hierarchies manifest in these interactions.

3.19.3.3 *Social analysis*

The third facet of Fairclough's CDA involves exploring the broader social context in which the text is situated, encompassing consideration of societal norms, power relations, and ideologies that both influence and are influenced by the text. Understanding how the discourse in the text connects to social structures, practices, and beliefs is crucial within this dimension. For instance, linking the identified discursive strategies in the text to broader social power structures enables a comprehensive understanding of how language perpetuates or challenges existing inequalities (Fairclough, 2001:88). Examine the broader societal implications of phonics instruction. Discuss how language education policies, socio-economic factors, and cultural ideologies shape the design and

implementation of phonics teaching. This underscores the necessity of critically analysing phonics instruction through Fairclough's perspective. CDA highlights the potential for integrating insights from CDA to enhance phonics teaching and advance a more equitable and inclusive language education (Fairclough, 2001:88).

3.20 CDA AND PAR

Combining CDA with PAR in teaching phonics is a potent approach to advancing equitable language education. Both CDA and PAR share a commitment to social justice and transformative change. CDA analyses phonics teaching materials, identifying linguistic biases or inequalities inherent (Fairclough, 2001:88). PAR involves the collaboration of teachers, learners, and community members in this analysis, collectively recognizing and documenting linguistic disparities (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:14). Educators and community members can collaborate through PAR to develop culturally sensitive and inclusive phonics curricula (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:14). CDA aids in analysing and critiquing the discourse surrounding curriculum choices (Fairclough, 1992:12). PAR emphasizes the empowerment of marginalized groups through research and action (Lewin, 1946:46). By integrating CDA, researchers and educators involve learners and community members in critically analysing phonics materials, enabling them to identify and challenge linguistic inequalities (Wodak & Meyer, 2009:46). PAR typically involves ongoing reflection and assessment of the impact of interventions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005:15). CDA analyses discourse-related changes related to phonics teaching, measuring shifts in ideology and discourse patterns (van Dijk, 1998:7). Lastly, the combination of CDA and PAR is a potent tool for advocating for policy changes in language education. By critically examining and documenting linguistic injustices, researchers and community members can lobby for more equitable language policies (Wodak, 2001:15).

3.21 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The study received permission from the University of Mpumalanga, and ethical clearance was granted to the researcher. Additionally, the researcher sought permission from the circuit manager and the school principal to conduct the study. The researcher used pseudonyms to ensure anonymity, and co-researchers were informed of their right to withdraw if they felt uncomfortable or unable to continue. Participation in the study was voluntary, and co-researchers were not obliged to participate. The researcher conducted the study with honesty, trust, and integrity, emphasizing the ethical handling of captured pictures for data generation, not personal use. Consent and assent forms were shared and signed by the co-researchers. Reflexivity, a crucial ethical practice in CDA, involves researchers continually reflecting on their assumptions, biases, and motivations throughout the research process. This self-awareness contributed to maintaining a critical and ethical analysis.

3.22 CONCLUSION

The chapter provided an overview of the research design and methodology employed in crafting an effective strategy for teaching isiNdebele phonics in Grade one. The methodology utilized for this study was PAR, and strategic planning was undertaken to implement solutions addressing identified priorities. Both PAR and CDA were applied to enhance the study's effectiveness. The researchers' credentials have been detailed, and measures ensuring anonymity and confidentiality have been implemented.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aims to formulate an effective strategy for teaching isiNdebele phonics in Grade one at KwaMhlanga North East Circuit. In this chapter, the data are analysed, findings are presented, and interpretations are discussed, all to devise an efficient strategy for isiNdebele phonics instruction in Grade one. The data are organized based on the study's five objectives, which include identifying challenges faced by teachers in teaching isiNdebele phonics in Grade one, determining solutions to these challenges, identifying conducive conditions for implementing the solutions, anticipating threats to the teaching strategies, and identifying successful indicators of the challenges faced by teachers. Each objective is unpacked, incorporating relevant constructs from the literature review, and suitable sub-headings are introduced.

Empirical data are presented in various forms, including words, images, and scenarios. The data are scrutinized and compared against good practices, encompassing legislative frameworks, theories, and previous study findings. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to analyse and interpret the underlying meanings of the texts at three levels: text, discursive practice, and social structure (Fairclough, 1995:97).

This chapter delves into analysing challenges encountered by Grade one teachers instructing isiNdebele phonics in line with the study objectives. The aim is to identify potential strategies that can be developed and adapted to address these challenges faced by isiNdebele teachers in Grade one. The evidence is examined through a CDA lens to understand co-researchers perspectives from a standpoint that emphasizes social justice and democracy. Factors contributing to the development of strategies are thoroughly investigated, considering potential threats and risks that could impede the effective implementation of these strategies.

4.2 CHALLENGES FACED IN TEACHING ISINDEBELE PHONICS IN GRADE ONE

Teaching isiNdebele phonics in Grade one poses several challenges. This section elaborates on the five primary challenges identified through a literature review, serving as conceptual guidance based on factual evidence and empirical data discussed in Chapter 2. The difficulties identified include (i) Inappropriate sequencing of phonic content, (ii) Lack of understanding of the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes), (iii) Difficulties in applying phonetic patterns, (iv) Lesson plans that do not adapt to meet the diverse needs of learners; and (v) Issues in applying phonic skills (encoding and decoding).

4.2.1 Inappropriate sequencing of phonic content

CAPS guidelines specify that teachers should initiate instruction with frequently used sounds to give learners a strong foundation (DBE, 2011:17). While teachers can introduce one to two new sounds per week, the pace should be tailored to the learners' progress (DBE, 2011:17). By the end of the first term, a minimum of eight sounds should be covered, focusing solely on single consonants during the first and second terms, with double consonants introduced in the third and fourth terms (DBE, 2011:7). It is discouraged for teachers to teach letters with similar characteristics consecutively (Mabizela et al., 2020:12). Inappropriate sequencing of phonics content can impede the natural development of reading skills (Mabizela et al., 2020:12). Without a logical and sequential introduction of foundational phonics concepts, learners may face challenges in decoding words and progress in their reading abilities (Mubanga et al., 2020:187). Learners can become confused and frustrated when presented with phonics concepts that are either too advanced or not aligned with their current understanding (Mubanga et al., 2020:187). Phonological awareness emphasizes the need for step-by-step, progressive instruction, starting from essential phonetic elements (such as individual sounds and letters) and advancing gradually to more complex phonics rules like blends, syllable structure, and word patterns (Sedita, 2020:1).

During observations, data revealed that practitioners did not adhere to the correct sequence when teaching phonics. This became evident during our initial meeting while reflecting on our lesson presentations.

Ms Motho:

“Why do you mix two similar letters in one week?”

Ms Johnson:

“I change sounds so that it can sink in the heads of the learners that b and d are not the same”.

Ms Anderson:

“Learners must channel their brain so that it can get used to identifying different letters with their characteristics”.

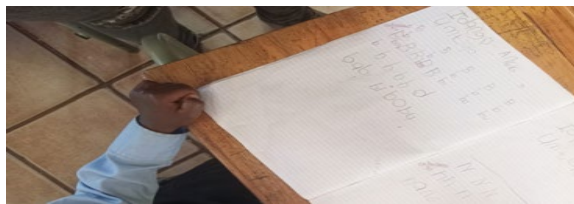


Figure 4.1: Learner confused with letters b and d

The teacher taught the sound **rh** for the week, but she used a different sound for assessment. This shows that a teacher does not have proper sequencing of sounds.

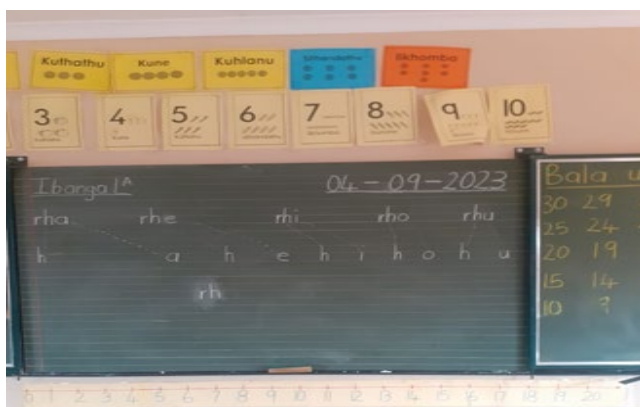


Figure 4.2: Sound of the week taught

Researcher:

“Why are you assessing on different sound rather than the sound you taught?”

Ms Johnson:

“Ahhh, we are teaching at the end. The learners come out of this class knowing all the sounds.”

Ms Anderson:

“Uhhh, we are left behind. We are trying to cover the ATP.”

This is the activity done on the same day after teaching sound **rh**, but the assessment is based on sound **mb**

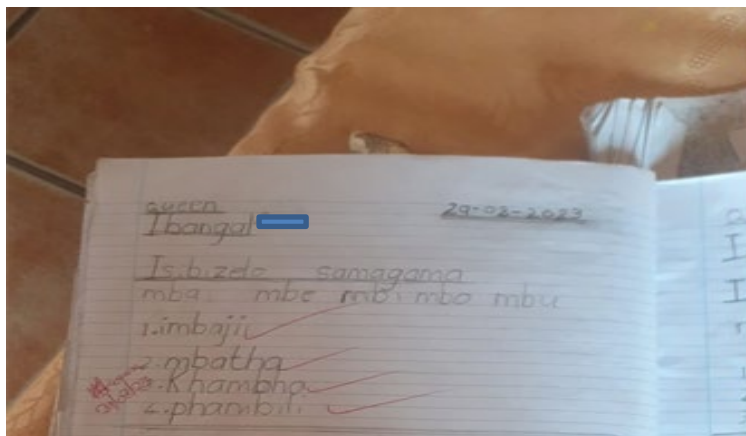


Figure 4.3: Activity of the week

The data uncover inconsistencies in the sequencing of phonics teaching, lacking logical progressions in presenting the sequence of phonic content (refer to Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Initially, the teacher does not employ sequence teaching, moving without following a coherent and proper order or flow of a lesson (beginning with practical aspects before delving into abstract parts). Throughout the school year, the teacher shifts back and forth between different phonics concepts without establishing a logical progression (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Due to inappropriate sequencing and a lack of understanding, learners become frustrated and disengaged with phonics teaching (Taeschner, 2022:3).

Inappropriate sequencing may result in inconsistent learning gaps, where learners miss crucial phonics elements or are introduced to advanced concepts before mastering foundational ones (Taeschner, 2022:3). These gaps can compound over time, negatively impacting reading comprehension and fluency. Inadequate sequencing may lead to limited word recognition skills for example sight word recognition, contextual word recognition and vocabulary, making it challenging for learners to decode and read words accurately (Anyiendah et al., 2020:45). This limitation can impede comprehension and hinder their ability to read more complex texts. Suppose learners haven't mastered essential phonics rules. In that case, they may struggle with spelling and writing accurately, hindering the transfer of phonetic knowledge to new words (Bilton & Duff, 2021:1) (see Figure 4.7). Skipping or inadequately covering foundational phonics concepts impedes the understanding and mastery of more advanced phonics rules and reading strategies (Blevins, 2016:240). These deficiencies affect comprehension and hinder higher-level reading skills (see Figure 4.6).

Posthumanism and PAR emphasize the agency and participation of learners, recognizing them as active agents in their learning process (Susen, 2022:80). Teachers can use learners as practical examples, such as telling a story in sequential order and having learners act out the story following the chronological sequence or using practical examples, like providing learners with a series of illustrated story sequences, each depicting a different phonics concept or sound pattern. Learners can sequence the pictures and then orally retell the story, emphasizing the phonetic elements in each scene (see Figure 4.16). Posthumanism invites an ecological perspective on learning, considering the interconnectedness of learners within larger socio-cultural and environmental contexts (Braidotti, 2019:11). Teaching phonic skills may involve situating language learning within real-world contexts, acknowledging the entanglement of language with culture, society, and the natural environment, where practical examples aid in teaching phonetic content sequentially.

CDA emphasizes understanding power structures embedded in language (Fairclough, 2001:18). When teaching phonics, societal norms or power structures might influence the content sequencing. For instance, the choice of words or examples used in phonics lessons can reflect societal biases or reinforce certain cultural norms. CDA advocates

considering the social context in language use (Fairclough, 2003:33). In teaching phonics, sequencing might involve selecting content that resonates with learners' lived experiences, ensuring relevance and meaningful learning within their social context.

CDA encourages learners to critically analyse the sequencing of information, arguments, or events within a text (Mullet, 2018:117). They can identify how specific ideas are strategically placed at the beginning, middle, or end to influence the reader's understanding and perception of the subject.

Therefore, the data indicated that teachers did not use the correct teaching sequencing method before the intervention of this study, which contradicts effective teaching.

4.2.2 Unable to understand the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

The CAPS document encourages Grade one teachers to introduce fundamental phonics skills, including teaching the associations between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) and the ability to blend these sounds into words (DBE, 2011:12). Teachers with a limited understanding of phonetic rules may encounter difficulties in employing effective instructional strategies for phonics teaching, leading to ineffective or inefficient teaching methods (Ehri, 2020:45). Teachers lacking a profound grasp of phonetic rules may struggle to identify and address specific challenges or misconceptions that learners face in acquiring phonics skills (Moats, 1999:103). Those who don't fully comprehend phonetic rules may unintentionally deviate from prescribed curriculum standards, resulting in a misalignment of instruction with expected learning outcomes (Moats, 2000:55). Teaching phonetic rules contributes to vocabulary growth by enabling learners to analyse and comprehend word meanings based on their phonemes and sound patterns (Ehri, 2020:45). Phonological awareness theory stresses the explicit teaching of the relationship between spoken language sounds and written symbols. Explicitly teaching the association between graphemes and phonemes is crucial for learners to understand and apply these relationships in reading and spelling (Moats, 2019:73).

During the observations, data indicated that teachers struggled to understand letters and their corresponding sounds. This was evident during our meeting while reflecting on our lesson presentations.



Figure 4.4: Learners' reading the letter sounds

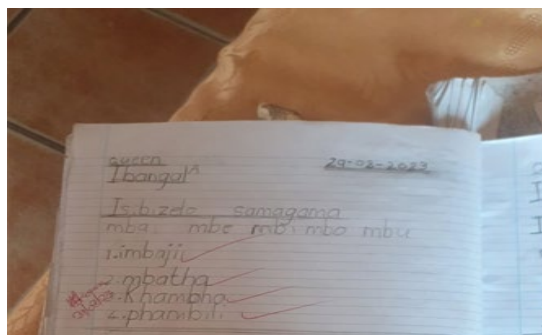


Figure 4.5: Activity of the learner is confused about how to differentiate between two sounds and letters

[Bokang (singing the letters and sounding them). They articulate them incorrectly; the upper vowels are pronounced in a low voice, and the low vowels are pronounced in a high voice).... Pronouncing **(a)** (upper voice) instead of **(a)** (lower voice)]

The challenge arises from learners' articulation of words, stemming from how they learned them, leading to incorrect phonemes and graphemes, as mentioned earlier. This confusion creates difficulty for learners in accurately writing certain words (see Figure 4.5). The data revealed that Ms. Johnson struggled to grasp the fundamental principles of phonetic rules, particularly the intricate relationship between graphemes and phonemes. During reading session's: read aloud and guided reading session (see Figure 4.12), she observed that some learners faced difficulties decoding words and often resorted to guessing rather than sounding out the words phonetically.

This lack of understanding of graphemes and their corresponding phonemes poses challenges in effectively guiding learners (Adams, 1990). Furthermore, when learners inquired about specific sounds and how to pronounce certain letters, Ms Johnson found it challenging to provide clear explanations due to her limited understanding of phonetic rules.

Lucky:

“Ma’am, how do we pronounce the sound (H)?”

Ms Johnson:

“Others they say (hūuu) some they say (hāaa) ... as long you know how to write it, it is not a problem.”

This lack of clarity impeded her ability to respond adequately to their inquiries (Graham & Harris, 2005:11). Furthermore, in spelling and writing exercises, Ms Johnson observed consistent errors in her learners' spelling, with incorrect letter combinations used for specific sounds. She recognized that her pronunciation of phonetic rules reflected her learners' struggles with spelling and writing. In summary, Ms. Johnson's limited understanding of phonetic rules significantly affected her effectiveness in phonics, resulting in decoding difficulties, insufficient explanations, spelling errors, and difficulty providing differentiated instruction (refer to Figure 4.5 and Bokang's reading skills). Therefore, teaching phonetic rules holds significant value in phonics instruction, as it forms the foundation for reading, writing, and language development (Moats, 2019: 39). Understanding the relationship between sounds and their corresponding written symbols is crucial for achieving reading proficiency (Moats, 2019:39).

Teaching graphemes and phonemes helps learners decode and read words accurately by associating sounds with letters or groups of letters, leading to improved reading skills (NICHD, 2000). The value of teaching graphemes and phonemes lies in enhancing reading and spelling skills, supporting word recognition and vocabulary development, improving reading comprehension, and providing the essential foundation for language structure and long-term reading success (Moats, 2019:40).

Posthumanism encourages learners to explore the relationship between language, identity, and technology (Braidotti, 2019:11). This exploration can lead to a deeper understanding of how phonetic rules are not static but are shaped by evolving linguistic, technological, and cultural factors. It prompts learners to critically analyse the role of language in constructing identity in a posthuman world (Braidotti, 2019:11). Posthumanist perspectives often emphasize the idea of distributed cognition, where cognitive processes are not confined to an individual's mind but extend into the environment and tools

(Braidotti, 2019:11). Teaching phonetic rules could involve utilizing technology and external resources to enhance learning, such as interactive phonetic apps or digital platforms that engage learners in a distributed cognitive process. Posthumanism often challenges the separation of mind and body (embodiment). In teaching phonetic rules, an embodied approach might involve incorporating physical activities or gestures that connect language learning with bodily experiences (Braidotti, 2019:12). For example, a teacher can associate specific movements with phonetic sounds to enhance memory and understanding. Posthumanist perspectives support the idea that communication extends beyond traditional linguistic modes (Braidotti, 2019:17). Educators might incorporate multimodal approaches in teaching phonetic rules, involving visuals, sounds, and interactive elements to cater to diverse learning styles and embrace a more holistic understanding of language.

CDA can analyse how cultural and societal factors shape the establishment of isiNdebele phonetic rules (Fairclough, 1992:73). Explore how power dynamics and social hierarchies influence the adoption or exclusion of isiNdebele phonetic rules, particularly in multilingual or diverse linguistic settings. CDA emphasizes that language is not neutral but is shaped by social, cultural, and political factors (Fairclough, 1992:83). Similarly, teaching phonetic rules involves understanding that language structures and phonetic patterns are not isolated entities but are influenced by social contexts. It analyses different language variations and how power structures affect language use. Teaching phonetic rules includes acknowledging and embracing variations in pronunciation and phonetic patterns across different dialects and languages. CDA examines how language can perpetuate or challenge power imbalances and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995:13). In teaching phonetic rules, educators can discuss how certain phonetic conventions may reflect societal power dynamics and biases. Integrating CDA principles into phonics instruction can encourage critical thinking about language use. Learners can analyse how specific graphemes and phonemes might carry social implications and biases, fostering acute language awareness. Teaching phonetic rules involves understanding how learners acquire phonetic knowledge. Considering the social context, educators can explore how cultural backgrounds, social identities, and societal norms influence language learning.

Therefore, it is evident that the teacher faces challenges in effectively teaching phonetic rules.

4.2.3 Problems with the application of phonetic patterns

CAPS underscores the incorporation of phonetic patterns into writing and spelling exercises, empowering learners to apply their phonics knowledge when composing words and sentences (DBE, 2011:14). Competence in utilizing phonetic patterns contributes to enhanced reading fluency, allowing learners to read more swiftly and smoothly by effortlessly decoding words while reading (Torgesen, Wagner & Rashotte, 1994:44). Proficiency in phonetic patterns supports accurate spelling, as learners can employ consistent spelling rules and patterns based on the phonetic structure of words, leading to improved spelling skills (Ehri, 2014:5). Learning phonetic patterns also facilitates vocabulary development by enabling learners to establish connections between words sharing similar patterns, thereby expanding their vocabulary and comprehension (Ehri, 2014:5). Teachers benefit from understanding phonetic patterns as it aids in precisely diagnosing reading and spelling challenges. By identifying specific areas of difficulty, teachers can provide targeted instruction to address learners' challenges effectively (Ehri, 2014:5). Phonological awareness equips learners to discern and recognize patterns in speech sounds, encompassing rhyming words, alliteration, and specific phonetic sequences. This skill contributes to their comprehension of language regularities and patterns, which is essential for both spelling and reading (Johnson, 2019:1).

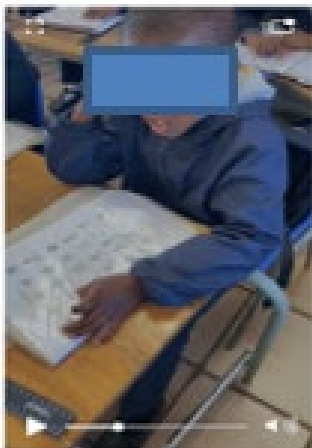


Figure 4.6: Learners finding hard-to-pronounce words



Figure 4.7: Learners leaving out some letters when writing the word (incorrect spelling); instead of irhasi, they wrote irasi

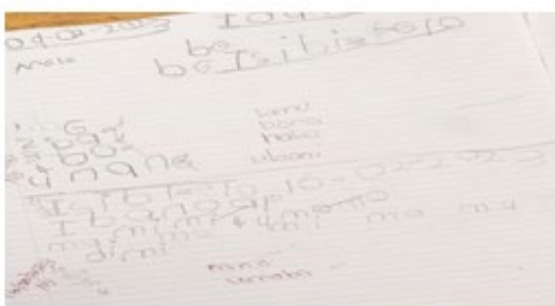


Figure 4.8: Learner writing incorrect spellings

Ms. Anderson encounters difficulties in instructing her learners on the practical application of phonetic patterns in reading and spelling. She acknowledges the significance of phonetic patterns in fostering reading and writing skills (NICHHD, 2000:4). Within her classroom, she observes that specific learners encounter challenges in consistently applying the learned phonetic patterns to decode unfamiliar words. They struggle to transfer this knowledge to real-world reading situations despite being instructed on the rules. For instance, when confronted with a new word featuring a familiar phonetic pattern, they often hesitate and find it challenging to apply the appropriate sounds confidently (Ehri, 1994:323). Furthermore, during spelling exercises, some learners struggle to identify the correct phonetic pattern for a given word, leading to frequent spelling errors

as they match the sounds they hear with the appropriate letter combinations (refer to Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

Posthumanism encourages involving learners in critical discussions about language power dynamics and representations (Susen, 2022:80). It urges learners to understand how isiNdebele patterns are presented. Entanglement in teaching phonetic patterns refers to the interconnectedness or interdependence of various aspects of phonetic knowledge and how they are integrated and taught cohesively. It emphasizes recognizing and addressing the relationships between different phonetic elements and how they influence each other in language learning and production. Posthumanism challenges the fixed idea of a 'normal' language and recognizes the fluidity and diversity of linguistic expressions (Braidotti, 2019:11). In teaching isiNdebele phonetic patterns, teachers should highlight the variety of ways the language is spoken, acknowledging regional dialects and individual variations. Rather than adhering to a rigid standard, embracing the dynamic nature of language is crucial. Posthumanism stresses interconnectedness and the importance of community in shaping knowledge (Braidotti, 2019:11). Teachers can connect language learning to the community by involving native speakers, integrating cultural contexts, and recognizing the influence of social dynamics on language, creating a more holistic and contextually rich learning experience.

By integrating CDA into phonetic pattern teaching, learners acquire the sounds and understand the societal, cultural, and ideological influences on language usage, promoting critical thinking and a broader perspective on language. CDA often examines how language constructs and reflects identities (Fairclough, 1989:44). Teaching phonetic patterns involves understanding how pronunciation influences perception and identity. Exploring accents, phonetic variations, and their societal perceptions can help learners appreciate the link between language, identity, and social norms. Integrating CDA principles into phonetic pattern instruction can foster critical awareness of language biases and stereotypes. By discussing how specific speech patterns might be stigmatized or valued differently, educators can encourage learners to evaluate language attitudes and prejudices critically. CDA emphasizes the importance of context in analysing language (Fairclough, 2003:13). When teaching phonetic patterns, educators can discuss

how pronunciation differs depending on social context, audience, or purpose. This contextual understanding enriches learners' language awareness and communication skills. CDA often investigates how language can perpetuate or challenge power structures. In teaching phonetic patterns, educators can explore how linguistic norms and standards are established and how they may influence social hierarchies, giving learners insights into language power dynamics.

In conclusion, instructing the application of phonetic patterns is crucial for developing foundational literacy skills. It enables learners to decode words accurately, enhance reading fluency, improve spelling proficiency, expand vocabulary, and become confident readers. Therefore, it is evident that the teacher faces challenges in teaching learners how to apply correct phonetic patterns.

4.2.4 Lesson plans that are not adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners

CAPS underscores the significance of differentiation to address the diverse learning needs present in the classroom. Teachers are urged to modify lesson plans to cater to learners with various abilities, including those with special educational needs (DBE, 2011:15). The curriculum advocates for the use of flexible instructional strategies during phonics lessons, encouraging teachers to employ a range of approaches, materials, and activities that align with the distinct learning styles and preferences of learners (DBE, 2011:15). Ongoing assessment and monitoring of learner progress in phonics are emphasized in CAPS, where formative assessments guide instructional decisions, enabling teachers to customize lesson plans and interventions based on individual progress and needs (DBE, 2011:15). Teachers might encounter challenges in accurately assessing learners' progress in phonics, potentially hindering targeted support and appropriate differentiation in the classroom (NELP, 2008:18). Tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners becomes challenging when teachers lack a comprehensive understanding of phonetic rules and how to adapt teaching methods accordingly (Tomlinson, 2001:11). A study by Foorman, Herrera, Petscher, Mitchell, and Truckenmiller (2015:243) highlighted that "the challenge of designing phonics lesson plans that accommodate the diverse needs of learners, including those with differing

levels of phonological awareness, remains a critical issue in early literacy instruction." Lesson plans should incorporate multisensory techniques to engage diverse learning styles. Phonological awareness recommends using auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic methods to teach phonics, enabling learners to grasp concepts through their preferred learning modality (Johnson, 2022: 2).

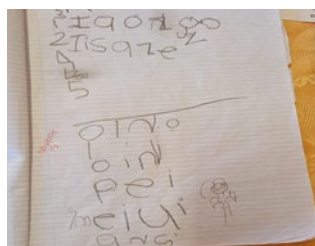


Figure 4.9: Learners with particular need writing same activity

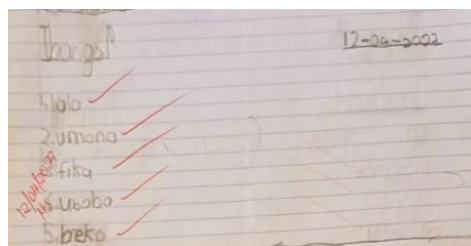


Figure 4.10: Learner with no special needs

Isifundo: IsiNdebele Ibanga: 1 Ilanga: 2-04-2023			
OKUMUMETHWEKO	UMAMONGO	UMBEREGO KATITHERE	UMBEREGO WOMFUNDI
UKULALELA NOKUKHULUMA	Ukufalela ngaphandle kokuthikameza, banikela ihuba lokukhuluma ngelalini neemahlandeni wengxhema	Uthoma ngokubamukela ukuya kwabo ethemini njenge Uragela phambili ukuba bonanya bewanjani amaholide wenzukelwa kwenkululeko. Ubatjela bonanya sengqemini zabo, bazococa ngakho bebakwenza ngamaholide	Bayacoca, ngakho bebakwenza.
AMATJHADA	Ukuhluhanisa ukufalela umehloka phakathi kwamajhada eveluthomani kwamagama.	Ubatjumbuzo amatjhada afundwa ngethemu edlulisile, ubengisa ijhadi lethemu yokuthoma. Amatjhada la = n, b, m, f, c, d	Bayawaphimisa woko.
UKUFUNDA NGABABILI	Ukufundela umgani ihekati elungiselelweko nofana eyazwakho ukuthukisa ukufalela	Ubergisa amaphepha wethemu yokuthoma anamagama.	Bayafunda
UKUFUNDA NGEENQHEMA	Ukufundela phezu eencwadini zabo esiqhemini esikhakhelewa ngutitjhere okutjho ukuthi isiqhema soke sifunda indatjana efanako.	ISIQHEMA SOKUTHOMA Ubanikela lincwadi zokufunda u SIMUNYA, uthoma afunde nabo ISIQHEMA SIBABILI Naso usinikela lincwadi zokufunda	Siyafunda Sifunda indatjana efundwe isiqhema sokuthoma.
UKUTLOLA	Ukubamba ibhrayoni repensela ngendlela efaneleko	Uthoma ukubambuzisa ukawha amagama ngamatjhada afundweko ethemini yokuthoma. Ukuba amagama alandeleko, umimi, kani bonani imala nji	Batjola amagama ababizelwa wona ebhodini. Batjola isibizelo, ukubizelwa amatjhada. 1. Jula 2. umona 3. fika 4. beko
UMTLOLO WESANDLA			
INKETENDZWA: njwadi, ibhod, njwaga			
Amapensela, lincwadi zokufunda nezokutjola, amaphepha wokufunda			
ISIBONSO SIKATITHERE			

Figure 4.11: Lesson plan with the same learning level for all learners

The data indicated that learners with special needs engaged in the same activities as those without special needs (refer to Figure 4.11). Learners with special needs, such as dyslexia or other learning disabilities, might require additional support and adapted instructional strategies. Conversely, some learners may possess advanced phonics skills and need more challenging activities for continued growth. Large class sizes can

challenge teachers to provide individualized support and differentiation during phonics lessons. Learners may enter the classroom with varying levels of phonemic awareness and phonics skills, ranging from a strong foundation in recognizing letter-sound relationships to struggling with these concepts.

The lack of differentiation in phonics lesson plans made it challenging for Ms. Anderson to offer targeted support and extension activities to address these diverse needs. Consequently, learner progress in phonics was uneven, and some learners were not reaching their full potential (Tomlinson, 2001:11). Despite her best intentions, Ms Johnson faced challenges in tailoring her instruction to cater to varying learning levels within her classroom (see Figure 4.9 and 4.10). Without a solid grasp of phonetic rules, customizing lessons to meet each learner's unique needs proved daunting (Tomlinson, 2001:12).

Teachers are encouraged to understand the diverse profiles of learners, considering their linguistic, cognitive, and socio-economic backgrounds. This understanding should inform the planning and adaptation of phonics lessons to address individual needs (DBE, 2011:15). The document suggests employing different grouping strategies, such as whole-class instruction, small group work, or individualized instruction, based on learners' proficiency levels. This allows for targeted support and challenges based on individual needs (DBE, 2011:15). Teachers are urged to use inclusive resources considering learners' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Utilizing materials and examples that resonate with learners' experiences helps make phonics lessons more accessible and engaging (DBE, 2011:15).

Posthumanism advocates for diverse learning styles, presenting information in multiple formats (e.g., text, visuals, audio) to accommodate various learning preferences (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic) (Braidotti, 2019:18). Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, offer various instructional methods, such as visual aids, hands-on activities, and interactive technologies, to accommodate different learning preferences. Posthumanism encourages lesson plans that allow flexibility in the learning environment, recognizing that learning can occur in various contexts and settings. Teachers can facilitate learning through real-world applications, outdoor activities, or collaborative projects, providing learners diverse and dynamic experiences. Posthumanism embraces the fluid and

dynamic nature of learning, acknowledging that learners may progress at different rates and in different ways. Teachers must design lesson plans with built-in adaptability, allowing for modifications based on ongoing assessments of individual and collective learning needs.

Applying CDA in the context of addressing the diverse needs of learners involves analysing the language and communication processes within educational settings to uncover how power dynamics and societal biases impact the educational experiences of different learner groups. CDA examines how language use reflects and perpetuates power imbalances in society. In lesson plans that aren't adaptable, language choices, content, or teaching methods might inadvertently reinforce existing power structures, excluding certain groups or privileging others. Lesson plans that are not flexible or adaptable may reinforce dominant cultural narratives or norms, marginalizing perspectives or experiences that diverge from the mainstream. This lack of inclusivity can contribute to the erasure of diverse voices or histories. CDA can identify linguistic and discursive practices that exclude or alienate specific learners. Lesson plans that don't adapt might use language, examples, or contexts unfamiliar to some learners, making it harder for them to engage or succeed. Through CDA, one can analyse how lesson plans affect learning outcomes. Plans that fail to adapt to diverse needs might contribute to unequal educational outcomes among learner groups, perpetuating educational disparities. CDA often considers social justice implications. It can highlight how inflexible lesson plans contribute to inequality and advocate for educational practices that promote inclusivity, equity, and social justice. Understanding these connections through a critical lens allows educators to re-evaluate and modify lesson plans. Integrating CDA perspectives can help design more inclusive, flexible, and responsive teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learner needs, fostering a more equitable learning environment.

4.2.5 Problems in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

CAPS instructs teachers to guide learners in applying phonics knowledge to recognize and pronounce unfamiliar words in their second language (DBE, 2011:19). Bilingual or

multilingual learners, exposed to multiple languages at home, may encounter difficulties in code-switching between languages, impacting their encoding and decoding skills (Mokala, 2022:171). Challenges in encoding and decoding can affect learners' proficiency in accurately representing and interpreting sounds and letters in the target language (Li & Woore, 2021:1). Phonological awareness, as a precursor to phonics skills development, is crucial. Learners must first be aware of individual phonemes (sounds) within words before effectively encoding (spelling) and decoding (reading) words. Phonological awareness aids learners in breaking down words into their component sounds.

The data revealed that learners face difficulty decoding simple words because they haven't mastered the individual letter sounds appropriately. This difficulty makes it challenging for them to read and write, ultimately affecting their overall literacy development.

[Phila reading the text: uma umbembule umsana... Instead of umma ubhebhule umsana.]



Figure 4.12: Learner struggling to read words correctly

Mr. Lee, an isiNdebele teacher in a school where isiNdebele serves as a second language for some learners, encountered significant difficulties when instructing the application of phonic skills for encoding and decoding. The school had a diverse learner population with different language backgrounds. In phonics lessons, Mr. Lee observed that learners from non-isiNdebele-speaking backgrounds struggled with decoding isiNdebele words due to disparities in phonetic patterns between their native language and isiNdebele (refer to

Figure 4.12). For instance, specific isiNdebele phonemes might not exist in their native language, posing a challenge in accurately decoding isiNdebele words (Cummins, 2000). Additionally, learners encountered difficulties applying phonic skills to encoding words based on phonetic rules. Their native languages might have different phonetic rules or inconsistent phoneme-grapheme mappings, which is confusing when attempting to spell isiNdebele words phonetically (Ehri, 2000). Another complication arose from the varying literacy levels among learners, making it difficult for some to decode and encode words. While some learners possessed strong literacy skills in their native languages, facilitating the understanding of phonetic concepts, others struggled due to limited literacy experiences in any language (Bialystok, 2001).

Posthumanism advocates for integrating augmented reality (AR) to enrich learning experiences. Teachers can develop AR-based phonics activities, allowing learners to interact with virtual letters and words, offering a dynamic and engaging platform for practising encoding and decoding skills (Buchanan, 2016). Posthumanism challenges the traditional view of cognition residing solely within individual minds, emphasizing the distributed nature of cognition across humans, tools, and the environment. Teaching phonic skills implies recognizing the role of various resources, including digital tools, interactive environments, and collaborative learning, in the encoding and decoding processes. Posthumanism questions the idea of a fixed and standardized language. Regarding isiNdebele encoding and decoding, educators can highlight the dynamic nature of language and how communication allows for diverse interpretations and expressions. This involves encouraging learners to explore different methods of encoding and decoding messages in isiNdebele, acknowledging the language's richness.

CDA underscores that language is not merely a neutral means of communication but is influenced by social contexts and power dynamics. Teaching encoding and decoding within a CDA framework involves examining how power structures, ideologies, and societal norms shape language choices. In contemporary communication, language extends beyond written or spoken forms. Teaching encoding and decoding with CDA encompasses multimodal communication—considering how images, symbols, and other semiotic resources accompany language to convey meaning and shape interpretation. By incorporating CDA into teaching encoding and decoding, educators aim to empower

learners as critical thinkers who question and analyse language use in diverse contexts. This approach encourages active participation in understanding and shaping societal discourses.

In conclusion, the challenges faced by Mr. Lee in teaching the application of phonic skills for encoding and decoding in isiNdebele language encompassed phonetic differences between languages, varied literacy levels, establishing cross-language connections, and effectively adapting instruction.

4.3 SOLUTIONS FOR IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ISINDEBELE PHONICS EFFECTIVELY IN GRADE ONE CLASS

This section provides possible solutions from the literature as conceptual guidance on factual evidence and empirical data of the practical teaching strategies of isiNdebele phonics discussed in section 4.2. The following evidence of solutions to the challenges is identified, namely (i) Use of authentic texts and storytelling; (ii) Word sorting using Word Families and Rhyming Words; (iii) Use of small group activities, namely chants, rhymes, word puzzles; (iv) Lesson plans with different learning abilities; and (v) use of EGRA.

4.3.1 Solution to inappropriate sequences of phonic content

4.3.1.1 Use of authentic texts and storytelling

According to the National Reading Panel (2000:17), effective teaching policies promote the incorporation of authentic texts and storytelling into the classroom to enhance literacy skills and cultural appreciation. Using authentic texts and storytelling enables teachers to employ diverse learning tools and methodologies, utilizing the latest knowledge available (Sari, Hafifah & Mayasari, 2020:129). Including authentic texts and storytelling in early literacy education has significantly improved phonological awareness by immersing learners in a context that exposes them to various phonetic sequences within a narrative framework (Satriani, 2019:113). Storytelling and authentic texts create a natural and contextually rich environment for exposure to phonetic sequences. Learners engage with

phonetic patterns within meaningful narratives, facilitating recognition and understanding of sounds in real-life situations (Aouaoucha & Taibi, 2020:1).

For each meeting, the co-researchers conducted a developmental workshop addressing each challenge to develop effective strategies for the challenges outlined in section 4.2. The team collectively generated ideas to assist teachers in teaching appropriate phonic sequences, and we prepared together. Mrs. Adams, the meeting coordinator, initiated the session by emphasizing the importance of phonic sequences in early learner education. She encouraged everyone to share their experiences, challenges, and successes in teaching phonics, fostering an open and collaborative discussion. The research team identified the need to devise effective strategies guided by PAR and CDA. It was acknowledged that researchers should actively participate in the research process rather than merely extract knowledge from others and draw conclusions about them. The team collectively decided to begin by creating an appropriate lesson plan that primarily focused on teaching the correct phonic sequence.

Each team member had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences teaching appropriate phonic sequences. Non-teaching members were invited to share their perspectives on addressing the phonics sequence.

Mrs Adams:

“Anyone who wishes to share their experiences or any ideas on how can we present the lesson please feel free to share your views.”

As planned, the team tried to devise ways to assist teachers in grasping the concept of appropriate phonic sequence. As the problem was discussed, there appeared to be a teacher with more than twenty years of experience, and she said she was willing to show all team members how she'd been teaching it.

Ms Ndala:

“I can assist and show everyone how I have been teaching phonic sequencing while still teaching Grade one.”

Teachers shared ways in which they teach phonic sequence. Ms Ndala shared her experiences.

Ms Ndala:

“I have been using different isiNdebele authentic texts and storytelling. I start telling a story doing practical movements, and then the activities will be based on any authentic text for better understanding.”

The co-researchers reached a consensus to select a storyline and authentic isiNdebele texts. Ms Ndala was allowed to showcase her lesson to the co-researchers. The team engaged in a discussion about the presentation, offering input and constructive criticism where they deemed improvements were necessary. They collaboratively outlined how the lesson could commence, progress, and conclude sequentially. All team members expressed satisfaction with using storytelling and authentic texts for teaching phonic sequences. The co-researchers also collectively developed a lesson plan, which was subsequently presented to them, with the co-researchers taking on the role of learners.

Mrs Ndlovu:

“I like the way the lesson is presented. I have never thought of our strategy before. I have really learnt a lot. I am now confident. Thank you.”

The claim made by Mrs Ndlovu shows that the workshop worked on her skills in teaching phonic sequence. Ms Anderson reflected on being part of this research team.

Ms Anderson:

“I am grateful that our team constitutes different individuals, including teachers who are not Grade one teachers, and I am really grateful for that.”

Ms. Anderson's statement emphasizes that the team includes not only Grade one teachers but also educators who teach other grades, which is considered an advantage for the team. The proposed solution was then tested in a practical classroom setting.

Mrs Ndlovu initiated her lesson by narrating a story to the learners and selecting a few learners to retell the same story coherently and sequentially. This approach aimed to engage the learners' minds and enhance their ability to perceive and understand the sequence of events. Two learners were chosen for this activity.

Mrs Ndlovu:

“Can I have two learners retell the story I shared with you from the beginning to the end? Terato and Thembi, can you please come forward and retell the story from the beginning until the end sequentially.”

Mrs Ndlovu assessed her learners' prior knowledge of isiNdebele sounds and letters. She identifies the phonemes familiar to the learners (j) (see Figure 4.14) that will help introduce the new sound. Following a structured phonics sequence, Mrs Ndlovu presents new phonemes; she starts with the vowel sounds and some common consonants, progressing to more complex phonemes for learners to master the sequence from simple to involved each time. Mrs. Ndlovu begins by introducing the basic isiNdebele phonemes and their corresponding graphemes. She uses visuals, authentic materials, and gestures to demonstrate each phoneme's correct pronunciation and writing (see Figures 4.13 and 4.14).



Figure 4.13: Learners manipulating familiar sound (j) before learning new complex sound (nj)



Figure 4.14: Familiar words that learners engage with

Mrs. Ndlovu integrates authentic isiNdebele texts, such as traditional stories or culturally relevant materials, into her lessons (see Figures 4.15).

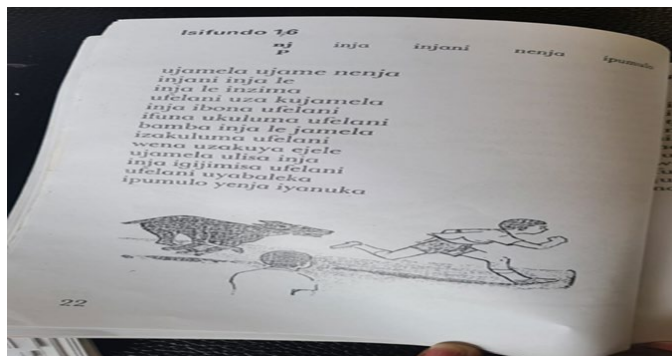


Figure 4.15: Authentic text used by the teacher

She chose a story with a focus on the phonemes being taught that week (NJ). The learners engage in interactive storytelling sessions, listening for and identifying specific phonemes in the story. They will retell the story sequentially from introduction to conclusion to activate their sense of chronological sequencing. She gives an activity of sequencing.



Figure 4.16: Activities for the learner, sequencing using practical picture

Mrs. Ndlovu employs interactive exercises to construct words with recently introduced phonemes. Learners utilize flashcards to create words and blend sounds. Mrs. Ndlovu regularly evaluates her learners' advancement through observations, formative assessments, and brief quizzes to confirm comprehension and retention of the taught phonemes. As part of their activity, she asks them to sequence sentences that follow one another in a given sequence.

7. Nomboro ukulandelayana kwezehlakalo ngeemitho (1)

Utitjhere umtjele bonyana bazokufunda, batlole badlale	2
UNolanga uyalithatha bese uyathula	3
UNolanga usizwa esikolweni ngumalume wakhe	1

Figure 4.17: Activity of sequencing using sentences

By incorporating genuine isiNdebele texts and a structured phonics sequence, Mrs. Ndlovu ensures that her Grade one learners develop a robust foundation in phonics while fostering an appreciation for their language and culture—posthumanism advocates for recognizing diverse forms of intelligence and communication. Teaching phonics through authentic texts and storytelling allows for including varied narratives, languages, and cultural contexts, promoting inclusivity in learning (Braidotti, 2013).

Posthumanism challenges rigid notions about language and communication, and teaching through storytelling aligns with this perspective by acknowledging that language is dynamic and constantly evolving. Authentic texts exemplify real-world language use, encompassing speech patterns, dialects, and linguistic diversity variations.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) facilitates the exploration of the social and cultural implications of phonics sequencing using authentic texts. It delves into how the sequencing of phonics in storytelling and authentic texts may impact learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. CDA analyses how language is employed to construct meaning and power relations in texts.

Using authentic texts and storytelling in phonics teaching allows learners to engage with real-world language, enabling teachers to explore language structures and power dynamics within these materials. Authentic texts and storytelling present opportunities for critical engagement, allowing the learners to analyse language choices, narrative structures, and perspectives employed in these texts.

CDA encourages questioning and understanding the underlying ideologies and societal norms embedded in language use, which can be explored within authentic texts (Fairclough, 2003:77). By integrating authentic texts and storytelling into phonics

instruction, teachers can not only facilitate language learning but also cultivate critical thinking skills, an awareness of language use, and an understanding of societal power dynamics, all of which are central to the principles of CDA.

4.3.2 Solution to unable to understand the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

4.3.2.1 *Word sorting using Word Families and Rhyming Words*

Educators are tasked with instructing learners on the construction of words using acquired sounds, covering at least two-word families weekly (DBE, 2011:66). Both word families and rhyming words function as practical tools for imparting phonetic rules, offering a systematic approach for learners to identify and manipulate sounds in language (Piccinin & Dal Maso, 2021:127). This contributes to developing decoding and encoding skills (Piccinin & Dal Maso, 2021:127). By delving into word families and rhyming words, learners enhance their vocabulary and refine spelling through the recognition of word patterns, fostering overall language proficiency (Murphy & Diehm, 2020:544).

Literacy development theories, as outlined by Ehri (2005; 167) and Morrow (2001), concentrate on the stages of literacy acquisition. Word families and rhyming words play a crucial role in phonics by helping learners recognize spelling patterns and develop phonemic awareness (Ehri, 2005:177; Morrow, 2001:37).

Through observations and meetings, the research team agreed to involve a teacher from a different school to share insights into teaching graphemes and solutions. The teacher enthusiastically shared her expertise, and the team reciprocated by offering support and gaining valuable knowledge from her. Mr. Mashishi, an SGB member, expressed appreciation for the presentation, highlighting its positive impact.

Mr Mashishi:

"I am not a teacher, but the presentation was clear enough for me to present it too.... [he laughs] ... such meetings are really needed in all schools because learning from each other makes things simple."

The school librarian only added to what Mr Mashishi was emphasizing:

"True, Mr Mashishi. I also learned a lot. I think schools should collaborate even if it's once per quarter so that they can share strategies to teach to come up with one common strategy to teach specific concepts in that way all schools will perform well."

Teachers shared their knowledge on how they teach graphemes and phonemes. They even use English examples. The team discussed until they reached a common strategy. The strategy of word family and rhyming words was combined to form one strategy.



Figure 4.18: Family words and rhyming words to emphasise the grapheme and phoneme

Figure 4.18 shows the interaction of co-researchers as they planned a lesson together. Nkele also proposed that learners would understand the process better if the lesson is presented using family and rhyming words rather than using any words that lead to more confusion. She further outlines why the former representations would make sense to learners compared to the latter. Nkele shared all the steps she uses to teach in her classroom. The research team took notes and came up with

"By using family and rhyming words, teachers will be able to understand and teach grapheme and phonemes in a straightforward way, and learners will easily understand that."

The approach was put into action with the learners in the classroom setting. Mrs. Ndlovu initiated the phonics lesson by introducing the concept of word families in IsiNdebele. She elaborates that words within the same word family share a common sound pattern and often exhibit rhyming characteristics. She illustrates a few IsiNdebele word families on the board, exemplifying the "isi-" prefix family. Following this, she introduces a rhyming activity, presenting various objects like "ibholo" [ball] and "ibhege" [bag], and prompts the learners to determine if the words rhyme (refer to Figure 4.19).



Figure 4.19: Objects with rhyming words

Mrs Ndlovu then distributes flashcards with words from the same word family to each learner. The learners work in groups, sorting the words based on the common prefix and identifying the rhyming sounds (see Figure 4.20).



Figure 4.20: Learners sorting words

Mrs. Ndlovu has prepared a word family worksheet for each learner to reinforce the concept. The worksheet has pictures of various objects, and the learners need to label

each object using words from the given word family. She then offers learners homework on word family and rhyming words.



Figure 4.21: Activity of word family and rhyming words

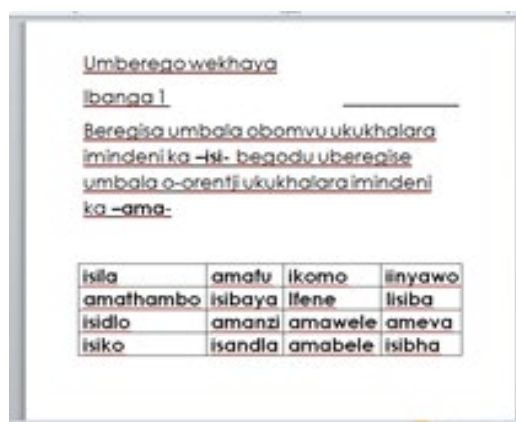


Figure 4.22: Homework of word family and rhyming words

This lesson demonstrates an engaging and interactive way to teach phonetic rules using word families and rhyming words in IsiNdebele for Grade one learners, promoting active participation and a deeper understanding of the language.

Posthumanism encourages the exploration of non-human perspectives (Braidotti, 2019:7). Similarly, word sorting methods allow learners to explore language patterns beyond human interpretation in phonics instruction. Word families and rhyming words provide a structure for understanding how words relate based on sounds and spelling patterns, going beyond the limitations of individual human interpretations (Barad, 2007;114). CDA can help to analyse the power relations inherent in the selection and presentation of word families and rhyming words in phonics instruction. It explores how language is prioritised, which words are chosen, and the underlying social and cultural aspects in the selection process (Fairclough, 2003: 40). By utilising Word Families and Rhyming Words, learners can understand phonetic rules within the context of actual words and their usage in discourse. CDA allows educators to bring authentic examples from various contexts, highlighting how specific phonetic patterns are used in different social, cultural, or political settings. CDA, when applied to teach phonetic rules using Word Families and Rhyming Words, encourages a critical exploration of language structures,

power relations, and social implications. It broadens learners' perspectives on phonetic rules by contextualising them within a socio-cultural framework, fostering critical thinking and linguistic awareness.

4.3.3 Solutions to problems with the application of phonetic patterns

4.3.3.1 Use of small group activities, namely chants, rhymes and word puzzles

CAPS emphasizes that learners should engage with and appreciate visual and word puzzles, riddles, and jokes, employing language creatively (DBE, 2011:29). It also underscores the importance of learners starting to use blending to form words, exemplified by *ila's-ila*, *m-ila* for identifying rhymes (DBE, 2011:60). The repetitive nature of chants, rhymes, and puzzles contributes to memory retention. Regular exposure to phonetic patterns and rules reinforces understanding (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Chants and rhymes significantly enhance auditory discrimination skills, enabling learners to distinguish between different phonetic sounds. This, in turn, supports their overall language development (Cunningham, 1998; 18). Participation in chants and rhymes necessitates children to discriminate between sounds, a fundamental aspect of developing phonological awareness as learners learn to differentiate similar sounds within a language (Eccles et al., 2021:3).

Through our onsite observations and collaborative sessions, it became evident that co-researchers utilized the workshop to devise a strategy for teaching the application of phonetic patterns. They organized themselves into three groups, allowing each group to decide on an effective strategy. The three groups then presented their plans to the entire team. Each group selected a representative to elucidate how they arrived at chants as a solution. Mr. Mashinini, the day's coordinator, facilitated each group's presentation.

Group one presenter (Nonhlanhla):

"We came up with chants as our strategy. We believe that. The repetitive nature of chants serves as a memory aid for learners. Through rhythmic patterns and repetition, learners can remember and recall phonetic patterns more easily, which aids in both reading and spelling."

Mr Mashinini:

“Can the group explain on how we can use chants to teach the application of phonetic patterns?”

Nonhlanhla:

“Identify a specific phonetic pattern or sound that you want to teach, such as vowel sounds, consonant blends, or specific word families (uku, isi, ama). Develop a simple and rhythmic chant that highlights the chosen phonetic pattern. Ensure that the chant is repetitive, catchy, and emphasizes the specific phonetic pattern you're focusing on. Introduce the chant to the learners by demonstrating it and explaining the phonetic pattern it represents. Break down the phonetic elements and discuss how they relate to the sounds learners hear.”

Group 2 presenter (Thabo):

“We chose rhymes as our strategy. Choose rhymes that emphasize specific phonetic patterns or sounds you want to teach. For example, if focusing on rhyming words with the "la" sound, select rhymes such as "sala," "vula," "sula," and "thula". Teacher must emphasize the targeted phonetic patterns within the rhymes. Point out the specific sounds or letters that make up the phonetic pattern, demonstrating how words in the rhyme follow the same sound pattern. Create extension activities that build on the rhymes. For instance, ask learners to find other words that rhyme with the words in the rhyme, reinforcing their understanding of the phonetic patterns.”

Group 3 presenter (Ms Dlamini):

“Word puzzles is the strategy we came with. Create word searches using words containing specific phonetic patterns—for instance, family or rhyming words to emphasize a pattern. Ask learners to find and circle these words. Encourage discussion about the patterns they discover in the words they find. Teachers can design crossword puzzles where the clues involve words that fit a particular phonetic pattern. For example, clues could be related to words with specific vowel patterns or consonant blends. As learners solve the crossword, they reinforce their understanding of phonetic patterns.”

The team integrated all the activities to make one strategy that links the activities.

Ms Anderson:

"I think we can merge all these activities and make one strategy that links."

The research team agreed with the three activities and implemented them in the classrooms.

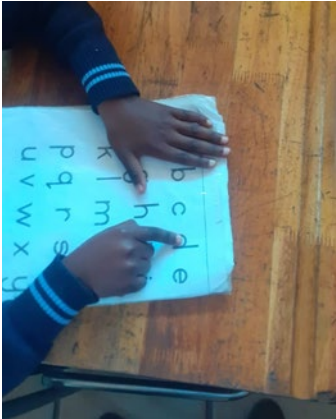


Figure 4.23: Learners chanting the letters



Figure 4.24: Teacher chanting sounds with learners

Ms Dlamini begins the session by chanting letters, introducing the IsiNdebele phonemes and their corresponding graphemes; she uses flashcards with letters and provides examples of words where these phonemes are used, provides each small group with a set of word cards that contain common phonetic patterns, learners work together to manipulate the cards and they practice blending the phonemes and graphemes to correctly pronounce and read the words aloud (see Figures 4.23, 4.24 and 4.5).



Figure 4.25: Learners blending and reading the words aloud

Ms. Dlamini introduces the concept of word families to her learners. Each small group is given a set of word cards from the same word family. The learners organize the words according to shared phonetic patterns and discuss the similarities and differences within the word family (refer to Figure 4.25). Ms. Dlamini reads a sentence aloud, highlighting specific phonetic patterns, and the learners take turns transcribing the dictated sentence with a focus on accurate spelling and pronunciation. She involves the small groups in a reading and dictation exercise, reinforcing decoding and encoding skills (see Figure 4.26).

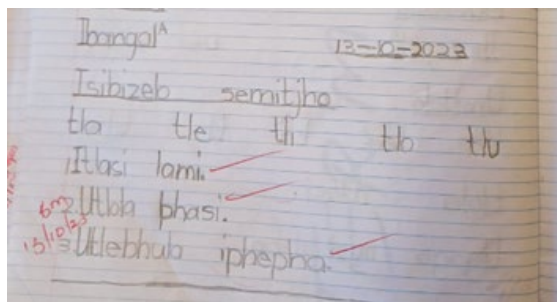


Figure 4.26: Spelling activity

Posthumanism challenges the concept of human exceptionalism and advocates for a more inclusive perspective on learning. It acknowledges the significance of the environment, non-human elements, and technology in the learning process, in addition to human participation (Braidotti, 2013). Using activities like word sorting, chants, rhymes, and word puzzles to teach phonetic patterns aligns with a posthumanist viewpoint by establishing interactive and collaborative learning environments. These activities involve human-to-human interaction and human-to-text and human-to-material (such as puzzles) interactions.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines how teaching methods, like word sorting and group activities, are socially constructed. It can uncover the ideologies and power structures influencing the selection and presentation of these methods in the classroom, shedding light on whose linguistic or cultural practices are being promoted.

CDA also explores language ideologies—the beliefs and values associated with language (Fairclough, 1989: 44). Using traditional chants, rhymes, and word puzzles in teaching IsiNdebele phonetic patterns challenges any negative ideologies about the language and

reinforces its value in education. By incorporating traditional chants, rhymes, and word puzzles, learners are empowered as they engage with elements of their own cultural and linguistic heritage. This approach allows for positive representation and appreciation of their language and culture within the educational context.

In summary, the connection between chants, rhymes, and word puzzles through CDA in teaching IsiNdebele phonetic patterns lies in how these methods can function not only as teaching tools but also as vehicles for promoting cultural appreciation, challenging language biases and fostering critical thinking and empowerment among learners within the context of their language and culture.

4.3.4 Inability to create adapting lesson plans to meet the diverse needs of learners

4.3.4.1 *Lesson plans with different learning abilities*

Education White Paper 6 states that the education and training system must adapt to serve a variety of learning needs, with a particular focus on instructional and educational reform (DBE, 2001:11). It is the role of teachers in schools to prepare lessons that go from the most basic to the most complicated level. The same notion is introduced to all learners. The material may be provided in multimedia format so that learners of various "intelligences" can access it (Lunenburg & Lunenburg, 2014:16). For learners with different abilities, utilising visual aids, manipulatives, or a multisensory approach can help reinforce phonological awareness. Using images, gestures, or tactile materials can assist learners with various learning styles and needs (Johnson, 2019:2). Phonological awareness activities can be modified to meet individual learning levels within a classroom, catering to learners who might need more reinforcement or those who grasp concepts more quickly (Johnson, 2019:2).

The research team effectively collaborated with a specialist to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to create adaptive lesson plans that cater to the diverse needs of their learners. The specialist first allowed teachers to share their experiences of

how they do the lesson plan. There was a discussion on how lesson plans should be structured.

Specialist (Ivy):

“Can we first share how you do your lesson plans?”

Ms Phetla:

“We do our lesson plans according to our grades, and the templates of the grades differ. Our lesson plans focus on the objective of the lesson.”

The teachers shared how they do their lessons. Ivy shared how the lesson plan can be structured to accommodate different learners' needs.

Ivy:

“The teacher should conduct a pre-assessment (for prior knowledge) to identify individual learning styles, abilities for the lesson of the day, and potential challenges. Use varied methods called a KWL chart (Know, Want to know, and Learned), informal discussions, or short quizzes. Introduce the lesson using a multimodal approach. Incorporate visuals, auditory elements, and hands-on activities. This addresses multiple learning styles within a single activity. The lesson must include different stations or centres that cater to various learning preferences. For example, a station with manipulatives for kinaesthetic learners, an audio station for auditory learners, and a visual station for visual learners. Teachers can divide learners into groups based on their learning profiles (e.g., different learning abilities and language backgrounds). Each group works on a collaborative task related to the topic, accommodating diverse perspectives and abilities. Teachers should offer individual practice tasks aligned with learners' identified learning styles and needs. For instance, provide different levelled tasks or activities suited for various abilities. Use a combination of formative assessments like observations and learner self-assessments. Provide feedback tailored to individual learning needs, reinforcing strengths and supporting areas that need improvement.”

The data reveals that lesson planning was problematic around the school. The workshop was done, and it was a success, and the statement from Ms Phetla supports it. Teachers benefited from the session. Ms Phetla's statement supports this.

Ms Phetla:

"This session was beneficial. I learnt a lot with lesson planning today..."

Mrs Ndlovu also supported the statement.

Mrs Ndlovu:

"It was indeed an informative workshop, and we should start using the same lesson planning format now."

The team created a lesson plan that meets the needs of learners (see Figure 4.27). For a clearer view, see Appendix G.

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Grade 5 Date/Range: 25-05-2020			
Learning Objectives By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to: 1. Identify the factors of a number. 2. Determine the prime factors of a number. 3. Calculate the Highest Common Factor (HCF) of two or more numbers. 4. Calculate the Least Common Multiple (LCM) of two or more numbers. 5. Apply the HCF and LCM in real-life situations.	Content Factors of a number Prime factors Highest Common Factor (HCF) Least Common Multiple (LCM)	Activities Group work Individual work Class discussion Problem solving	Assessment Formative assessment Summative assessment
Resources Textbook Worksheets Whiteboard Markers	Introduction Start with a class discussion on the importance of factors and multiples in everyday life.	Development 1. Explain the concept of factors and multiples. 2. Demonstrate how to find the factors of a number. 3. Show how to find the prime factors of a number. 4. Calculate the HCF and LCM of two or more numbers.	Conclusion Summarize the key points of the lesson.
Homework Complete the worksheet on factors and multiples.	Reflection Reflect on the learning experience and identify areas for improvement.	Extension Research the factors and multiples of a large number.	Feedback Provide feedback to the learners on their performance.

Figure 4.27: Lesson plan

It posits that knowledge is socially constructed, implying that educating teachers on lesson creation and tool utilization will enable them to teach learners with varying learning styles effectively. The co-researchers collectively adopted Ivy's suggested lesson planning structure to accommodate different learning abilities.

Posthumanist thinking celebrates hybridity and the dissolution of boundaries between human and non-human entities (Braidotti, 2019:3). In lesson plans, this may involve creating learning environments that recognize and value each learner's unique abilities and perspectives, fostering collaboration and mutual learning. Posthumanism views technology as an integral aspect of human experience (Braidotti, 2019:3). Lesson plans can integrate technology to enhance learning experiences, providing adaptive technologies to cater to diverse needs, such as assistive technologies using audio and

video. Posthumanism values agency and empowerment, so lesson plans aligned with this perspective might offer opportunities for learners with diverse abilities to actively participate in their learning process actively, granting choices and autonomy in approaching tasks and assignments (Braidotti, 2019:12). Essentially, the connection between posthumanism and lesson plans for diverse learners lies in establishing educational spaces that embrace diversity, promote inclusivity, and provide adaptable, empowering, and technology-integrated approaches to accommodate varying learning abilities and preferences.

CDA scrutinizes how language shapes and reflects power structures within society (Fairclough, 1989:44). Educators utilizing CDA might consider how language can reinforce or challenge power imbalances when crafting lesson plans for diverse learners. Lesson plans can incorporate texts or discussions exploring diverse viewpoints, challenging dominant narratives, and fostering critical thinking. CDA recognizes how language can exclude or privilege certain groups, and lesson plans for diverse learners can incorporate strategies to adapt language, such as using visuals, simplified language, or different modalities of communication to cater to various learning abilities. CDA's focus on the societal impact of language can inform lesson plans employing differentiated instruction techniques. Educators can design activities within a lesson plan that accommodate different learning abilities, ensuring meaningful engagement with the material for all learners. CDA aims to empower individuals by unveiling hidden meanings and encouraging critical engagement with language. Lesson plans developed through a CDA lens can provide opportunities for learners of diverse abilities to express themselves, actively participate, and develop necessary thinking skills. By integrating the principles of CDA into lesson planning for diverse learners, educators can create inclusive and empowering learning experiences that foster critical thinking, engagement, and respect for diverse perspectives within the classroom.

4.3.5 Solution in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

4.3.5.1 *Use of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)*

EGRA incorporates assessments to gauge reading fluency, encompassing encoding (writing or spelling words) and decoding (reading words). Learners undergo assessment

to evaluate their speed and accuracy in reading and writing words, sentences, or passages (Woods-Stevens, 2019:71).

The school received EGRA documents several years ago but was not utilizing them. The Head of the Foundation Phase organized a developmental workshop where she shared how EGRA is employed, drawing on her professional training from years ago. She volunteered to impart her expertise.



Figure 4.28: HoD presenting to the research team how EGRA should be used

The lesson was now delivered in the classroom. Ms. Anderson initiated by emphasizing to her learners the significance of attentively listening to the sounds at the beginning and end of words. Using straightforward words as examples, she illustrated how understanding these sounds aids in reading and writing. Ms Anderson presented images of common objects, such as a girl brushing her teeth (tlubha) and a girl writing (tlola), prompting her learners to vocalize the name of each object. She then guided them to recognize each word's beginning and ending sounds. For example, with the word "tlubha," they isolated the /bh/ sound at the end and the /tl/ sound at the beginning.

Ms. Anderson introduced a blending activity, articulating individual phonemes (sounds) (/tl/, /u/, /bh/, a) slowly and clearly. The learners blended these sounds together to pronounce the complete word "tlubha." They practised blending various phonemes to construct simple words. Transitioning to a segmentation task after blending, Ms Anderson pronounced an entire word (e.g., "tlola"). She asked the learners to identify and isolate

the individual phonemes they heard (/t/, /o/, /l/, a). They then practised breaking words into phonemes (Figure 4.28).

mberego wekhava
Ibanga 1 25-09-2023
Yakha amagama alandelako ukuze
akhulume beqodu atleke kuhle
Isibonelo: tl-a-bh-e-l-a = tlabhela
 1. i-s-i-tl-u-bh-o=
 2. u-m-tl-i-tl-o

Kadla amagama alandelako
Isibonelo: itlasi=i-tl-a-s-i
 1. itliniqi=
 2. tlabhela=
 3. umhlolo=

Figure 4.29: Homework given to learners



Figure 4.30: Learners segmenting and encoding words

To strengthen encoding skills, Ms. Anderson distributes mini chalkboards and chalk. She utters a word, and the learners write it by breaking it into sounds and encoding them (refer to Figure 4.30). Ms. Anderson concludes the lesson by reiterating the importance of attentive listening to sounds for both reading and spelling. As homework, she assigns tasks requiring learners to practice blending and segmenting different words and to compose sentences using the target sounds (see Figure 4.29).

Through this dynamic and interactive lesson, Ms. Anderson aids her learners in cultivating robust encoding and decoding skills, establishing a sturdy foundation for their literacy development. The activities focus on sound awareness, blending, and segmenting, essential components for reading and writing (DBE, 2011:17).

Posthumanism challenges the anthropocentric perspective of learning and literacy (Ferrando, 2021:56). When applied to EGRA, it might prompt educators to explore diverse learning approaches beyond human capabilities. This could involve leveraging technology or adaptive learning systems tailored to individual learner needs in decoding and encoding skills. Posthumanism emphasizes the socio-cultural and environmental contexts in which literacy occurs (Ferrando, 2021:56). Applying this approach to EGRA

may include assessing literacy skills in various contexts and recognizing the influence of cultural, social, and ecological factors on literacy development.

CDA analyses texts to uncover implicit meanings, power dynamics, and social implications. EGRA assessments often involve analysing texts to assess reading proficiency. CDA can assist educators and researchers in understanding the underlying social biases or cultural elements embedded in these texts, influencing reading and comprehension. CDA delves into how language and discourse shape policies and practices—understanding the role of language in educational policies and using EGRA aids in critiquing and reshaping educational practices to be more inclusive and effective. Through the CDA lens applied to EGRA, educators can gain deeper insights into the sociolinguistic aspects of literacy instruction. This integration allows for a more nuanced approach to teaching decoding and encoding skills, considering the socio-cultural contexts in which these skills are developed and applied.

4.4 CONDUCTIVE CONDITIONS IN TEACHING ISINDEBELE PHONICS EFFECTIVELY IN GRADE ONE CLASS

There were several conditions in teaching of isiNdebele phonics in Grade one. This section discusses the conducive conditions that made the strategies to be effective and successful. The conditions are praise, positive reinforcement, explicit instructions, cooperation, team-teaching, and play-based learning activities.

4.4.1 Conducive condition to appropriate sequences of phonic content

4.4.1.1 Praise and positive reinforcement were used

The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation (NPWSE) advocates for strategies that promote positive reinforcement techniques, including verbal praise, acknowledgment of learner efforts, establishing reward systems for academic achievements, and fostering a supportive teacher-learner relationship (Metzler et al, 2001:449). Scholars like Dweck, Walton, and Cohen (2014:17) underscore the importance of praise in cultivating a growth mindset. Educators offering specific, genuine, and constructive praise motivate learners

to engage with learning tasks actively, foster a positive attitude toward challenges, and encourage perseverance. Positive reinforcement for correctly utilizing phonological skills motivates learners to practice these skills more regularly. For instance, praising a learner for identifying beginning sounds in words encourages them to continue actively listening for and recognizing these sounds (Layton & Deeny, 2013:21).

Praise and positive reinforcement played a pivotal role in the study. The statement by Ms Phetla and Mrs Ndlovu (cf. section 4.3.4) indicated that co-researchers praised each other, creating a positive environment. During the lessons, teachers also consistently reinforced praise and positivity.

Ms Johnson:

“Well done, my baby girl; keep up the good work!”

When learners are praised for accurately identifying phonic sequences or making progress, it enhances their confidence and enthusiasm to engage in similar tasks in the future (Cameron, Pierce, Banko & Gear, 2019:650). Acknowledging correct phonetic efforts motivates learners to invest more effort and willingly participate in phonics-related exercises. This heightened engagement improves their concentration and perseverance in learning phonic sequences (Ryan & Deci, 2000:60). When positive reinforcement is linked to the recognition of correct phonic sequences, learners establish positive associations with learning and phonics-related activities. Teachers offer praise even when learners do not provide a correct answer, which aids in motivating them.

Ms Johnson:

“Thank you for trying ...you almost got it right. Anyone to help her?”

This positive association improves their attitude towards learning, making the process enjoyable and less intimidating (Pomerantz & Kempner, 2013:2040). Praise and positive reinforcement contribute to the retention and reinforcement of correct phonic sequences. The positive feedback received acts as a reinforcement mechanism, solidifying the correct phonetic associations in the learners' memory (Hattie & Timperley, 2007:81). Consistent and sincere praise for mastering appropriate phonic sequences enhances learners' confidence in decoding words effectively. This confidence is crucial for proficient

reading and contributes to overall language development (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009:322). Offering positive reinforcement and praise for efforts in learning phonic sequences promotes a growth mindset, encouraging learners to embrace challenges and persevere in their learning journey (Dweck, 2014:17).

Posthumanism challenges rigid notions of human capabilities and enhancement (Braidotti, 2019:11). In an educational context, positive reinforcement and praise can boost learners' self-esteem, motivation, and overall well-being, aligning with nurturing human potential through supportive environments. Posthumanist thought questions fixed ideas about learning and intelligence. Praise and positive reinforcement can be applied to celebrate various forms of progress, extending beyond academic achievements to include efforts, creativity, problem-solving skills, and collaborative endeavours among learners. Posthumanism emphasizes diversity and multiplicity (Fairclough, 1992:23). This can translate into acknowledging and valuing diverse learning styles and abilities in education. Praise and positive reinforcement can be tailored to accommodate and appreciate various strengths and accomplishments, fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

CDA examines power imbalances and their manifestation in educational settings (Fairclough, 1989:47). When teachers use praise and positive reinforcement in phonics instruction, they influence learner behaviour and learning outcomes. Analysing the language and delivery of praise can reveal underlying power structures, including who receives praise, how it is conveyed, and its impact on learner motivation and self-esteem. CDA can scrutinize the discursive strategies employed by educators when using praise and positive reinforcement in phonics instruction, analysing linguistic choices, discourse structures, and communicative patterns. This analysis sheds light on how educators frame and deliver feedback, its effect on learner engagement, and the efficacy of these strategies in facilitating learning.

In conclusion, positive reinforcement and praise are potent tools in teaching. They motivate learners, increase participation and effort, foster positive associations with learning, aid retention, build confidence, and promote a growth mindset in phonics education (Swaim, 2022:3).

4.4.2 Conducive condition to able to understand the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

4.4.2.1 *Explicit instructions*

As Riccomini, Morano, and Hughes (2017:22) noted, providing clear instructions is crucial for helping learners understand what is expected of them. When teachers deliver clear and concise instructions, learners are more likely to grasp the task or concept being taught, reducing confusion and improving learning outcomes (Riccomini et al., 2017:22). Clear instructions are especially vital in functions or activities related to phonics learning. Learners require precise directions on how to engage with phonics materials, such as word decoding exercises, blending sounds, or segmenting words, to effectively develop phonological awareness skills (Villaume & Brabham, 2003:478).

Clear instructions were consistently provided throughout all meetings and teaching and learning lessons. Teachers ensured clarity in their instruction, as exemplified by Mrs Ndlovu's direct constructs during her lessons (cf. section 4.3.1.1).

Mrs Ndlovu:

“Can I have two learners to come and retell the story I shared with you from the beginning until the end? Terato and Thembi, can you please come forward and retell the story from the beginning until the end sequentially.”

Teachers provided learners with clear instructions for all activities, as evidenced by written instructions in all shared activities in this study. Throughout the study, co-researchers consistently gave clear instructions in all instructional constructs.

Explicit instruction plays a crucial role in helping learners understand the structure of words, including graphemes and phonemes. It establishes a foundation for accurately recognizing and decoding words (Moats, 2019:40). Explicit instruction offers clear and precise explanations of the relationship between graphemes and phonemes, ensuring that learners grasp specific sound-letter correspondences (Ehri, Nunes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoub-Zadeh & Shanahan, 2001: 250). This clarity contributes to the accurate decoding and encoding of words. Through the explicit instruction teachers provide, learners efficiently learn and consolidate grapheme-phoneme rules, minimizing the likelihood of confusion or misconceptions (Foorman, Dombek & Smith, 2016:50). This structured approach enhances the speed and accuracy of reading and spelling. In summary, explicit instruction is vital for teaching graphemes and phonemes. It offers straightforward and structured learning, targets specific learning needs, promotes efficient learning, facilitates reading and writing transfer, and improves reading comprehension and spelling skills.

Posthumanism underscores the agency and autonomy of learners. Rather than solely relying on explicit directives, teaching approaches might focus on empowering learners to explore, question, and construct knowledge independently, fostering self-directed learning. Posthumanist perspectives value complexity and diversity. Instead of rigid, step-by-step instructions, they advocate for adaptive and flexible learning environments where learners interact with diverse sources of information, allowing for multiple pathways to understanding and problem-solving. Posthumanist approaches highlight critical thinking and learner agency. Instead of passively receiving explicit instructions, learners are

encouraged to engage critically with information, question assumptions, and construct their understanding through exploration and interaction with diverse sources.

CDA examines how language use reflects and reinforces power structures. In educational settings, the language used for instruction, including the explicit teaching of phonetic rules, can mirror societal power dynamics (Fairclough, 1989:47). CDA scrutinizes teaching materials, including phonics instruction resources, to uncover implicit biases or power imbalances. Explicit instruction methods might unintentionally uphold certain language norms, influencing how phonetic rules are taught and learned. In summary, the connection between CDA and explicit instruction in phonetic rules lies in understanding how language instruction, including phonics teaching, can either challenge or perpetuate power imbalances and linguistic biases. By critically examining the language used in phonics instruction and the implicit messages conveyed, educators can strive for more inclusive and equitable teaching practices that acknowledge and embrace linguistic diversity.

4.4.3 Conducive condition in the application of phonetic patterns

4.4.3.1 *Cooperation*

The CAPS document underscores the importance of interactive teaching methodologies such as group work, discussions, and collaborative activities, inherently promoting cooperation among learners (DBE, 2011:5). According to West (2010:93), cooperation is essential for effective teamwork and collaboration. When individuals cooperate, they combine their skills, knowledge, and efforts toward a common goal, leading to more innovative solutions and higher productivity. Cooperative activities enable learners to support and learn from each other. Group work facilitates peer interaction, allowing learners to discuss, practice, and reinforce phonics concepts and phonological awareness skills (Wilson, McNeill & Gillon, 2017:426).

Cooperation emerged as the most favourable condition in the study, with co-researchers providing unconditional support, as evidenced below:

The school's Senior Management Team (SMT) organizes professional development sessions for teachers on effective phonics teaching. Experienced teachers mentor newer educators, sharing best practices and innovative methods for teaching phonics. The school invites parents to workshops on phonics strategies. Parents gain insights into the importance of phonics and receive guidance on reinforcing phonics skills at home through games, activities, and reading routines. Parents also actively participated in the study.

Miss Dlodlu (SGB):

“Being part of the team has been the best experience for me. I have learnt a lot. I wish the best for our school.”

The school also showed cooperation by participating, and the words support this (cf. section 4.3.2.1). Co-researchers collaborate to assess learners' progress in phonics. Regular meetings and conferences were held to discuss individual learner needs and share feedback on effective strategies.

Pretty:

“Colleagues, can we first address the issues faced in the school and try to come up with solutions for our study to be effective.”

Learners demonstrated cooperation by consistently attending school and actively participating in the study, as evidenced throughout the lessons, where they actively engaged. Teachers also exhibited cooperation by sharing various teaching strategies and collaborating with their peers to ensure the effectiveness of the study. This collaboration is consistently supported by teachers openly sharing their experiences and strategies.

Cooperative learning strategies can enhance active engagement among learners as they collaborate to understand and practice phonetic patterns (Johnson, 2022:44). Cooperation enables learners to learn from their peers, who may possess different strengths and insights, benefiting from shared knowledge and expertise (Gillies, 2016:39). Learners may approach understanding phonetic patterns differently, and cooperative learning allows sharing of various strategies, fostering a more profound comprehension of phonetic rules and improving problem-solving skills (Gillies, 2016). Collaborative learning encourages peer interaction and discussion, enabling learners to share insights

and understand phonetic patterns. Discussing these patterns with peers reinforces learning and provides diverse perspectives (Kagan, 2009). In a cooperative learning environment, more knowledgeable peers can support their classmates' learning by offering guidance and assistance in correctly recognizing and applying phonetic patterns (Vygotsky, 1978:181).

Posthumanism often advocates for an ecological perspective, emphasizing interconnectedness and interdependence. This perspective encourages cultivating a sense of cooperation among learners and between learners, teachers, technology, and the environment. It underscores the importance of collaboration within the broader learning ecosystem. Posthumanism challenges human exceptionalism and hierarchical views, fostering cooperative learning environments that value diverse perspectives, promote empathy, and acknowledge the contributions of all individuals, human and non-human, to the learning process. Posthumanist ideas often embrace hybridity and fluidity, influencing educational practices by promoting cooperative learning environments that blend physical, digital, and experiential elements. Learners may collaborate not only with peers but also with technology or virtual entities in their learning experiences.

Cooperation as a condition in teaching phonetic patterns involves collaborative approaches where learners work together to enhance their learning. CDA can be employed to analyse how language patterns in collaborative learning settings influence cooperation. For instance, observing how learners negotiate meanings or phonetic rules together can be examined critically to understand power dynamics or linguistic influences in the cooperative process. CDA emphasizes the social context of language use (Fairclough, 2001:11). When teaching phonetic patterns, educators who integrate cooperation as a condition recognize the social aspect of learning. They create environments where learners engage in cooperative tasks that involve using phonetic patterns, fostering social interaction while learning language structures.

4.4.4 Conducive condition to create adapting lesson plans to meet the diverse needs of learners

4.4.4.1 *Team-teaching*

Within IQMS (2021:73), there is a focus on promoting peer learning and support (Makubung, 2017:33). Teachers are urged to engage in mentoring relationships, share experiences, and learn collaboratively. This peer support often extends to cooperative teaching practices, where educators collaborate, provide feedback, and collectively plan and execute lessons, resembling the team-teaching approach. Collaborating in a team-teaching environment offers opportunities for professional growth, enabling educators to learn from each other, share teaching strategies, and develop new skills through observation and collaboration (Smith, Ralston, Naegele & Waggoner, 2020:80). In a team-teaching setting, educators can offer more individualized support to learners. Having multiple teachers allows for targeted interventions and additional guidance for learners who may struggle with specific phonological concepts (DeWitt, 2022:12).

The following evidence demonstrates that team-teaching played a significant role in adapting lesson plans during the study. Teachers collaborated on ideas, shared various strategies for teaching different phonic content, and explored the benefits of team teaching (cf. section 4.3.4.1). For instance, a language specialist taught how to create a lesson plan while other teachers explained the advantages of team teaching.

Team teaching allows for differentiated instruction, effectively addressing various learning styles and abilities. It involves educators with diverse experiences and expertise, fostering creativity and generating innovative teaching strategies and approaches when collaborating on lesson plans. The collective creativity often results in engaging and effective lesson plans. Team teaching accommodates differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners, tailoring parts of the lesson plan to various learning styles, abilities, and preferences for a more inclusive approach. Sharing the workload of lesson planning among a team of educators increases efficiency as teachers focus on specific areas of expertise. Collaboration fosters teamwork and support among educators, creating a positive and supportive environment that boosts teacher morale. Collaborative

lesson planning optimizes the efficient use of resources, as teachers share materials and other resources.

Posthumanism emphasizes the interconnectedness between humans, technology, and the environment. Team teaching is viewed as a collaborative learning network where educators interact, collaborate, and learn from each other, aligning with the interconnected relationships valued in posthumanist thought. Posthumanist thinking questions the centrality of the individual human subject, and team teaching aligns with this idea by recognizing the collective knowledge and expertise that multiple educators bring to the classroom (Rennolds, 2022:111). Posthumanism highlights the diversity of perspectives, and in a team-teaching setting, educators bring diverse viewpoints, experiences, and teaching methods, fostering a richer and more multifaceted learning environment.

CDA involves analysing language use in its social and cultural context. In team-teaching, educators bring diverse perspectives and experiences, and a CDA approach helps teachers recognize how language, power dynamics, and cultural nuances influence communication in diverse classrooms. CDA encourages considering multiple viewpoints and sources of knowledge. In team-teaching, educators bring varied experiences and resources to adapt lesson plans, leading to more prosperous, inclusive materials and teaching strategies catering to diverse learners. CDA promotes a critical examination of texts and discourses. Educators collaboratively plan lessons in team teaching, drawing on CDA insights to analyse and adapt materials, making them accessible and relevant to diverse learners.

4.4.5 Conducive condition in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

4.4.5.1 Play-based learning activities

CAPS advocates for an integrated learning approach, incorporating various activities, including play-based methods, to teach and reinforce concepts across different subjects or learning areas (DBE, 2011:20). Play-based approaches often engage multiple senses,

offering a multi-sensory learning experience. Activities involving touch, movement, sight, and sound enhance memory retention and understanding, contributing to both encoding and decoding processes (Moseley, 2023:77). Play-based activities create a dynamic and interactive platform for children to develop essential phonological awareness skills, establishing a robust foundation for phonics instruction. Through enjoyable, hands-on experiences, children develop auditory discrimination, sound manipulation, and segmentation skills crucial for successful phonics learning (Moseley, 2023:113).

Play-based learning fosters social interaction and collaboration among children. Engaging in group activities, like cooperative reading or story creation, facilitates peer learning and reinforces encoding and decoding skills through shared interactions (Haden & Shaffer, 2018:67). Collaborative play promotes discussions about sounds, letters, and words, reinforcing encoding and decoding skills through peer interaction (Haden & Shaffer, 2018:68). Play-based activities often involve multiple senses, such as sight, sound, and touch. This multisensory approach helps children establish more robust connections between letters, sounds, and words, supporting encoding and decoding (Haden & Shaffer, 2018:68).

In summary, play-based activities effectively contribute to the development of encoding and decoding phonic skills by enhancing phonemic awareness, improving letter-sound correspondence, promoting engagement and motivation, providing contextual learning experiences, integrating language skills, and encouraging peer collaboration (Haden & Shaffer, 2018:68).

Posthumanism values agency and creativity in learning. Play-based phonics activities encourage children to explore, create, and experiment with language sounds and structures, fostering their agency in constructing meaning and understanding. Posthumanist perspectives appreciate multimodal learning experiences. Play-based phonics activities often employ multiple modes of communication (visual, auditory, tactile), enabling children to engage with phonics in diverse ways. Posthumanist thinking emphasizes interconnectedness and relationships between different elements. Play-based activities for phonics can illustrate the interconnectedness of sounds, letters, and meanings, showing how these elements relate and interact in language.

CDA principles can guide educators in selecting materials and resources for play-based learning that challenge stereotypes, encourage inclusivity, and offer diverse linguistic experiences. This aids in the natural integration of phonics skills within varied contexts. Through CDA, educators can critically examine the language used in play scenarios and address any biases or stereotypes present. This ensures that play-based activities promote equitable language learning and the application of phonics skills for all children. CDA encourages critical thinking about language use. Educators can guide children to critically analyse language structures, sounds, and letter combinations during play, fostering a deeper understanding of phonics concepts.

4.5 THREATS TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING PHONICS

This section discusses potential outcomes that, if not addressed appropriately, might negatively influence the successful teaching of isiNdebele phonics in Grade one class. There are lots of threats and experiences that affected the whole study, as stated in section 3.5.1.4. However, the section will discuss the threats that affected each specific solution differently. The research team identified the following threats during data collection: (i) Poor memorization skills, (ii) Disconnection of teaching the principles of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes). (iii) Insufficient materials and resources, (iv) learners with diverse needs, (v) Teachers not professionally trained to use EGRA.

4.5.1 Threat in teaching appropriate sequencing of phonic content

4.5.1.1 *Poor memorization skills*

Committing vocabulary words, phrases, or grammar rules to memory contributes to language acquisition and proficiency, fostering practical communication skills. Memorization enhances cognitive speed and efficiency by automating specific knowledge areas, allowing quicker access to fundamental information and facilitating smoother cognitive processes (Kaharuddin, 2018:233). Memorization is crucial in establishing automaticity in recognizing and recalling letter sounds and their sequences. Sedita (2020:4) noted that phonological awareness activities like rhyming games or sound

discrimination exercises necessitate children to listen attentively and remember auditory information. Participation in these activities aids in developing auditory memory—the ability to recall and retain sounds or sequences of sounds—vital for phonological awareness (Sedita, 2020:4).

The poor memorization skills of learners posed a threat to teaching sequencing of phonic content. Ms Johnson reflected on this:

“I am retelling the story for one more time; I hope everyone will be able to retell the same sorry.”

Memorization skills play a crucial role in acquiring and retaining information, particularly in the context of phonic sequencing, which is essential for reading and literacy development. Phonic sequencing, encompassing understanding the order and correlation between letters and sounds, forms a pivotal foundation for early literacy. However, inadequate memorization skills can significantly hinder the effective teaching of appropriate phonic sequencing. Weak memorization skills may impede associating letters with their corresponding sounds (Gathercole, 2006:513). These deficiencies can adversely impact word recall and spelling accuracy (Ehri, 2020:45). Learners may struggle to remember words and face challenges in spelling due to difficulties in retaining and reproducing the correct phonic sequences. Specifically, recalling the sounds linked to each letter or letter combination becomes challenging, hampering a solid grasp of the fundamentals of phonic sequencing. Difficulties remembering phonic sequencing contribute to diminished reading fluency (Ehri, 2020:45). Strong memorization skills are imperative for successful learning, especially in phonic sequencing, a cornerstone of early literacy. Consequently, poor memorization skills can negatively affect teaching appropriate phonic sequencing, leading to difficulties in letter-sound association, impaired retention of phonic rules, inefficient blending and segmentation, reduced reading fluency, and challenges in word recall and spelling (Ehri, 2020:47).

Posthumanist perspectives underscore the significance of learning in context. The memorization of phonics sequences may occur within situated contexts, such as real-life scenarios, interactive digital environments, or collaborative group settings, fostering memory formation within meaningful contexts. Posthumanism views cognition as not

solely confined within an individual's mind but distributed across the environment and tools. In learning phonics sequences, memory might involve individual recall and external tools, such as charts, digital aids, or collaborative resources. Posthumanism values adaptability and flexibility in learning, suggesting that memory of phonics sequences may encompass adaptive learning environments adjusting to individual learning styles or utilizing diverse methods to accommodate various memory preferences.

CDA can critically assess traditional teaching methods heavily reliant on rote memorization of phonics rules and sequences. It may highlight how these approaches can disadvantage learners with poor memorization skills, leading to exclusion or frustration in learning. CDA encourages a critical examination of the sequencing of phonics content, questioning whether the traditional sequence caters to diverse learning styles and needs. For instance, it might investigate whether a rigid, linear sequence of phonics rules benefits all learners or if it overlooks the needs of those with poor memorization skills.

4.5.2 Threat to understanding the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

4.5.2.1 Disconnection of teaching the principles of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

The CAPS guideline advises teachers to begin teaching fundamental phonics abilities in Grade one, including teaching learners the links between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes), as well as the capacity to blend these sounds into words (DBE, 2011:12). According to Ehri (2004:153-188), the term "disconnection of teaching phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)" refers to a situation where the instruction of phonetic rules, which involves understanding the relationship between written symbols (graphemes) and the corresponding sounds (phonemes) they represent, is fragmented, inconsistent, or lacking coherence. In other words, there is a breakdown or lack of continuity in imparting the fundamental principles of how letters or letter combinations are associated with specific speech sounds. Failing to connect phonetic rules to meaningful contexts or everyday language usage can make it harder for learners to understand the relevance

and application of these rules. Phonological awareness contributes to decoding skills by helping learners understand the relationship between graphemes and phonemes. It enables them to sound out unfamiliar words by recognizing letter patterns and associating them with their corresponding sounds (Ehri, 2022:53).

Disconnection in teaching phonetic rules can limit word recognition skills (Gillon, 2017). Learners struggled to recognize familiar words and had difficulty decoding new words independently. This limitation impedes their vocabulary growth and comprehension of written texts. The absence of a clear connection between graphemes and phonemes can confuse spelling and writing (Ehri, 2004:153). Learners experienced difficulty selecting the appropriate letters to represent sounds, leading to misspelt words and challenges in conveying ideas effectively in written form.

Integrating graphemes and phonemes is crucial for developing proficient reading skills (Ehri, 2004:153). Therefore, the negative consequences of disconnection in teaching these principles lead to poor word decoding skills, ineffective reading comprehension, difficulty spelling, limited vocabulary expansion, and reduced reading motivation and confidence.

Posthumanism emphasizes learning within complex ecologies. Teaching graphemes and morphemes could involve considering the cultural, linguistic, and societal contexts in which language operates, connecting linguistic elements to broader social and cultural contexts. Posthumanist ideas highlight collaborative learning environments. Teaching the connection between graphemes and morphemes might involve joint activities where learners collectively analyse language structures and meanings, fostering a shared understanding. The entanglement perspective encourages collaborative learning environments. Teaching grapheme-phoneme connections might involve collaborative activities where learners interact with each other and digital tools to explore and understand the relationships between written and spoken language elements.

CDA often delves into how societal and cultural factors influence language use. In teaching phonetic rules, societal biases might affect which phonetic rules are emphasized in education, potentially favouring particular dialects or language varieties over others. CDA can highlight how certain linguistic practices or dialects might be marginalised in

educational settings. In the context of phonetic teaching, some phonetic rules or dialectal pronunciations might be overlooked or devalued, impacting learners whose speech patterns differ from the standardized norms taught in schools. CDA examines language ideologies and their impact on societal structures. In teaching phonetic rules, ideologies about what constitutes 'correct' pronunciation or language might influence teaching practices, potentially disadvantaging learners whose speech patterns diverge from the standard.

4.5.3 Problems with the application of phonetic patterns

4.5.3.1 *Insufficiency of materials and resources*

The CAPS document advocates for using diverse teaching materials that accommodate various learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds among learners. It underscores the importance of inclusive resources that actively engage all learners, fostering equity in education (DBE, 2011:20). Teaching materials connect theoretical concepts to real-world examples, rendering lessons more relevant and relatable. The absence of materials may challenge educators in contextualizing learning experiences (Alshatri, Wakil, Jamal & Bakhtyar, 2019:448). As scaffolds, teaching aids contribute to developing phonological awareness skills, assisting learners in becoming more adept at recognizing and manipulating sounds within spoken language (Alshatri et al., 2019:448). These aids offer diverse and interactive experiences that cater to distinct learning styles, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of phonological concepts essential for reading and language acquisition (Alshatri et al., 2019:448).

Teachers are compelled to create their own teaching aids each time they present isiNdebele lessons due to the absence of printed resources. This process is time-consuming, as illustrated in Figures 4.13, 4.14, and others showcasing teaching resources in the study.

Mrs Ndlovu:

“Sometimes it is impossible to use written stories in teaching isiNdebele because you firstly need to create and write your own story as the department does not provide us with isiNdebele materials.”

Ivy (subject specialist):

“Yes, that is true because we do not have isiNdebele writers in this century. All books are old and are outdated, so a teacher must be really creative; not having resources is not an excuse.”

The data indicated that teachers had to employ creativity and exert additional effort for the study's success. By integrating diverse teaching aids into lessons, educators can craft dynamic and engaging learning experiences that accommodate learners' varied needs and preferences, ultimately leading to enhanced understanding, retention, and application of knowledge.

Inadequate materials and resources limit the availability of learning opportunities for learners (O'Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2018). Learners had limited access to various resources, including printed charts, books, word cards, texts, sounds, and videos, hindering their exposure to diverse IsiNdebele phonetic patterns and constraining their grasp of the language. Visual aids, interactive tools, and multimedia resources can improve comprehension, but their absence impedes effective teaching (O'Donnell et al., 2018). The available resources were outdated and lacked appeal for functionality. Dull or obsolete resources fail to capture learners' attention, making it challenging for them to stay motivated and effectively learn IsiNdebele phonetic patterns. Therefore, insufficient materials and resources in teaching IsiNdebele phonetic patterns have adverse effects on learners' learning experiences and comprehension. These effects include limited learning opportunities, reduced engagement and interest, inadequate practice and reinforcement, difficulties in demonstration and explanation, and the exacerbation of educational inequities.

Posthumanism values collaborative learning. Teaching aids could foster collaboration among learners, promoting peer-to-peer learning through shared resources or interactive aids. Teaching aids are supplementary tools and augmentations that enhance human capabilities. Posthumanism encourages the use of technological aids to amplify teaching

and learning processes, expanding the possibilities for education. Posthumanist perspectives advocate for diverse teaching aids catering to various learning styles and preferences. This includes visual aids, auditory resources, tactile materials, and interactive digital tools to offer multifaceted learning experiences.

CDA can investigate how the insufficiency of materials affects learning outcomes. It may uncover disparities in language acquisition and literacy skills based on the availability of resources, impacting learners' abilities to grasp phonetic patterns effectively. It examines how language is used in the materials to construct knowledge about phonetic patterns. It includes the discursive strategies employed to teach these patterns and their potential implications on learners' perceptions of language and speech. CDA analyses how phonetic pattern materials reflect or challenge societal power relations. For instance, materials might inadvertently reinforce dominant social structures by favouring specific speech patterns associated with higher social status. In essence, CDA would critique phonetic pattern teaching materials by delving into the power dynamics, ideologies, and social implications embedded within the language and content of these resources. It aims to uncover how these materials might shape learners' understanding of language and influence broader societal perceptions and hierarchies related to language use.

4.5.4 Lesson plans that are not adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners

4.5.4.1 *Diverse learner's needs*

As per the CAPS document (DBE, 2011:5), each school's organization, planning, and teaching should prioritize inclusivity. Diverse classrooms encompass a broad spectrum of needs, abilities, and learning styles (Tomlinson, 2014). Meeting the unique requirements of each learner, including those with diverse cognitive, physical, emotional, and behavioural needs, poses a significant challenge for teachers (Bryant & Smith, 2019:111). Some learners may have specific learning disabilities, special needs, or behavioural difficulties that necessitate tailored instructional strategies and accommodations (Bryant & Smith, 2019:111). Phonological awareness provides a flexible framework that educators can adapt to meet the diverse needs of learners. By customizing activities, offering individualized support, and recognizing various learning

contexts, teachers can effectively address the diverse needs of learners while fostering foundational literacy skills. Co-researchers reflected on the needs of diverse learners.

Ms Sibiya:

“It is time-consuming and straining to deal with different learners’ needs, and sometimes we do not follow the procedures as we need to cover the ATP.”

Ms Johnson also added:

Ms Johnson:

“True... but we will keep on trying our level best until we master that.”

Certain learners may face challenges in phonics acquisition due to learning disabilities or special needs (Shaywitz, 2020:203). Teachers must be equipped to provide tailored instruction, accommodations, and additional support to ensure a practical understanding of phonics concepts for these learners. Engaging parents and caregivers in understanding and supporting the diverse needs of learners can pose challenges (Epstein, 2018). Collaborating with families is crucial to adopting a holistic approach to addressing diverse needs both at home and in the classroom. Implementing effective inclusive teaching strategies catering to diverse learners is complex (Westwood, 2018: 44). Developing inclusive pedagogy to meet the learning needs of all learners while maintaining a conducive classroom environment remains an on-going challenge (Shaywitz, 2020:203).

Posthumanism challenges hierarchical structures in education, questioning traditional power dynamics and aiming to create learning environments where diverse voices are valued, fostering a more egalitarian and inclusive space. It acknowledges the multiplicity of identities beyond traditional categories and encourages educators to recognize and respect diverse identities, including cultural backgrounds, abilities, and ways of knowing. Posthumanism emphasizes inclusive educational practices beyond the human-centric approach, urging educators to consider diverse learners' needs by incorporating various perspectives, abilities, and cultural backgrounds into the learning process. Posthumanist perspectives acknowledge the fluidity and hybrid nature of identities and learning experiences, promoting embracing diverse ways of learning and knowing. It recognizes

that these may evolve and intersect uniquely for each learner. Posthumanism advocates for acknowledging and celebrating diversity among learners, extending beyond traditional categories to include various cultural backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles.

CDA investigates power imbalances within educational settings, examining how language and discourse can marginalize certain groups of learners based on race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, or language proficiency. This analysis aims to address inequalities and advocate for inclusive education. CDA explores how teaching methods and materials reflect or challenge societal norms and power structures, striving to develop pedagogical approaches responsive to diverse learners' needs and promoting inclusive and equitable education. In essence, CDA underscores the significance of recognizing, valuing, and accommodating diverse learners' needs within educational settings. It advocates for inclusive practices, equitable opportunities, and critical reflections on language use and educational discourse to create a more just and supportive learning environment for all learners.

4.5.5 Problems in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

4.5.5.1 Teachers not professionally trained to use (EGRA)

Many learners exhibited a lack of proficiency in isiNdebele, stemming from diverse backgrounds—some experiencing a classroom for the first time, others not attending Grade R, and some not being isiNdebele speakers, posing a considerable challenge. Limited proficiency in isiNdebele can result in difficulties in reading comprehension (Ardington et al., 2020; 11). Struggles with decoding impact learners' understanding of text, making it challenging to derive meaning from what they read. In some cases, learners may predominantly use languages other than isiNdebele in their daily lives (Masuku, 2017). The shift towards dominant languages in social, educational, and media contexts can diminish proficiency in isiNdebele. The availability and quality of teaching and learning resources, including textbooks and instructional materials in isiNdebele, might be insufficient (Ndlovu, 2019:234). Inadequate resources can hinder effective teaching and learning, impacting learners' proficiency in the language.

Posthumanism emphasizes co-agency, where both humans and non-humans contribute to educational processes. In this context, it might explore how the use of EGRA affects the co-constitution of teaching and learning practices. From a posthumanist viewpoint, the focus might not solely be on the lack of professional training but on the interconnected relationships between teachers, technology, and the teaching-learning process. It might encourage exploring the diverse ways in which teachers engage with and respond to technological tools like EGRA, potentially reimagining the roles of teachers and technology in fostering decoding and encoding skills in learners.

CDA might delve into the underlying ideologies and discourses shaping educational practices. It could question prevailing beliefs or assumptions about teacher training and its importance in improving literacy outcomes. CDA might explore how the lack of professional training in utilizing EGRA can reinforce power imbalances within the education system. Teachers who are not trained might lack access to effective tools, impacting their ability to teach decoding and encoding skills adequately. CDA, in examining the language and discourses surrounding these issues, would likely highlight the social, political, and educational implications of teachers not being professionally trained to utilize tools like EGRA. It might underscore the need for systemic changes to ensure equitable access to quality training and resources for all teachers, aiming to improve literacy instruction and learner outcomes.

4.6 SUCCESS INDICATORS OF PROPOSED STRATEGIES

In this segment, we delve into indicators of success in executing teaching strategies. This section presents potential evidence from the literature to establish a conceptual framework grounded in factual evidence and empirical data regarding the effectiveness of teaching phonics in Grade one. The ability of teachers to instruct the proper sequencing of phonic content becomes a critical success indicator. Consequently, if the strategy's components successfully addressed the challenges discussed in the study (cf. sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4), it seems reasonable to consider them as indicators of success, as highlighted in the ensuing sections.

4.6.1 Evidence-appropriate sequencing of phonic content

The data revealed that a teacher expressed the effectiveness and benefits of a workshop involving the use of authentic texts and storytelling during a workshop (cf. section 4.3.1.1). The utilization of authentic texts, storytelling, praise and positive reinforcement, and a developmental workshop has proven successful in teaching sequences of phonic content. Praise contributes to cultivating a positive and supportive learning environment where learners feel valued and encouraged. This atmosphere fosters a classroom where learners are comfortable taking risks and learning from their mistakes. Mrs. Ndlovu supported this by highlighting that all learners wanted to participate in the class.

Mrs Ndlovu:

“I only need one learner to retell the story. I won’t be able to choose all of you now. You are too many.”

Improved retention of phonetic sequences is evident in learners when they are taught through storytelling. This enhanced retention translates into a more practical application of these sequences in spoken and written communication, showcasing a deeper comprehension of how sounds correspond to letters. Assessments indicate enhanced performance in phonics-related tasks among learners who have undergone instruction using authentic texts and storytelling. Their proficiency is demonstrated through a better understanding of phonetic sequences and their application in language exercises (refer to Figure 4.17).

Learners are encouraged to read the text independently, decode words using the learned phonics patterns, and apply these patterns in their writing assignments. Using authentic texts and storytelling to teach phonic sequences has proven highly successful. Learners in the class exhibit improved decoding skills and increased confidence in reading and writing. The ability to apply phonic sequences from authentic texts to their own reading and writing tasks underlines the effectiveness of this instructional approach.

4.6.2 Evidence of understanding the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

Learners exhibit proficiency in recognizing graphemes and phonemes and also apply these principles when reading and writing. This achievement is reflected in their improved reading fluency and written expression, showcasing the effectiveness of the word families and rhyming words strategy for teaching phonetic rules. Learners engage in reading and writing exercises using the word families and rhyming words. They read books, create sentences, and write short stories using the learned phonetic rules (see Figure 4.31 below).

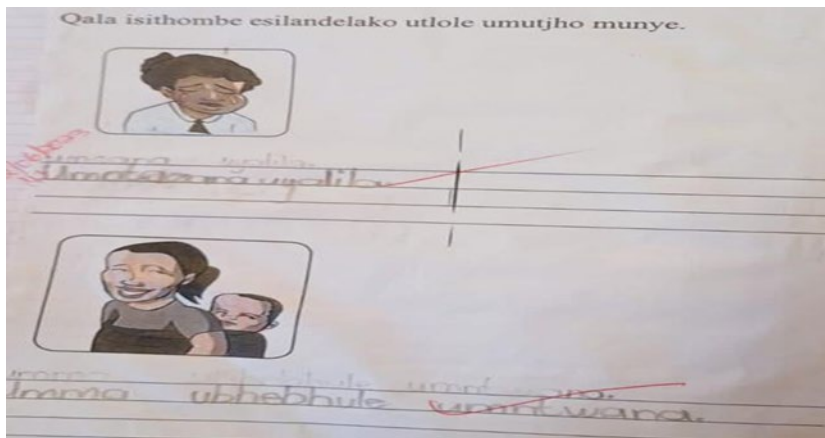


Figure 4.31: Created sentences and short stories

Co-researchers observed remarkable success in learners' understanding phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes). The learners demonstrate an enhanced ability to decode words, identify common phonetic patterns, and apply this knowledge in their reading and writing tasks.

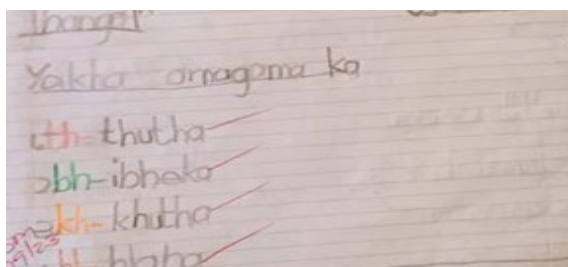


Figure 4.32: Learners writing all words of different sounds correctly

In Figure 4.32, learners demonstrate the ability to reflect on their work concerning the given instructions, showing an understanding of their learning process. Learners complete the task accurately based on the given instructions. Their output aligns with the expected outcomes. Successful use of word families and rhyming words as tools to teach phonetic rules lays a strong foundation for future literacy development.

4.6.3 Evidence in the application of phonetic patterns

During meetings, teachers were strongly encouraged to participate in all developmental workshops and training programs to equip them with practical methods for applying isiNdebele phonetic patterns. As a result, co-researchers demonstrated cooperation by actively supporting the study by attending these meetings. Teachers adopted a small group instructional approach to teaching isiNdebele phonetic patterns, employing engaging activities such as chants, rhymes, and word puzzles. These activities were thoughtfully designed to reinforce specific phonetic patterns.

The rhythmic nature of chants and rhymes plays a significant role in developing phonemic awareness, facilitating learners' easier recognition and reproduction of phonetic patterns (Thela, 2021;201). This approach fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills and reinforces the understanding of phonetic patterns in an enjoyable and interactive manner. Co-researchers observed a notable level of accuracy in pronunciation and the ability to apply phonetic patterns, as depicted in Figure 4.33. The instructional approach is adjusted based on the identified needs and challenges observed within each group.

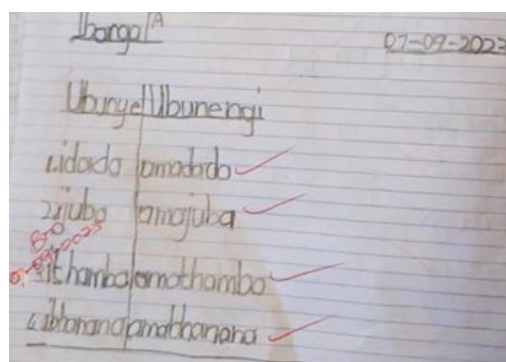


Figure 4.33: Learners' activity with an understanding of phonetic patterns

Through the small group activities of chants, rhymes, and word puzzles, learners demonstrated improved phonemic awareness and understanding of IsiNdebele phonetic patterns. The learners become more confident in pronouncing and utilising these patterns in their reading and writing exercises, indicating the success of the instructional approach.

4.6.4 Evidence of lesson plans that are adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners

Co-researchers commence by acknowledging the diverse learning profiles present among their learners. They recognize that their class encompasses a range of learning abilities, from advanced learners to those requiring additional support. This acknowledgement forms the foundation for designing effective lesson plans tailored to individual needs. The co-researchers are mindful of the fact that learners possess distinct strengths, weaknesses, interests, and readiness levels for the content. Consequently, they craft comprehensive lesson plans that are differentiated to accommodate various learning abilities.

Each lesson plan incorporates multiple pathways and options for learners to engage with the material based on their unique learning styles and abilities. Additional practice activities and guided reading sessions are included for those requiring extra support. Advanced learners are presented with challenging phonic exercises, encouraging exploration of more complex word patterns. Differentiated instructional strategies are employed to cater to diverse learning styles and abilities. The lesson plans encompass various instructional strategies, including visual aids, group discussions, hands-on activities, and technology integration. These strategies cater to visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and tactile learners, ensuring engagement and comprehension for all.

Teachers consistently assess learners to monitor their progress and adjust lesson plans accordingly. Formative assessments and observations aid in identifying areas where learners may need extra support or more challenging activities. Learners requiring additional support exhibit noticeable progress, while advanced learners continue to be

stimulated and engaged. The assessment results indicate enhanced phonic proficiency across the spectrum of learning abilities within the Grade one class (Tomlinson, 2017:19). Additionally, there is evident growth and learning among teachers involved in team teaching as they exchange ideas, share teaching methodologies and benefit from each other's expertise, contributing to ongoing professional development.

4.6.5 Evidence in the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

Through the strategic incorporation of EGRA to teach the practical application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding), Mrs Roberts notes a substantial enhancement in her learners' proficiency to decode words, spell accurately, and implement phonics rules, as evidenced in previous learners' activities. The EGRA assessments yield valuable insights, enabling teachers to effectively tailor instruction and guide learners toward achieving phonics proficiency.

Acknowledging the diverse needs of learners, teachers provide support based on individual decoding and encoding abilities. Targeted interventions are offered to learners facing difficulties, while advanced learners are assigned challenging tasks to enhance their skills further. Teachers observe a significant improvement in their learners' IsiNdebele encoding and decoding capabilities. The learners showcase enhanced proficiency in recognizing IsiNdebele sounds, syllables, and words, leading to improved reading and writing abilities.

By demonstrating its capacity to accurately assess, identify gaps, inform instruction, and drive enhancements in decoding and encoding skills, EGRA is an effective tool in enhancing literacy outcomes among learners. While EGRA functions primarily as an assessment tool, its results profoundly influence and shape effective teaching strategies to refine decoding and encoding skills among early-grade learners. Utilizing this data effectively leads to targeted, evidence-based instructional practices conducive to establishing robust literacy foundations.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research aimed to develop an effective strategy for teaching phonics in the isiNdebele home language within a Grade one class. Data were presented, analysed, and interpreted based on five study objectives: identifying challenges faced by teachers in teaching isiNdebele phonics, proposing solutions to these challenges, determining conducive conditions for the solutions, anticipating threats to the teaching strategies, and identifying successful indicators of challenges faced by teachers. This chapter outlines the findings, recommendations, and conclusions of the study. The study is also presented in relation to posthumanism theory and Phonological awareness as a conceptual framework underpinning the investigation.

5.2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION

This section will address findings and recommendations for each challenge in achieving the aim and objective of the study.

5.3 INAPPROPRIATE SEQUENCING OF PHONIC CONTENT

The research identified a challenge related to letter recognition among learners. Observational data indicated teachers did not follow the correct sequence when teaching phonics. While introducing a specific sound, they assessed learners with different sounds, claiming to cover the school syllabus. This practice, as discussed in section 4.2.1, was inconsistent with effective teaching strategies. Teachers tended to teach sounds with similar characteristics consecutively, leading to confusion among learners, as advised against by research findings.

The data highlighted a lack of consistency in the sequencing of phonics teaching, and there was no apparent logical progression in presenting the phonic content. The teacher

did not employ sequence teaching, moving through the material without following a coherent and proper sequence or flow of a lesson (starting from practical aspects before introducing abstract concepts). Consequently, based on the data, the teacher did not apply the proper teaching sequencing technique before the intervention of this study, contradicting principles of successful teaching. Poor memorization skills were identified as a threat to the effective teaching of appropriate phonic content sequencing.

5.3.1 Recommendations strategy for teaching appropriate sequencing of phonic content

Integrating authentic texts and storytelling into phonics instruction serves as a remedy for the inappropriate sequencing of phonetic content. This approach establishes a rich, contextual, and engaging learning environment, allowing learners to comprehend phonics rules and sequences holistically and memorably. Authentic texts, encompassing culturally relevant stories and traditional narratives, embed phonetic sequences within meaningful contexts. Storytelling engages various sensory experiences—auditory (listening to the story), visual (illustrations or gestures), and even tactile (manipulating story props)—catering to diverse learning styles. This facilitates understanding how sounds and letters function collaboratively in real-life language usage. Storytelling captivates learners' attention, making the learning process enjoyable. Authentic texts, rooted in cultural heritage, resonate with learners, fostering active participation and motivation to explore phonetic sequences. Stories provide examples of how phonetic sequences are applied in sentences and conversations, demonstrating the practical use of sounds and letters within a meaningful context.

Educators have successfully employed praise and positive reinforcement as conducive conditions for teaching appropriate sequences of phonic content. Data indicates that praising and positively reinforcing learners builds confidence in their grasp of phonetic sequences. Recognizing their efforts and progress cultivates a positive attitude toward learning. Praise becomes a powerful motivator when learners actively engage in storytelling activities or interact with authentic texts by reading aloud or sharing interpretations.

Acknowledging learners' attempts at understanding complex narratives or deciphering phonetic sequences within authentic texts reinforces their efforts and encourages perseverance, even in the face of challenges. Praising learners for their contributions, whether in discussions about cultural aspects of authentic texts or sharing personal interpretations of a story, fosters a sense of value for their perspectives and insights. Positive reinforcement for attentiveness during storytelling activities or when learners create their stories boosts confidence in expressing themselves through language. Providing positive feedback on pronunciation, understanding, or expressing themes within authentic texts enhances learners' confidence in using the language and engaging with culturally relevant content. While praise is valuable, offering specific feedback and constructive reinforcement is equally essential to guide learners toward improvement and provide a holistic learning experience within storytelling and authentic text engagement.

Teachers collaborating and exchanging ideas, attending workshops, and learning from each other contribute to continuous professional development. This collaborative approach improves educators' expertise in teaching phonics effectively. The strategy's success is evident as teachers effectively teach appropriate phonetic sequences, leading to successful skill acquisition by learners. For effective teaching of appropriate sequences of phonic content, I recommend using authentic texts and storytelling as a strategy, incorporating situations of praising and positive reinforcement, along with developmental workshops.

5.4 UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE OF PHONETIC RULES (GRAPHEMES AND PHONEMES)

Observational data indicated that teachers faced challenges understanding the relationship between letters and their corresponding sounds. Their lack of comprehension regarding graphemes and their associated phonemes posed difficulties in effectively guiding learners. The teaching approach led to learners struggling to articulate words, resulting in inaccurate phonemes and improper graphemes. This confusion hindered their ability to write specific words correctly, leading to consistent spelling errors, as detailed in

section 4.1.2. During reading sessions, some learners displayed difficulties in word decoding, often resorting to guessing rather than phonetically sounding out the words.

Additionally, in spelling and writing exercises, learners frequently made consistent spelling errors, utilizing incorrect letter combinations for specific sounds. This pattern of errors suggested that teachers encountered challenges in efficiently conveying phonetic rules. The disconnection in teaching the principles of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes) poses a threat to the effective sequencing of phonic content.

5.4.1 Recommendation strategy for enabling teachers to understand the principle of phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes)

The data has demonstrated the effectiveness of using word families and rhyming words to teach phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes). Once learners grasp the systematic relationships between graphemes and phonemes, this understanding proves helpful when learning letter sounds in a different language. Exploring word families and rhyming words expands learners' vocabulary and enhances spelling through pattern recognition in words, thereby fostering more vital language skills (Murphy & Diehm, 2020:544). Being memorable and catchy, rhymes aid in the retention of phonetic rules. Learners recall common patterns in sounds and spellings, reinforcing the relationship between graphemes and phonemes. Learners observe consistent spelling patterns and sound sequences through word families, enabling them to apply phonetic rules to new words within the same family and reinforcing their understanding of graphemes and phonemes.

Explicit instruction has proven conducive to teaching phonetic rules. This instructional approach involves repetition, practice, and reinforcement of phonetic rules, aiding in retention as learners engage in activities that solidify their understanding of the relationship between graphemes and phonemes. Explicit instruction minimizes confusion and ambiguity by clearly stating phonetic rules, eliminating guesswork for learners. This clarity contributes to the development of accurate pronunciation and spelling skills.

Collaboration with teachers from other schools has been beneficial to the study. Interaction with educators from different schools exposes teachers to diverse

perspectives, teaching methodologies, and approaches, broadening their understanding of sequencing phonic content and encouraging them to consider alternative perspectives. Establishing connections with educators from different schools fosters a network for collaboration and resource-sharing. Teachers can collaborate on projects, exchange lesson plans, or engage in joint professional development activities.

The strategy was successful because teachers effectively taught phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes), and learners acquired the skills successfully. To teach phonetic rules (graphemes and phonemes) effectively, I recommend that teachers use word families and rhyming words as a strategy, incorporating explicit instructional conditions and collaborating with teachers from different schools.

5.5 PROBLEMS WITH APPLICATION OF PHONETIC PATTERNS

The data uncovered challenges teachers face in teaching the application of isiNdebele phonetic patterns, negatively impacting learners and their performance. It was observed that particular learners struggled to apply the phonetic patterns they had learned to decode unfamiliar words during lessons. Despite receiving guidelines, they found using their knowledge in real-world reading situations challenging. When faced with a new word featuring a known phonetic pattern, learners often hesitated and couldn't confidently apply the appropriate sounds. Additionally, some learners were confused when multiple phonetic patterns could be used for a single word, making it challenging to select the correct pattern and decode it accurately. In spelling activities, particular learners had difficulty identifying the right phonetic pattern for a given word, struggling to match the sounds they heard to the correct letter combinations, resulting in frequent spelling errors. Teaching phonetic patterns is crucial for developing foundational reading skills, enabling learners to decode words successfully, enhance reading fluency, improve spelling proficiency, expand vocabulary, and ultimately become confident and proficient readers. Consequently, it is evident that teachers face challenges in teaching learners how to apply accurate phonetic patterns, and the inadequacy of materials and resources poses a threat to the practical application of phonetic patterns.

5.5.1 Recommendation when having problems with the application of phonetic patterns

Data has demonstrated the effectiveness of using chants, rhymes, and word puzzles to teach phonetic patterns. Chants and rhymes create a rhythmic and repetitive auditory experience, aiding in recognising and reinforcing phonetic patterns. Studies suggest that repeated exposure to sounds contributes to phonemic awareness. Through repetitive chanting and rhyming, learners practice correct pronunciation, emphasizing word phonetic patterns, leading to improved articulation and clarity in speech. The research study highlights the efficacy of chants, rhymes, and word puzzles in facilitating the understanding and application of phonetic patterns, making them valuable tools in teaching language and literacy skills to learners.

Collaboration emerges as a conducive condition in the teaching of phonetic patterns. The cooperation among community members and school stakeholders plays a significant role, with school stakeholders supporting the initiative by organizing workshops and participating in the study. Parents collaborate and support the cause by practising phonetic patterns with their children, extending learning beyond school hours. The data reveals that co-researchers used workshops to devise strategies for teaching the application of phonetic patterns, sharing insights on effective teaching methods during these collaborative sessions.

The strategy was successful because teachers effectively taught the application of phonetic patterns, and learners successfully acquired the skills. To teach phonetic patterns effectively, I recommend that teachers utilize chants, rhymes, and word puzzles as a strategy, foster a cooperative teaching environment, and organize developmental workshops.

5.6 LESSON PLANS THAT ARE NOT ADAPTING TO MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF LEARNERS

The core challenge here stems from the inherent diversity among learners. Teachers encountered difficulties in developing lesson plans that effectively addressed the diverse

needs of their learners. Classrooms welcomed learners with unique backgrounds, abilities, learning styles, and cultural experiences. The data revealed that learners with special needs were assigned the same level of activities as those without special needs. Teachers struggled with adapting instruction to accommodate the varying learning levels present in their classrooms. Considering learners' diverse profiles, encompassing linguistic, cognitive, and socio-economic backgrounds, often took a back seat during the teaching and learning process. In instances involving special needs learners, necessary accommodations or modifications in lesson plans were not consistently provided, limiting their ability to fully participate or comprehend the material. The disengagement and lack of enthusiasm observed among learners during lessons served as indicators that the content or approach in the lesson plans failed to captivate or meet the diverse needs of the learners. Learners with diverse needs threaten the development of lesson plans that effectively cater to the needs of all learners.

5.6.1 Recommendations for lesson plans adapting to meet the diverse needs of learners

Lesson plans that address diverse learning styles, abilities, and interests have proven more effective in engaging learners. This heightened engagement often results in increased participation and attentiveness during class activities. Tailoring lesson plans to diverse needs has shown improved learning outcomes, with learners demonstrating a better understanding of concepts, enhanced information retention, and higher achievement levels compared to standardized or one-size-fits-all approaches. Lesson plans customized for diverse needs incorporate differentiated instruction, allowing teachers to adjust content, pace, and methods to meet individual learning requirements. This approach ensures that both struggling learners and advanced learners receive appropriate support. The study recommends that teachers develop lesson plans that meet the diverse needs of learners.

Team teaching has been conducive to creating lesson plans and has demonstrated the effectiveness of this strategy. Team teaching embraces diversity in ideas, perspectives, and learning styles. Teachers acknowledge that learners have different backgrounds,

strengths, and needs. Through team-teaching collaboration, they create inclusive learning environments that accommodate diverse perspectives, ensuring that all learners have opportunities to engage meaningfully in the learning process by sharing ideas during lesson preparations. By integrating different subject matters or perspectives within team-teaching lessons, teachers aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of concepts, fostering a more profound and interconnected knowledge base for learners.

The study recommends inviting subject specialists to schools. Specialists provide professional development sessions, share best practices, and collaborate with colleagues to improve overall teaching quality within the subject area. Organized professional development sessions foster continuous learning among teachers, encouraging them to refine their teaching practices. They exchange ideas, attend workshops, and learn from each other, enhancing their expertise in teaching phonics effectively. Specialists customize lessons to suit different learning styles and abilities within their subject area. They stay updated with the latest research, trends, technological advancements, and new educational resources, enhancing teaching and learning experiences as they work with different teachers in various schools.

The strategy was successful because teachers could create lesson plans that catered to the diverse needs of learners, resulting in successful skill acquisition. For effective teaching of lessons, it is recommended that teachers develop lesson plans that address the diverse needs of learners, utilizing team teaching, and inviting subject specialists to assist teachers through developmental workshops.

5.7 PROBLEMS IN THE APPLICATION OF PHONIC SKILLS (ENCODING AND DECODING)

According to the data, learners had difficulty decoding simple phrases as they had not fully mastered the distinct letter sounds. This difficulty in reading and writing significantly impacted their overall literacy development. The school had a diverse learner population with varying language backgrounds. Learners from non-isiNdebele-speaking backgrounds found it challenging to decode isiNdebele phrases due to differences in phonetic patterns between their home language and isiNdebele. Additionally, learners

struggled with applying phonic skills to encoding, specifically spelling words based on phonetic rules. While some learners excelled in their home languages, facilitating an easier grasp of phonetic concepts, others faced difficulties due to limited literacy experiences in any language. Teachers' lack of professional training in using EGRA poses a threat to applying phonic skills (encoding and decoding).

5.7.1 Recommendation of having problems with the application of phonic skills (encoding and decoding)

EGRA facilitated the identification of specific areas where learners faced challenges in decoding and encoding. Through its assessments, teachers pinpointed weaknesses in phonemic awareness, word recognition, spelling, and other foundational skills crucial for reading and writing.

Consequently, some learners struggled to decode words accurately during reading. To address this issue, Msabaha (2018:15) suggested emphasizing audible reading, sound training, and simulations to develop pupils' pronunciation skills, making them integral to the entire educational system where learners learn the basic sounds of isiNdebele. Additionally, the widespread use of a phonetic alphabet chart was recommended in conjunction with familiarizing learners with phonetic scripts.

By analysing EGRA findings, teachers devised targeted interventions to enhance learners' phonetic skills. They crafted personalized lesson plans and activities directly addressing the identified areas of struggle revealed by the assessment. Teachers' proficiency in teaching encoding and decoding skills improved, leading the study to recommend using EGRA in teaching phonetic skills. The study showcases learners who consistently and appropriately apply phonetic rules, recognise patterns, understand letter-sound relationships, and use this knowledge to decode unfamiliar words or encode thoughts into written language. Therefore, teachers should consider EGRA as a strategy for teaching phonic skills (encoding and decoding).

Play-based activities provided real-life contexts for applying phonic skills, allowing learners to engage in meaningful situations where they decoded words in EGRA, signs,

or encoded messages in pretend play, linking phonics to everyday experiences. According to study findings, play and learning are interconnected, and play-based learning benefits children's development and academic performance. Developmental workshops play a crucial role in personal and professional growth by providing a structured platform for acquiring new skills, fostering personal development, and facilitating networking opportunities in a conducive and interactive environment.

The strategy was successful because teachers effectively taught phonic skills (encoding and decoding), and learners acquired these skills successfully. I recommend that teachers use EGRA as a teaching strategy for effective teaching, create a play-based environment, and consistently involve themselves in developmental workshops.

5.8 BACKGROUND OF THE STRATEGY

The research study revealed that teachers encountered difficulties in applying appropriate teaching strategies and struggled to formulate comprehensive lesson plans catering to the diverse needs of learners. This revelation surfaced during the initial discussion meeting of the co-researchers' action plan. The primary obstacle to the strategy's effectiveness stemmed from teachers' ineffective delivery of isiNdebele phonics, primarily attributed to a deficiency in teaching and subject knowledge.

5.9 VALUE OF THE STUDY

The study holds a vital objective, focusing on the optimal approach for teachers to employ when teaching isiNdebele phonics to Grade one learners. It aims to enhance the performance of isiNdebele learners significantly. The study's significance lies in providing learners with essential skills for becoming proficient readers and writers. It contributes to language learning by enriching vocabulary, strengthening spelling skills, and fostering independent reading and comprehension.

Furthermore, the study is poised to elevate teachers' skills, enabling them to share their newfound knowledge. Employing PAR as the research methodology facilitated the co-researchers in gaining fresh perspectives, exchanging expertise, and motivating one

another to participate and complete the study actively. Through this process, co-researchers acquired skills that can be applied to improve their daily lives.

The interactions between teachers and learners are anticipated to improve, fostering a more conducive learning environment. The research outcomes are expected to assist the Department of Education (DoE) in training and disseminating knowledge related to phonics teaching. Schools can leverage the study to initiate their developmental workshops among peers, creating a collaborative platform for ongoing improvement in phonics instruction.

5.10 SUCCESSES IN DESIGNING THE STRATEGY

According to the study, some common impediments or problems impede the effective teaching of isiNdebele phonics in Grade one, and as a result, numerous initiatives have been initiated and implemented. Adequate teacher training and professional development have benefited teachers in efficiently teaching phonics and delivering knowledge that will bring learners to the intended objective, allowing them to navigate the technologically changing world.

5.11 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Teachers in this study continue to face challenges in effectively teaching isiNdebele due to inadequate training. The absence of proper guidance from education professionals hampers practitioners' ability to teach coding efficiently at Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) centres. Therefore, future research should delve into contextual aspects to enhance teacher training.

While our study focused on a single centre, including others to ascertain the method's effectiveness is imperative. Constraints such as limited resources, including time, funding, and access to materials, have restricted the study's depth and scope, affecting the research's quality and comprehensiveness.

Not all co-researchers had experience teaching phonics, highlighting the diverse backgrounds contributing to the study. External factors beyond the classroom, such as

home environments, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status, play a role in influencing learners' progress in phonics.

5.12 CONCLUSION

It has been emphasized that phonics plays a vital role in language acquisition, enabling learners to understand that letters and letter combinations form specific sounds and words. The primary objective of this research was to develop an effective strategy for teaching phonics in the isiNdebele home language to Grade one learners, employing Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the methodology facilitated data collection and resolution of identified challenges through observations and meetings.

The results indicate that teachers employed various teaching methods to impart phonics skills, including the use of authentic texts and storytelling, word families and rhyming words, chants, rhymes, word puzzles, the creation of lesson plans catering to diverse learner needs, and the utilization of the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). These methods ensured learners' comprehension of phonics and its components. According to the study, these strategies proved effective in teaching phonics content, enhancing learners' understanding and performance. Teachers facing challenges in phonics instruction may find these identified strategies beneficial, ultimately fostering increased learner engagement.

Additionally, it is recommended that teachers employ reading comprehension teaching tactics aligned with the learners' characteristics and skill levels. Ongoing training and skill upgrades are also suggested to facilitate continuous learning and professional development for teachers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

 <p>UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA <i>Creating Opportunities</i></p>	
<p>Prof Matlamahole Geoffrey MOKOCHHOLE</p>	
<p>School of Early Childhood Education (SECE)</p>	
<p>Nyabusa Campus</p>	
<p>Box 568000, N</p>	
<p>50 155-6079</p>	
<p>Protocol Reference Number: UMPY/Sikhoana021504079/SECE/ARCo/2023</p>	
<p>Project Title: Reading Challenges Faced by Grade 3 Learners of Rural Area Four Primary Schools</p>	
<p>Approval Notification: Designing an effective-phonics teaching strategy for grade one class in Ishidobele in the Mungata District</p>	
<p>FULL APPROVAL:</p>	
<p>Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interviews Schedule, Informed Consent form, Title of the project, Location of the study, Research Approach and methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendments' modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.</p>	
<p>PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be stored securely in the 'school's' division for a period of 3 years.</p>	
<p>The Ethical Clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from date of issue. Thereafter, Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.</p>	
<p>Wishing you the best with your study.</p>	
<p>Yours faithfully,</p>	
	
<p>Prof M. Matlamahole</p>	
<p>Name of Chairperson: (Chair PRCo)</p>	
<p>Co: Research Office Administrator: MR N Kokohe and MR. T Mlambo</p>	
<p>Co: Faculty Research Committee Chair: Prof H Israel</p>	
<p>DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(s)</p>	
<p>(We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorised to carry out the abovementioned research and guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. I agree to completion of a yearly progress report.</p>	

	<p>28-07-2023</p>
Signature	Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE MPUMALANGA DoE



education
DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

P.O. BOX 470
KWAMHLANGA
1021
NO. 581A, PEACE STREET
"B" KWAMHLANGA
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

KwaMhlanga NE Circuit: Nkangala District

Litiko le-Tsoelikelelo Ukwamhlanga ne-Futhele Department van Oosdrings Nkangala ka Dyobane

Enq: Mokone SA
013 947 3720 / 071 413 8934
ssoalemsk1@gmail.com / s.mokone@mpuedu.gov.za

**TO: Ms. NS SKHOSANA
SIBONGUMPUMELELO PRIMARY**

**FROM: MOKONE SA
CIRCUIT MANAGER
KWAMHLANGA NE CIRCUIT**

**SUBJECT: GRANTING OF AN APPROVAL TOWARDS YOUR STUDIES IN
MASTER'S DEGREE**

DATE: 05.09.2023

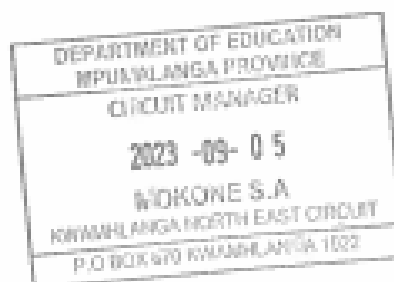
The KwaMhlanga NE Circuit has acknowledged receipt of your request to conduct a Research towards the fulfillment of your studies with the University of Mpumalanga.

Firstly the Circuit Office wishes you good luck in your endeavour to improve your knowledge and skills; however more is appreciated when the community around your school is going to benefit from your studies.

The KwaMhlanga NE Circuit Office, hereby grant permission to you, Ms. NS Skhosana, to conduct a requested Research towards the completion of your studies.

Regards


**CIRCUIT MANAGER
MOKONE SA**



05.09.2023
DATE

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FOR THE PRINCIPAL

CONSENT FORM FOR THE PRINCIPAL, HOD AND TEACHER

Request for you to participate in a research study

Dear prospective co-researcher

I, Nomfundo Sophy Skhosana, a master's degree candidate at the University of Mpumalanga doing research under the supervision of Professor Mahlomaholo, humbly request your permission to conduct research at your institution. My student number is 220143625.

I am requesting you to participate in the study entitled: Designing an effective phonics teaching strategy for grade one class in isiNdebele in the Nkangala District. Your school was selected because it is ideal for gathering information about the strategy to teach phonics in grade one class in isiNdebele language. This study formulates a strategy to enhance the effective teaching of phonics in isiNdebele as a home language in grade one class.

The study will entail working together with teachers, HODs, principal and parents, school librarian and business man. This study is not supposed to be risky and no risky situation is expected. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and every participant has the right to withdraw without any repercussions from participating in the study at any time if a situation arises and make you feel comfortable. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback will be given to participants in writing and through word of mouth. I can also be contacted at: nomfundaskhosana00@gmail.com

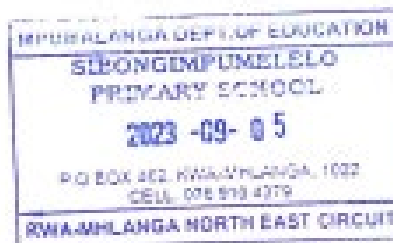
Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Ms N.S. Skhosana

Principal

N. Buji
N. Buji / N.R (Principal)
05/09/2023



APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FOR THE HOD AND TEACHER

CONSENT FORM FOR THE HOD AND TEACHER

Request for you to participate in a research study

Dear prospective co-researcher

I, Nomfundo Sophy Skhosana, a master's degree candidate at the University of Mpumalanga doing research under the supervision of Professor Mahlomaholo, humbly request your permission to conduct research at your institution. My student number is 220143625.

I am requesting you to participate in the study entitled: Designing an effective phonics teaching strategy for grade one class in isiNdebele in the Nkangala District. Your school was selected because it is ideal for gathering information about the strategy to teach phonics in grade one class in isiNdebele language. This study formulates a strategy to enhance the effective teaching of phonics in isiNdebele as a home language in grade one class.

The study will entail working together with teachers, HODs, principal and parents, school librarian and business man. This study is not supposed to be risky and no risky situation is expected. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and every participant has the right to withdraw without any repercussions from participating in the study at any time if a situation arises and make you feel comfortable. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback will be given to participants in writing and through word of mouth. I can also be contacted at: nomfundoskhosana00@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

NS SKHOSANA

Ms N.S Skhosana

APPENDIX E: ASSENT FORM FOR MINORS

ASSENT FORM FOR MINORS

My name is Nomfundo Sophy Skhosana a master's degree candidate at the University of Mpumalanga doing research under the supervision of Professor Mahloaholo, hereby request you to participate in the research study that I am doing. My student number is 201504079.

The topic of the study is: Designing an effective phonics teaching strategy for grade one class in isiNdebele in the Nkangala District. Your child's school was selected because it is ideal for gathering information about the strategy to teach phonics in grade one class in isiNdebele language. These study aims to design an effective strategy that can be used to teach isiNdebele home language effectively I grade one class formulate effective strategy to teach phonics in isiNdebele home language in grade one class.

The study will entail working together with teachers, HODs, principal and parents, school; librarian and business man. This study is not supposed to be risky and no risky situation is expected. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and every participant has the right to withdraw without any repercussions from participating in the study at any time if a situation arises and make you feel comfortable. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback will be given to participants in writing and through word of mouth. I can also be contacted at: nomfundoskhosana00@gmail.com.

You should know that

- You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to.
- You may stop being in this study anytime if you feel uncomfortable.
- Your parents/ guardian were asked for permission for you to participate in this study. Even if they said yes, it is still your right to decline if you don't want to participate.
- You can ask any questions you have now or at a later stage.
- You or your parents can contact me any time if you need any clarity on any issues regarding the study.

Sign this form only if you

- Understood what the study entails
- Have all your questions answered
- Have spoken with your parents / guardian about this study
- Agree to take part in this study.

Child's Name _____

Date _____

Parent signature _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researchers signature: NS SKHOSANA

Name: NS

Date: 07-09-2023

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

Consent form for parents

Dear parent

My name is ~~Nomfundo Sophy Skhosana~~ a master's degree candidate at the University of Mpumalanga doing research under the supervision of Professor ~~Mahlopholo~~, hereby request you to participate in the research study that I am doing. My student number is 201504079.

The topic of the study is: Designing an effective phonics teaching strategy for grade one class in isiNdebele in the Nkangala District. Your child's school was selected because it is ideal for gathering information about the strategy to teach phonics in grade one class in isiNdebele language. These study aims to design an effective strategy that can be used to teach isiNdebele home language effectively I grade one class formulate effective strategy to teach phonics in isiNdebele home language in grade one class.

The study will entail working together with teachers, HODs, principal and parents, school; librarian and business man. This study is not supposed to be risky and no risky situation is expected. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and every participant has the right to withdraw without any repercussions from participating in the study at any time if a situation arises and make you feel comfortable. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Feedback will be given to participants in writing and through word of mouth.

One of the course requirements is to complete a classroom lessons and tasks in the classroom. The lessons and tasks will be done with minimum interference to the regular undertakings in the classrooms.

I appreciate your willingness to accommodate this request. If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact the head teacher and the principal. I may also be contacted at my email address: sibanyonidp10@gmail.com

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow your child to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child: _____

Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature:

Researcher's name (print)

NS Researcher's signature NS SKHOSANA Date: 07-09-2023

APPENDIX G: LESSON PLAN

Subject/ isifundo: isiNdebele

Grade/ ibanga: 1

Date/ilanga: 25-102023

Components	Skills/Amakghono	Teacher/Utijhere
Ukulalela nokukhuluma	Ukulalela nokuphendula imibuzo ngokupheleleko ngendatjana ekufundwe ngayo. Bazokwazi ngokudephileko ngetjhada u tj okufana Isakhiwo setjhada Umdumo Amagama Imitjho Noku tloleka kwalo	Ubavezela iinthombe ezinelitje kumtjhiningcondo. Abuye abeke ilitje etafuleni. Ubaqoqela indatjana ekhuluma ngelitje uyenza nemisikinyeko ekhabelana nendaba. Ubabuza imibuzo elandelako: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indatjina le ikhuluma ngani? • Ngelokwenzani ilitje leli? • Bobani amagama wabanzana abasendabeni? • Ngubani ogame ababele? • Lokha nakusilwako kusuke kuyokwenziwani Ukhetha abSONentwana ababili bona baqoqe intjanana ebegade abafundisa yona kusuka ekuthomeni ukuya emaphethelweni wayo
Amatjhada		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utijhere ubabuza ngetjhada eliswakala khulu kunawo woke. Ubuyekiza amatjhada ekufundwe ngawo. Ubafundisa ngetjhada u tj. Ukwakheka, umdumo, amagama, imitjho nokhunye ekukhambelana netjhada. Badakudlala umdlalo wokumadanisa isithjombene negama ebhodini. Uzakubnikela ama sledi bona bazakhele amagama amabili ngetjhada u tj.
Ukufunda ngokwabelana		
Ukufunda ngeenqhema		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ubanikela amaphepha atolwe indatjana bona bayifunde. Bazayinfunda ngeenqhema kuthi labo abasalele emva abanike amagama amahlanu bawafunde.
Ukutlola		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bazakutlola umberego encwadini ye DBE ikhasi 47. Uzakubanikza umberego wekhaya bona bayokuzitjamelana imitjho emide ngetjhada u tj.

<p>Umtlolo wesandla</p> <p>linsetjenziswa</p> <p>Amathuba ababileko</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abaphiwe ngokudlulelo • Labo abenqabo 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuma sledi wabo bazakuzijayeza ukutlola kuhle amagama anetjhada u tj • Itjhogo,ibhodi,amapensela,iincwadi,umtjhiningcondo,amaphepha wendatjana • Uzakubanika igama bazakhele ngalo imitjho emihlanu • Uzakubanikela amagama ano tj bawagadangise ukuze batjwayele ukutlola
--	--	---

APPENDIX H: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR



EDITING SERVICES

☎ 072 377 5585

✉ carmen@ufs.ac.za

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

This certifies that I have edited the work detailed below below for language.

Title:

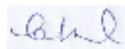
"DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE PHONICS TEACHING STRATEGY FOR GRADE ONE
CLASS IN ISINDEBELE IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT"

by

NOMFUNDO SKHOSANA

STUDENT NO. 201504079

Regards



Carmen Nel

30 January 2024

Professional editing of articles, thesis, dissertations and books

APPENDIX I: PLAGIARISM (TURN IT IN) REPORT

DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE PHONICS TEACHING STRATEGY FOR GRADE ONE CLASS IN ISINDEBELE IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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