WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HOME LANGUAGE AND LITERACY BACKGROUNDS OF AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING LEARNERS AND THEIR PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH?

ANTHEA ADAMS

A minithesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Artium in the faculty of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape.

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Supervisor: P. Plüddemann

Co- Supervisor: D. Foster

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NEW LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION POLICY (WCED)

PRIMARY SCHOOL

HEGEMONY OF ENGLISH

PARENTS/CARE-GIVERS

FAMILY LITERACY

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ABSTRACT

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HOME LANGUAGE AND LITERACY BACKGROUNDS OF AFRIKAANS-SPEAKING LEARNERS AND THEIR PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH?

ANTHEA ADAMS

MA minithesis, Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape.

In this study, which is an example of three ethnographic type case studies, I explore the relationship between the literacy backgrounds and home language of Afrikaans-speaking learners and their proficiency in English. My literature review mainly focuses on research pertaining to language-in-education in a South African context and where applicable, an international context. I identify two aspects, which are significant in the development of the three children's English proficiency. These aspects are the following:

(i) The difference between the school language (LoLT) and home language of the three children.

(ii) The difference between the school literacy practices and the home (or alternative) literacy practices.

My thesis takes the view of the New Literacy Studies that literacy is situated socially and that children's literacy practices are shaped at home. I discuss the terms *literacy practices* and *literacy events* in terms of the social practices approach to literacy.

Theories about reading and writing include the emergent literacy approach according to which becoming literate is described as a process whereby reading, writing and oral language are all integral parts of literacy learning. I discuss the English language proficiency of the three children in terms of Cummins' (1981) development of two continua, of context embedded, cognitively undemanding communication and context

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reduced, cognitively demanding communication, which is an extension of the BICS and CALP theory in language development.

I reflect on how my experience as an English teacher in a multicultural township school indicates that the hegemony of English may influence School Governing Bodies to adopt assimilationist language policies. With reference to literacy, the term "assimilationist" refers to people choosing to learn a high-status language to the detriment of their own home language/s. The implications of such language choices are the reinforcement of English and the continuing low status of their home language/s. I conclude this mini-thesis by making recommendations to stakeholders in education.

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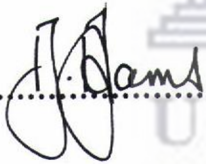
DECLARATION

I declare that this mini-thesis titled What is the relationship between the home language and literacy backgrounds of Afrikaans-speaking learners and their proficiency in English?, is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

ANTHEA ADAMS **November 2003**

SIGNED:  ....

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Introduction

During the early 1990s, the South African Education Departments were still racially segregated and student teachers like myself were trained to teach in cultural and linguistic settings similar to what we ourselves had experienced at school. As we entered the teaching profession, our perceptions about language and culture in a classroom setting remained unchallenged, probably because we shared the same cultural and linguistic identity as our learners. However, after the first democratic elections in 1994 and subsequent political developments, several schools experienced an influx of culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

As a result of teacher rationalization during the late 1990s, I was re-deployed to a newly built township school on the Cape Flats, which accommodated linguistically diverse learners and teachers. At the same time, curricular changes included Curriculum 2005, which is the South African version of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Curriculum 2005 introduced a shift from teacher-centred approaches to learner-centred, participatory approaches. My colleagues and I were faced with several challenges, which included the successful implementation of a new curriculum as well as having to accept that our teaching methods learnt at college were outdated and ineffective in this multilingual, multicultural setting.

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Based on poor assessment results and personal observation most teachers agreed that the current language policy of the school was detrimental to the learners' academic performance. Xhosa- and Afrikaans speaking parents decided on English as the medium of instruction or language of learning and teaching (LoLT). The LoLT frustrated both teachers and learners who were already engaged in a daily struggle in coping with the demands of Outcomes Based Education. Learners who were eloquent in their home languages were being 'silenced' as they struggled to grasp or relate basic concepts in English. However, when playing amongst their friends on the playground, these learners appeared to be fluent in English. Since these learners only started learning Afrikaans and Xhosa as subjects from the onset of grade four, they subsequently lacked the required written and reading proficiency in their home languages expected at grade four levels. Thus, the reason why the current language

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policy of the school opposes recommendations pertaining to additive bilingualism as contained in the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) 1997, is because parents want an English-only policy for their children.

These challenges generated my interest in the relationship between language proficiency and academic performance. Language proficiency refers to a person's skill in using a language for a specific purpose (Kaschula & Anthonissen 1995: 71). (Cummins 2000: 54, 58) makes a distinction between conversational aspects of proficiency in a language and academic aspects. Conversational aspects are termed basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and academic aspects are termed cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP).

My initial research orientation was a combination of a quantitative and an ethnographic research orientation. I wanted to focus on the relationship between the language proficiency of grade four Xhosa- and Afrikaans-speaking learners and their literacy backgrounds and home language/s. I worked with two sets of data, the quantitative study of the larger group of one-hundred-and twenty learners and the smaller interpretive study of twelve learners. Unfortunately, I was unable to balance these two research orientations. As the interpretive study of the twelve learners also required a 'deeper' ethnographic interpretation, it seemed logical to shift my initial focus (i.e. from a quantitative orientation to an interpretive orientation). The data collected in the quantitative study, proved useful in narrowing down a sample of twelve learners. These twelve learners were further narrowed down to three and I proceeded to collect more interpretative data from this smaller sample. My research topic thus shifted from a quantitative approach to a qualitative paradigm. My dissertation titled "What is the relationship between the home language and literacy backgrounds of Afrikaans-speaking learners and their proficiency in English?" is an example of a case-study with an ethnographic orientation.

As the annual monthly income per household suggests (Table 1), the school where this research was conducted is situated in a poor community on the Cape Flats. When established during 1989/90, this working-class community became one of the first areas in the country where people were racially, culturally, and linguistically integrated.

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Table 1: Socio-Economic characteristics of the Area

Socio-Economic characteristics: Source: 1996 CENSUS	
Total Population	**34306**
Population Density	**79.49**
Total Households	**6994**
Average Household Size	**4.9**
Median Annual Household Income	**19536**
Per Capita Monthly Income	**436**
Area Size	**431.6021**

In this community, people have very few material resources. Due to the population density and other socio-economic factors, the unemployment and crime rate is very high. As a result of this high unemployment and an extremely low annual household income, the majority of parents are unable to pay their children's school fees. Although this community is spread over a fairly large area, the average household size indicates that people's living space is extremely crowded. People in this community are dependent upon each other for their safety and sometimes even their livelihood. They also rely on their neighbours and friends for reading materials such as newspapers and magazines. It is highly likely that these social factors negatively influence the learners' academic performance.

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The School, completed in 1998, is a very young school. It is one of four primary schools in the area. It is also one of three schools which have a school population that is culturally and linguistically, fairly heterogeneous. The school population reflects a linguistically diverse community. Children are exposed to three or more languages on a daily basis. The following table reflects the linguistic make-up of the school:

Table 2: Language Profile of the School

Learners by Home Language, 2001 (Source: WCED EMIS)	
Afrikaans	**324 (25.3%)**
English	**29 (2.3%)**
IsiXhosa	**886 (71.3%)**
Other	**13 (0.1%)**
Total	**1242 (100%)**

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As Table 2 indicates, Xhosa-speaking learners are in the majority and Afrikaans-speaking learners are in the minority. English-speaking learners and learners who have other home language/s, form a very small component of the school population. Xhosa-speaking learners are also in the majority in each classroom.

Table 3: Language Profile of the teaching Staff

Teachers by Home Language, 2001(Source: Language Questionnaire)	
Afrikaans	**5 (13.8%)**
Afrikaans + English	**9 (25%)**
English	**4 (11.1%)**
IsiXhosa	**17 (47.2%)**
Other	**1 (2.7%)**
Total	**36 (100%)**

Although the Xhosa-speaking learners are the majority component of the school population, the teaching staff at the School is almost equally represented. Nearly fifty percent of the teachers are Xhosa-speaking and the rest of the teachers have either Afrikaans, English or a combination of Afrikaans and English as home language/s. The data for those teachers, who indicted an Afrikaans-English combination as home language, are indicative of the language shift amongst Afrikaans-speaking people in the Western Cape towards English. All of these teachers indicated that, although they speak Afrikaans to family members and friends, they speak English to their children.

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The School Governing Body members confirmed that the school does not have a written language policy and that their decision to implement English as the Language of Learning and Teaching was based on parents' wishes to integrate learners culturally and linguistically. This decision was also indicative of parents' awareness of the hegemony of English[1] and their subsequent unspoken request to the school to provide their children with the required skills in English that would enable them to function successfully in broader society. It is thus not surprising that these parents opted for an English-only language policy since they themselves were subjected to mother-tongue language policies, which were firstly, forced upon them and secondly,

[1] See Chapter 2.7.

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which they associated with racism and an inferior education. The School Governing Body failed to stipulate how it intended to promote multilingualism within the school. They were also not familiar with the recommendations with regard to Language policy in the following documents:

- The new South African Constitution (RSA 1996)
- The Language in Education Policy (DoE 1997)

Besides the home-school language mismatch, there is also a definite mismatch between the language policy of the school and its implementation. Xhosa-speaking teachers mostly translate from English to Xhosa while Afrikaans-speaking teachers mostly translate from English to Afrikaans. Despite this mismatch, English remains the language of assessment.

Thus, it is obvious that teachers at this particular school face a high degree of linguistic diversity. Classrooms mirror the language profile of the school as they consist of learners who have no or very little proficiency in English and learners whose home language is either isiXhosa or Afrikaans. However, teachers and learners make use of coping strategies like code switching and peer interpreting to facilitate better understanding and to communicate across linguistic, racial and cultural lines.

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Teachers therefore also rely heavily on learners who are proficient in English to translate and explain concepts to the rest of the class. As mentioned earlier, a range of social factors also impedes learners' educational development. I therefore wanted to determine to what extent the literacy practices of the learners and their parents/caregivers relate to the learners' proficiency in English.

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Chapter 1 Language Policy in Education

1.1 Language Policy during 1948-2001

As language is a determinant in educational success (Desai 1994: 24-25), this chapter introduces a historical overview of the language in education policies and how these language policies affected the learners subjected to these policies. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of mother tongue instruction and its educational advantages for learners. The issue of mother tongue education is a complex issue as it is a universally acknowledged good pedagogy. I also discuss in what way African-language speaking learners had an early-exit model of bilingual education that implies subtractive bilingualism whereas speakers of English and Afrikaans enjoyed a limited form of additive bilingualism. The section on policy review contains a brief outline of developments in education policy after 1996. I also discuss the aims of the new language in education policy (LiEP) of 1997 as well as its implications for multilingual classrooms. Reference to local and international research illustrates how these concerns pertaining to language policies and media of instruction are not isolated cases, but resonate globally.

1.1.1 Policies for 'African'[2] language speaking Learners

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Language policy is one mechanism for locating language within social structure so that language determines who has access to political power and economic resources (Bamgbose 2000: 16). Thus, language policy is one mechanism by which dominant groups establish hegemony in language use. Broom (2000: 8) similarly states that language policies in education are inextricably linked to political ideologies and are seldom decided solely on educational grounds.

[2] Although I use the terms 'African', 'coloured' and 'white' when referring to learners of a particular ethnicity, I do so for historical reasons and lack of a better term and not because I agree with such racially derogatory terms.

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The Language-in-Education policies in South Africa during 1948 – 1994 were based on racial and linguistic discrimination. During this period, language development became directly linked to political ideology (LANGTAG 1996: 79). The Nationalist Party government designed language–in-education policies to ensure racial segregation and a hierarchical society (De Klerk 2002: 33). These language policies were a central component of apartheid education as they were instrumental in achieving the goals of separate and unequal development for the dominant minority and social and economic under-development for the marginalized majority (Heugh 1995: 42).

The nationalist government implemented societal multilingualism in order to divide and separate ethnic groups (Broom 2000: 5, Alexander 1989: 21). The tabling of the Eiselen Report in 1955 resulted in the Department of Bantu Education implementing Afrikaans as well as English as joint media of instruction in the secondary school after eight years of mother tongue instruction in the primary phase. This was done in an attempt to ensure the status of Afrikaans (Macdonald 1990: 88).

By 1975, the two official languages, English and Afrikaans were introduced as media of instruction for standard 5 (grade 7). Learners' resistance to this discriminatory education policy culminated in the Soweto uprising of 1976 (Alexander 2000: 17). Learners protested against the dual-medium instruction and against being forced to learn Afrikaans, which they regarded as the language of the oppressor.

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Afrikaans thus became stigmatised and continued to decline amongst this sector of the population (LANGTAG 1996: 80). Lacking scientific and technological terminology, the indigenous languages were deliberately underdeveloped to perform low status functions whereas English and Afrikaans were developed into dynamic languages for high status functions in modern, high status domains (De Klerk 2002: 33). Adegbija (1994: 4) mentions similar findings in an international context, namely Sub-Saharan Africa. Barton and Hamilton (2000: 9-10) define domains as "structured, patterned contexts within which literacy is used and learned." In this regard, 'high-status domains' refer to formally structured institutions such as education and the workplace (ibid. 2000: 10). Furthermore, the underdevelopment of the indigenous languages implied that they were not sufficient vehicles for instruction and learning in the higher

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grades and at tertiary level (Macdonald 1990: 42). Most schools chose to continue with English as LoLT as a means of rejecting Afrikaans. However, learners started learning Afrikaans as a third subject from the beginning of standard 1 (grade 3) (ibid. 1990: 38).

1.1.2 Cummins: Theories on Bilingualism

I include Cummins' theories on bilingualism here, as they are useful when discussing language proficiency.[3] According to Cummins'common underlying proficiency model, individuals are able to transfer what they learnt in the home language to an additional language. This is because they have a central operating system whereby languages are interactive and transfer readily. However, if children are forced to operate in an insufficiently developed additional language, the system will not function at its best (Baker 1993: 132-134).

Cummins distinguishes between two thresholds in home language development namely 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS) and 'cognitive academic language proficiency' (CALP) (Baker 1993: 138). The lower threshold is the minimum amount of home language academic proficiency necessary to make a positive impact on additional language academic proficiency. This is known as 'basic interpersonal communicative skills' (BICS). The higher threshold is the amount of home language competence necessary to reap the cognitive benefits of bilingualism. This is known as 'cognitive academic language proficiency' (CALP) (Krashen 1996: 11).

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The two languages of a bilingual can develop independently of each other up to the BICS level, i.e. for communicating in everyday contexts. However, the two languages work together interdependently, when it is necessary to function at the CALP level, e.g. using a language in a decontextualised and cognitively demanding situation such as having to engage successfully with an unseen text whereby no background knowledge has been given (Luckett 1995: 75). Its implication is that the level of competence learners may reach in their additional language in CALP depends to some

[3] See 2.4 for a detailed discussion on Language Proficiency.

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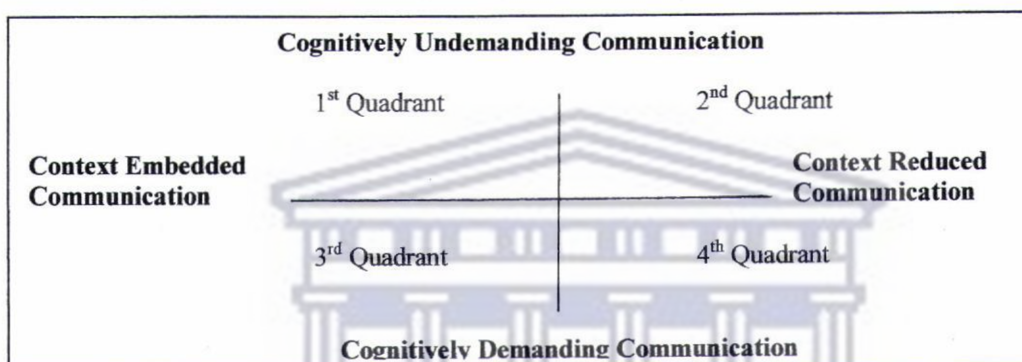
extent on the stage of development in their home language. It is therefore imperative that learners learn to think and function in their home language up to the CALP level. This will enable them to reach CALP in their additional language as well, because the cognitive skills they have already acquired in their home language are easily transferred to the additional language. Cummins'development of the thresholds theory is represented in the following diagram:

Diagram A: Cummins' thresholds theory



(Baker 1993: 139)

Cognitively Undemanding Communication and Cognitively Demanding Communication concern communicative proficiency. The first dimension refers to the amount of contextual cues available to a learner. Context embedded communication exists when there is a good degree of support in communication e.g. via body language. By pointing to objects, using gestures and intonation, children give and receive plenty of cues to help understand the message. In context reduced communication there are very few cues to the meaning that is being transmitted. Learners have to rely on the words in a sentence in order to make meaning. Such an example of context reduced communication can be found in the classroom when meaning is only restricted to words in a text (Baker 1993: 139).

The second dimension is the level of cognitive demand required in communication. Cognitively demanding communication may occur in a classroom where much information at a challenging level needs processing quickly. Cognitively undemanding communication occurs when a person has the mastery of language skills

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sufficient to enable easy communication. Such an example would be a conversation with a friend or shop assistant, where the processing of information is relatively simple and straightforward (Baker 1993: 139-140).

Surface fluency or basic interpersonal communication skills fit into the first quadrant (See diagram). Thus, BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills) is context embedded, cognitively undemanding use of a language. Language that is cognitively and academically more advanced (CALP) fits into the fourth quadrant, as it is context reduced and cognitively demanding. Cummins' theory suggests that additional language competency in the first quadrant (surface fluency) develops relatively independently of home language fluency. In comparison, context reduced, cognitively demanding communication develops inter-dependently and can be promoted by either language or by both languages (the home language and additional language) in an interactive way. Cummins' theory suggests that bilingual education will only be successful when learners have enough first or additional language proficiency to function successfully in a context reduced, cognitively demanding situation of the classroom.

One of the main findings of Macdonald's (1990) Threshold Project indicates that standard 3 (grade 5) learners were inadequately prepared for the sudden transition to learning ten subjects through the medium of English. Learners in DET schools only had exposure to about 800 words in English by the end of four years of school. Their limited exposure to English was highly detrimental, as they needed a vocabulary of approximately 5000 words in order to cope with the demands of standard 3 (grade 5) and beyond (ibid. 1990: 48). It is highly likely that these learners may have had surface fluency or basic interpersonal communication skills, but not cognitive academic language proficiency that implies functioning at context reduced, cognitively demanding levels.

The following factors contributed to significant differences in educational success rates for learners belonging to the different racial groups:

- Disparities in basic and supplementary provision of resources (such as textbooks and monetary allocations per learner). In comparison to schools for

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other racial groups, 'white' education received the biggest financial allocation and DET schools the smallest.

- Varying standards in teacher qualifications.
- Differences in the provision of qualified teachers.
- Differences in the teacher-learner ratios.

A society's awareness, progress, general well-being and productivity are affected by the quality of its education (Adegbija 1994: 4). By controlling the quality of education, the Nationalist Party government thus succeeded in barring learners from language groups other than English or Afrikaans from achieving success in the societal hierarchy (NEPI 1992: 27-32).

1.2 Policies for speakers of Afrikaans and English

From the onset of their schooling career until standard 10 (grade twelve), learners belonging to other racial groups had mother tongue education with the introduction of the additional language as a subject alongside the home language. Unlike learners in DET schools, these learners had maximum exposure to both languages, (Heugh 1995: 43–44, De Klerk 2002: 33-34).

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Academically, these learners were privileged as their education system had the following advantages namely:

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- The high status of their home languages, English and/or Afrikaans was reinforced in the community.
- Cognitively they were adequately equipped with the necessary resources, which were a prerequisite for academic achievement (Broom 2000: 11).

The decision to teach English as subject from 1948 onwards and to separate English and Afrikaans speakers for the formative years of schooling, was a mechanism used by the Nationalist government to protect the Afrikaans language and culture against the hegemony of English (NEPI 1992: 30-31). All the provinces except the province then known as Natal, accepted recommendations concerning mother tongue instruction tabled by the Eiselen Commission in 1955. The Eiselen Commission

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recommended the mother tongue as LoLT up to standard 4 (grade 6). Parents could choose the LoLT if both languages were spoken at home. From Grade 1 onward, both official languages were compulsory school subjects.

In 1967, the Nationalist government tightened its control in education with the National Education Policy Act (Act No 39). This Act prescribed the mother tongue (English or Afrikaans), as LoLT for 'coloureds' and Central government had to oversee the implementation of this policy. With these measures, the Nationalist government entrenched separate education for English and Afrikaans-speaking learners on the one hand and learners in DET schools and ''white'' learners on the other hand. Learners received language instruction in the additional language, which was the other official language from standard one (grade 3).

Academically, most 'coloured' learners struggled because of the mismatch between the variety of Afrikaans spoken at home and the standard variety used at school. The standard variety, which was taught and examined in school, differed from the informal variety, which learners used with family members, friends and people in their community. As learners were not allowed to use the spoken variety in school, they were beginning to regard all spoken varieties other than the standard variety as inferior. The *inherent value hypothesis* stating that one variety is better or more beautiful than the other is applicable (Appel and Muysken 1987: 20). Traditionally, schools had "communicated a sense of shame in regard to children's language and cultural background rather than a sense of affirmation and pride" (Cummins 2000: 33).

1.3 A Reformulated Language in Education Policy

1.3.1 The Language in Education Policy (1997)

Numerous interactions between stakeholders (such as language strategists, academics and political activists and non-governmental organizations) formed part of a process, which resulted in the 1996 Constitution in which eleven official languages were declared namely: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setwana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu. These eleven official languages formed a

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central component of the reformulated Language in Education Policy for public schools by the former Education Minister, Sibusiso Bengu, on 14 July 1997. This Policy was based on the recommendations of the Language Plan Task Group (LANGTAG) Report of 1996.

The Language in Education Policy (DoE 1997) acknowledged that discriminatory language policies of the past affected the access of African language speaking learners to the education system as well as whether they would achieve success within it. Therefore, its aims included the following:

(a) To promote multilingualism.
(b) To promote the use of students' home languages i.e. home language(s) as language/s of learning and teaching (LoLT) in the context of an additive multilingual paradigm and with due regard to the wishes and attitudes of parents, teachers and students.
(c) To encourage all South African students to acquire at least two but preferably three South African languages, even if at different levels of proficiency, by means of a variety of additive bi-, or multilingual strategies. Learners whose home language is either English or Afrikaans are strongly encouraged to learn an African language as an additional language.
(d) To promote the linguistic development and modernisation of the African languages as well as their equality of social status.
(e) To equip all students with the language skills needed to participate meaningfully in the political economy of South Africa.
(f) To cultivate respect for all the languages used in South Africa including Sign Language.

The most important feature of the LiEP (1997) is its commitment to an additive bilingualism approach. This implies the following:

(i) A commitment to 'mother-tongue' instruction i.e. L1-medium education.
(ii) Parallel-medium schools for economic, political and cultural ('nation-building') reasons.

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(iii) Dual-medium schools as the ideal until the development of the African languages as languages of high-status functions puts these languages on par with Afrikaans and English (Alexander 2000: 17).

Significantly and in opposition to common belief, LiEP (1997) does not prevent access to English, nor does it dilute or minimise learners' opportunity to gain meaningful access to English (Heugh 2000: 6). Contrary to previous language-in-education policies, LiEP (1997) supports the maintenance of home language/s, while, simultaneously, it encourages the acquisition of additional language/s.

1.3.2 Policy Review

Apart from the LiEP (1997), several other policies with particular reference to language and literacy issues impact on education in South Africa (Plüddemann 1998: 443). The South African Schools Act (DoE 1996) is one of the language policy changes designed to intersect with LiEP (1997). This act grants school governing bodies, consisting of a majority component of parents, the authority to determine the language of instruction at their particular school (Heugh 2000: 8, Plüddemann et al. 2000: 15).

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Curricular changes include Curriculum 2005 (C2005), the South African version of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) (Plüddemann 1998: 443). C2005 is the first version of the post-apartheid National Curriculum Statement. However, Plüddemann et al. (2000: 16) highlight some of the inconsistencies in government policy as they describe Curriculum 2005 as not fully supporting the notion of Additive Bilingualism. They draw attention to similar concerns expressed by others regarding government's apparent lack of commitment to eradicate the deficit educational model of the past:

(i) Curriculum 2005 does not affirm the 'cognitive role of the home language'

(ii) The singular reference made to 'language of learning' instead of 'language(s) of learning.

In Curriculum 2005, language issues are centrally addressed in only one of the eight learning areas namely Language, Literacy and Communication. The critical outcomes of this learning area include the following:

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- Learners make and negotiate meaning.
- Learners show critical awareness of language use.
- Learners respond to aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts (Plüddemann 1998: 444).

Outcomes Based Education presents an obstacle for most teachers in 'black' schools due to the shortage of well-qualified teachers and the ongoing legacy of poor resources and large classes (ibid. 1998: 444). Likewise, Brock-Utne (2001: 127) observes the role of African languages in South Africa as not being adequately addressed regardless of policy statements. Braam et al. (2000: 14) also refer to the continued low status of isiXhosa as a language of print and the absence of a culture of reading and writing in the African languages.

Although the Department of Education initiated discussions on curriculum and language policy, it failed to integrate these two aspects by not developing the new curriculum, Curriculum 2005 and the LiEP (1997) in conjunction with each other. This was in spite of an appeal made by PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) to the Department of Education for the curriculum review and the language policy review processes to be integrated and conducted simultaneously.

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On a national level, the government has been unprepared for the following:

(i) A shift from a language policy that accords official status to two languages (English/Afrikaans) only, to one that also includes nine indigenous languages.

(ii) The implications of promoting multilingualism with regard to teacher training and development.

Interventions in this field came in the following forms:

(i) The Further Diploma in Multilingual Education (FDE), a credit-bearing course, which is a joint initiative by PRAESA and the School of Education, University of the Western Cape.

(ii) A one-year distance education course for in-service teachers in multilingual classrooms, offered by the NGO sector, ELTIC in the

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Gauteng province and other shorter courses presented by the Primary Science Programme in the Western and Eastern Cape provinces (Plüddemann 1998: 443-445).

The Curriculum Development Directorate of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has also begun to show practical commitment to the implementation of the new language-in-education policy. This was done by supporting initiatives like the projected in-service training of subject advisors regarding appropriate strategies for multilingual classrooms and the distribution of guidelines pertaining to language teaching in multilingual classrooms, to all its schools. These guidelines and information booklet include the following:

- PRAESA *Family Guide to Multilingual Education* (Bloch & Mahlalela 1998)
- A video project in association with Edumedia and the WCED titled *Language Teaching in Multilingual Classrooms* (WCED 2002)
- A multilingual information booklet on Language and Learning *Language is for Learning, Taal is vir Leer, Ulwimi lolokufunda* (WCED 2002).

Since 1995, all public schools in South Africa have been open to learners of all races. Although the governments' aim was to raise the status of all languages in order to accommodate unity and diversity, English as LoLT continues to dominate in most schools. One of the factors of the current situation is the decision of school governing bodies to move away from the mother tongue as LoLT. Generally, this decision is based on social and political reasons instead of pedagogical reasons (WCED 2002: 7).

1.3.3 The Western Cape Language Policy for Primary Schools (LPPS)

In February 2002, Western Cape Education Minister, André Gaum, appointed a Ministerial Task Team to develop a strategy for expanding mother-tongue education in the province. The report titled "Language Policy in the Primary Schools of the Western Cape" was completed in 2002 (DoE 2002). The Language Policy Report recommends that the Western Cape Education Department should:

- Implement a policy of mother-tongue-based bilingual education in Grades R to 6 in all primary schools in the Western Cape.

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- Provide incentives to guide all children towards choosing the third official language of the province as their second additional language.

The Language Policy Report recommends a range of measures needed to implement this policy that includes the following:

- Training of teachers.
- Financial investment in preparing learning support materials in the three official languages of the province (English, Xhosa and Afrikaans).
- A campaign to promote awareness of the benefits of mother-tongue-based bilingual education.

As learners whose home language is Afrikaans or English already have access to mother-tongue instruction, the Task Team concentrated on Xhosa in developing the strategy for mother-tongue instruction. According to the Report, mother-tongue-based bilingual education includes the following:

- Using the mother tongue of the child as a formative language of learning and teaching from Grade R or Grade 1 to the end of Grade 6.
- Introducing the first additional language as a subject as soon as possible in the foundation phase, including Grade R.
- In cases where parents or guardians prefer a dual-medium approach, gradually using the first additional language as a supportive language of learning and teaching as and when the children have adequate competence.
- Ideally, using the home and first additional languages as complementary languages of teaching and learning on a 50/50 basis by the end of Grade 6.

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The Ministerial Task Team states that mother-tongue education results in cognitive advantages for learners, especially in the first years of primary school. The cognitive advantages bilingual children have over monolingual children are emphasized. It is also confirmed that children who are forced to learn through an unfamiliar language are in most cases extremely disadvantaged and unable to catch up academically. The report reiterates that most children need at least twelve years to become competent in their home language (WCED 2002).

Further curricular developments include the issuing of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) grades R-9 (Schools), in 2002, to all schools and

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educational institutions. The revised curriculum aims to strengthen Curriculum 2005. In the revised curriculum, learning outcomes for the general education and training Band Grades R-9 (for schools) are built on the critical and developmental outcomes that were inspired by the 1996 Constitution (DoE 2002: 1).

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Chapter 2 Bilingual and Multilingual Education

This chapter provides interpretations of the terms bilingualism and multilingualism in a South African context. A brief overview of international as well as South African research pertaining to bilingual and multilingual education in the classroom is also given. This chapter contains a brief discussion of the 'monolingual habitus', which is necessary in order to theorise the concept of 'hegemony'. The link between the 'monolingual habitus', and Delpit's (1995: 24) concept 'the culture of power' is also made as well as how these two concepts are applicable in our multilingual classrooms. I also discuss how social institutions such as schools support dominant literacies at the cost of alternative literacy practices.

2.1 Multilingualism in Education

Given South Africa's heterogeneous context, most schools are multilingual in composition. Braam et al. (2000: 10-11) define a multilingual classroom as a situation of linguistic diversity among learners. In the Western Cape, linguistically diverse situations largely occur in English- and/or Afrikaans medium schools that were historically classified as 'coloured' and 'white' schools. The enrolment of increasing numbers of Xhosa-speaking learners means that there are at least two and often three languages in the classroom. The school where I conducted my research reflects the cultural diversity of the surrounding community in terms of its teaching and non-teaching staff and learners. In these multilingual classrooms the linguistic composition of the classroom is somewhat less homogeneous, as many learners have more than one home language e.g. Tswana, isiXhosa and Afrikaans.

Successful multilingual learning implies, firstly, that all stakeholders (such as parents, teachers and learners) positively recognise the multilingual character of classrooms. Secondly, it implies that teachers must be willing to use the languages or varieties of languages learners are familiar or comfortable with (ELTIC 1997).

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2.2 An Additive Approach to Multilingualism

Bloch and Mahlalela (1998: 21) unpack an additive approach to multilingualism as the use of a learner's home language from the onset of education and its continuation as a language of teaching for at least 50% of teaching time throughout schooling. One (or more) additional language/s, e.g. English, is added to this, without replacing the home language in all learning areas.

As LiEP (1997) supports the maintenance of home language/s, while, simultaneously, encouraging the acquisition of additional language/s, it aims to promote Additive Bilingualism. Bilingual and multilingual education, which is based on mother-tongue instruction, is in a much better position (than monolingual education) to promote individual empowerment (Alexander 2003: 3).

The various development programmes offered to learners at tertiary level to facilitate their access to knowledge via English bear testimony to the failure of mainly English policies at school level. This situation is not unique to South Africa, but takes place globally. October's (2002) research on the 2000 matriculation results in the Western Cape shows irrefutably that learners who were taught and assessed in their home language (English or Afrikaans) performed outstandingly better than those learners (mainly Xhosa L1 speakers) who were taught and assessed in their first additional language (mainly English). Although these research findings do not suggest that language medium is the only factor determining academic performance, the relationship between language medium and academic performance is extremely significant (WCED 2002).

Desai (2001: 330-331) cautions against the "choice factor" in the education policy[4]. The Western Cape Language Policy Task Team has a different perspective on choice versus compulsion. The Task Team recommends the institution of incentives to guide students towards learning the third official language of the province as their second additional language (SAL). A system of incentives should also be introduced to

[4] See LiEP (1997) and theWestern Cape Language Policy for Primary Schools (LPPS).

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schools to encourage them to adopt language policies in keeping with the objectives pertaining to additive multilingualism in the LiEP (1997). Such a system of incentives should also encourage teachers to improve their proficiency and classroom practice in all three languages of the province (English, Xhosa and Afrikaans). These incentives need not be of a monetary nature, but can include the following:

(i) A higher categorization for such schools.

(ii) A more generous staff allocation for such schools.

(iii) Language proficiency endorsements on professional qualifications.

(iv) Enhanced promotion prospects for teachers in particular school contexts (WCED 2002).

The Six-Year Primary Project in Nigeria is an example of an additive model in which the educational advantages of sustained mother tongue instruction were significantly shown. Bamgbose (2000: 52) refers to a superior performance by those learners taught in their mother tongue throughout their six years of primary education as opposed to those learners initially taught in their home language and later in English. He denounces the myth of 'earlier means better' by concluding that a transition from a mother tongue medium to English in the fourth year of primary education may not be the right policy after all (ibid. 2000: 52, 79). Likewise, Pretorius (2002: 2) refers to the poor academic performance of many students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, who study through the medium of a language that is not their home language, as a characteristic feature of the South African education system.

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2.3 A Subtractive Approach to Multilingualism

Bloch and Mahlalela (1998: 21) define a subtractive approach as a situation in which the learner's mother tongue/home language is used up to a certain point as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and then dropped in favour of another language. Subtractive bilingualism often occurs when the learner's home language is not valued and supported by the education system (Luckett 1995: 75).

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2.4 Language Proficiency

Language proficiency refers to a person's skill in using a language for a specific purpose (Kaschula & Anthonissen 1995: 71). Cummis (2000: 54, 58) makes a distinction between conversational aspects of proficiency and academic aspects. Conversational aspects of proficiency refer to basic interpersonal conversational skills (BICS) and academic aspects of proficiency refer to cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins' (2000: 68) context-embedded/context-reduced framework is useful in explaining the conversational/academic distinction (See Chapter 1, 1.1).

Although Cummins (2000: 68-69) explains his context-embedded/context-reduced framework in terms of a Northern perspective by referring to immigrant additional language learners, it is also applicable in a South African context where Afrikaans- and Xhosa speaking learners are enrolled in English-medium schools. Conversational abilities (1st Quadrant) in an additional language develop relatively quickly because learners make use of interpersonal and contextual cues to deduce meaning. These forms of communication make relatively few cognitive demands on the individual. However, it is more difficult for these learners to master the academic functions of language (4th Quadrant). This is because context reduced, cognitively demanding uses of language require high levels of cognitive involvement and are minimally supported by contextual and interpersonal cues. Thus, academic language proficiency refers to "the ability to make complex meanings explicit in either oral or written modalities by means of *language itself* rather than by means of contextual or paralinguistic cues (e.g. gestures, intonation etc.)"

Research findings in ethnographic studies[5] confirmed the conversational/academic distinction in language proficiency. There is a difference between the language used in everyday, face-to-face interaction and the language of education. This distinction is known as *playground language* and *classroom language* (Cummins 2000: 69).

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[5] See Gibbons, P. (1991: 3).

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Playground language refers to the language that enables children to make friends, participate in games and a variety of everyday activities in order to develop and maintain social contacts. Playground language usually occurs in face-to-face interaction and is highly dependent on the physical and visual context (such as gesture and body language). Playground language differs from the language used in classrooms, as it normally does not require the language associated with higher-order thinking skills (such as hypothesizing, evaluating, inferring, generalizing, predicting or classifying). These higher-order thinking skills are related to learning and the development of cognition. As they occur in all areas of the curriculum, they are imperative for academic development (ibid. 2000: 69-70).

Research suggests that language is interactive and transfers readily. This implies that lessons learnt in one language (e.g. a home language) can be transferred into the other language (e.g. an additional language), or vice versa. Language proficiency can best be explained in terms of Cummins' common underlying proficiency (CUP) model of bilingualism.[6]

As mentioned earlier, research in a South African context (e.g. October 2002, Macdonald 1993), indicated that proficiency in a language would have a definite impact on the way learners learn in that language. In these two studies, learners have not acquired enough of the target language to be able to learn in it at the time of transition from the main language. However, the LoLT should not be regarded as the only determinant of educational success.

Learning in an additional language co-exists with a variety of other factors, such as literacy provision or class background (NCCRD 2000). Therefore, in addition to linguistic factors, social and cultural factors may also influence educational achievement.

Likewise, the NEPI study (1992: 32) acknowledges that instruction in the mother tongue is not the only determinant of educational success by referring to the importance of teacher training for the use of the LoLT. The NEPI study substantiates

[6] See Chapter 1, 1.1.1 for a detailed discussion of Cummins' language proficiency models of bilingualism.

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this with reference to the failure rate in DET schools that were highest in grade one, when learners were learning in their home language/s. Research done by the Linguistics Department at the University of the Western Cape (1999)[7] corroborates arguments that learners at university-entry level will not do significantly better if writing exams or tests in their home language/s due to inter-related factors such as writing and learning styles acquired during school.

2.5 Cognitive Advantages

Children develop a strong foundation in thinking, reasoning and imagination when concepts are formed and learned in their mother tongue/home language (Bloch and Mahlalela 1998: 24). Heugh (2000: 12-14) cites a large body of South African research, which identified the importance of early mother tongue literacy and home language maintenance as imperative for successful education. Likewise, findings in the Threshold Project also indicated the vast difference in language task performance between learners with a high level of English proficiency and those with little or no English proficiency.

Bamgbose (2000: 3) advocates mother tongue instruction by stating that a learner's education is best begun in a language the learner has some competence in, preferably the mother tongue. The use of a language other than a learner's home language as a LoLT, particularly in early primary education is a case of language exclusion, since it ignores the language that the learner is already fairly proficient in. Furthermore, as Macdonald's (1990) research suggests, it becomes an uphill struggle for the learner to overcome difficulties of grasping new content presented in a foreign or unfamiliar language (ibid. 2000: 12).

Krashen (1996: 3, 6) takes a similar stance on mother tongue instruction by referring to one of the major rationales underlying bilingual education, namely that language is acquired by comprehension. When learners are given subject matter knowledge through their home language, they adjust more easily to their new situation and it makes the instruction they get in English more comprehensible. This is known as the

[7] Ongoing research not yet published.

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"input hypothesis" which states that language is acquired by the understanding of messages and by obtaining comprehensible input (Krashen 1993).

Brock-Utne (2001: 116) similarly states that learners who have learned to read in their mother tongue learn to read in an additional language more quickly than those who are first taught to read in the additional language. We learn to read by making sense of what we see on the page. If learning to read is accomplished by reading, learning to read in a language we already understand will be much easier. The ability to read transfers across languages; this implies that once you can read in one language you can read in another (Krashen 1996: 3-6). A central finding of Macdonald's (1990) Threshold Report, is that learners who switch to a new language as LoLT before sufficiently developing and learning the new target language will not succeed (Heugh 2000: 14).

Krashen (1996: 28) refers to international research indicating that reading in all languages is done and acquired in a similar way. These findings indicate that those who read well in the home language tend to read well in their additional language. This data also provides very strong support for Cummins' common underlying proficiency model, which implies that literacy development in one language provides a clear advantage in developing literacy in any other language.

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2.6 Societal Advantages

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An additive approach to multilingualism enhances learners' self-esteem as it allows them to feel confident about who they are and about their language. Given our multicultural environment, it is useful to speak more than one language. Importantly, getting to know people with different languages and cultural practices fosters better understanding and a valuing and respect of cultural differences (Bloch and Mahlalela 1998: 24).

Learners' self-confidence with regard to respect for and the use of their mother tongue or home language is one of the determining factors for their success in school. High levels of internal motivation are maintained when learners are not obliged to use the additional language (Macdonald 1990: 91). In making his case for mother tongue

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instruction, Bamgbose (2000: 24) refers to the societal advantages of initial literacy in a learner's home language, which is an easier transition from the home to the school. It is also likely to minimize dropout rates associated with inability to cope with an unfamiliar LoLT.

2.7 The "Monolingual Habitus[8]"

Ingrid Gogolin (1997: 41) describes the 'monolingual habitus' as the deep-seated habit of assuming monolingualism as the norm. The concept of 'monolingual habitus' is relevant to multilingual nations like South Africa where there is usually one language of power. This is the case in practice despite the Constitution of 1994 granting eleven official languages (ibid. 1997: 41).

The monolingual orientation, which can be observed among teachers in German and other European schools (also South African schools), is an intrinsic element of their professional *"habitus"* as members of the nation state school system. This professional *"habitus"* implies that the establishment of monolingualism in the official national language is an imperative in teachers' professional ethos. The 'monolingual *habitus*' has been built and secured through the traditions of the educational system itself. It also operates more effectively the less conscious the individual teacher is about its existence (ibid.1997: 42).

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This 'monolingual *habitus'* goes well with the concept of hegemony, particularly as the 'monolingual *habitus*' is a hindrance to learning in multilingual classes where learners are taught through the medium of English. These learners are considered as "minorities" in the sense that in practice, their languages are not accorded an equitable status. Alexander (2003: 3) urges the necessity of accepting the principles of mother-tongue education, which, in turn, involves liberating our minds from such restrictions of colonialist thinking and the 'monolingual habitus' or mindset.

Delpit (1995: 24-26) similarly talks about "the culture of power." She refers to five aspects of power namely:

[8] The concept of 'monolingual *habitus'* is inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's use of the term "*habitus*" for a modus, which generates dynamic changes in human activity (Gogolin 1997:41).

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"Issues of power are enacted in classrooms."

This includes the power of the teacher over the learners and the intimate link between schooling and the power individuals gain because of their economic status in the workplace. Cuvelier (2002: 47) identifies existing power relations between the teacher and the learners especially in cases where teaching is a one-way activity with the teacher in control.

This "culture of power" has prescribed codes or rules for those who are participating in power.

Learners who do not speak the standard variety of a particular language are discriminated against. These rules relate to linguistic forms, communicative strategies and presentation of self, i.e. how learners talk, write, dress and interact. Cuvelier (2002: 45) refers to this phenomenon as institutional culture and language.

These rules are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.

Children from middle-class homes do better in school than those from non- middle-class homes. This is because the culture of the school is based on the culture of the upper and middle classes, i.e. of those in power. This implies that success in institutions like schools, workplaces, etc. depends upon the acquisition of the culture of those who are in power.

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"If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier."

Members of any culture transmit information implicitly to co-members. When implicit codes are attempted across cultures, communication breaks down frequently. This communication break down can be avoided if members of different cultures inform each other about matters such as the appropriate dress code, interactional styles, embedded meanings, taboo words or actions, etc.

"Those with power are frequently least aware of or least willing to acknowledge its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence."

Teachers belonging to a different race, culture and social class than their learners are often reluctant to acknowledge their participation in the culture of power whereas

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their learners who are less powerful are most likely able to recognise the power variable.

In their comparison of the language context in The Hague and Greater Cape Town, Braam et al. (2000: 6) determine a similarity of the dynamics between the powerful or dominant language and the other languages in each context. "IsiXhosa, despite its status as an official language spoken by a large minority of Capetonians, remains in some respects as marginalized and is speakers as disempowered as immigrant language minority groups in Western Europe and North America." (ibid. 2000: 6)

The Basic Skills Agency (BSA) model of family literacy *(See Chapter 3)* illustrates how the educational authorities reach into children's homes by means of educational television programmes in order to guide parents in developing their children's literacy skills and, in doing so, change the literacy practices within the home. Such institutional intervention is part of contemporary power practice, which includes the power of the state to reach into and exert control over the daily lives of people (Pitt 2000: 108-120). The following are reasons why the BSA family literacy pedagogy fits into the above-mentioned theories of contemporary power practices and identity formation:

(i) In the joint activity strand of the model parents are guided towards early literacy activities and behaviour seen as appropriate by educational professionals.

(ii) To support institutional practices the emphasis is on parenting practices based on expert knowledge.

(iii) No opportunities are given to question and discuss parenting practices and whether these institutional practices are appropriate (ibid. 2000: 120-121).

The BSA model of family literacy marginalises social identities and perspectives on texts and practices that have their origin outside of school practices. (ibid. 2000: 121). Likewise, Barton and Hamilton (2000: 12) refer to socially powerful institutions such as schools supporting dominant literacy practices whereas other or alternative literacy practices which exist in peoples' everyday lives are less visible and less supported. Thus, social institutions and power relationships pattern literacy practices, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others.

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Chapter 3 Literacy Theory

This chapter contains a brief comparison of the two approaches to literacy namely the autonomous approach and the social practices approach. I also discuss the terms literacy events and literacy practices in terms of a social practices approach. This discussion is followed by a detailed account the BSA model of family literacy, which refers to parents being actively involved in the education of their children. The chapter concludes with brief theories on reading and writing.

Two approaches towards literacy can be identified namely:

1) The Autonomous approach
2) The Social practices approach

3.1 The Autonomous Approach

Those operating within the autonomous approach regard literacy as an individual attribute or ability (Wiley 1996: 31-33). Cognitive consequences result from the ability to use print rather than from the social practices in which it is used. According to the autonomous perspective, literacy is regarded as independent of and impartial towards any socio-political context. It also ignores social factors that affect individual motivation to succeed at becoming literate.

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Barton (1994: 11-19) also refers to the autonomous view of literacy being applied in education whereby stakeholders designed and implemented reading programmes based on a school-based definition of literacy as a set of cognitive skills, some of which were transferable. This skills-based approach implies that reading can be broken down into a set of skills and sub-skills.

3.2 The New Literacy Studies

3.2.1 The Social Practices Approach

Contrary to the Autonomous approach to literacy, the New Literacy Studies does not view literacy as a singular thing or activity, but advocates more contemporary

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approaches namely *literacies* as a plural set of social practices. This implies that literacy has a social meaning and that people make sense of literacy as a social phenomenon and their social construction of literacy is rooted in their attitudes, actions and learning (Barton 1994: 28). The social practices approach to literacy is based on the idea that reading, writing and meaning are always socially situated (Gee 2000: 189).

School literacy should be redefined to emphasise the study of multicultural literature in the following manner:

- School literacy is instructional practices that involve an active process of meaning making.
- It is writing instruction that makes students' background experiences central.
- It is also culturally responsive instruction.
- And it is the development of critical literacy (Plüddemann 1998: 447).

There are many specific literacies, each comprising an identifiable set of socially constructed practices based upon print and organized around beliefs about how the skills of reading and writing may, or perhaps should be used. It is therefore best to think in terms of literacies rather than literacy (Lankshear and Lawler 1987: 39, 43, 58). Each of these literacies involves control of discourses involving print. Discourses are a way of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people. Discourses are always and everywhere social. Therefore, language as well as literacy is always and everywhere integrated with and relative to social practices constituting particular discourses. Furthermore, language is inextricably bound up with ideology and cannot be analysed or understood apart from it (Gee 1990: xviii-xx).

The social practices approach values literacy programmes and policies that are built on the knowledge and resources people already have (Wiley 1996: 33). In general, literacy is equated with schooling, and schooling with education. This equation inevitably implies a break between the school and the literacy practices of the outside world (Plüddemann 1998: 449). In other words, there exists a difference between

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school literacy practices and home/alternative literacy practices. The Literacy Subcommittee of LANGTAG (1996: 137-138) views "schooled" literacy as only one kind of literacy practice and defines literacy as inclusive of a wider variety of literacy practices. Literacy is also viewed as a language skill and the ability to communicate in reading and writing a language is an important dimension of what it means to know a language. Given South Africa's multilingual culture and multilingual classrooms, the Subcommittee therefore recognizes the need to define broad definitions of literacy in multilingual terms. However, the notion of Literacy in more than one language as a desirable goal in a South African context seems to be problematic as it excludes monolingual immigrants.

Bloch (2000: 5) also regards literacy as a social activity as she believes that literacy development is a social, political and cultural process, which begins with meaningful interactions with written language. This ties in with Barton's (1994: 34-35) proposal of an ecological view of literacy whereby a social and psychological view of literacy are intertwined namely:

1) As social activity literacy can best be described in terms of the literacy practices, which people draw upon in literacy events.
2) People make use of different literacies, which are also associated with different domains in life such as home, school, church and the workplace.
3) People's literacy practices are situated in broader social relations.
4) Literacy is based upon a system of symbols used for communication and exists in relation to other systems of information exchange. It is a way of representing the world to others.
5) Our awareness, attitudes and values regarding literacy guide our actions.

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Barton (1994: 30) also refers to an ecological approach to literacy, which aims to understand how literacy is embedded in other human activity, its embeddedness in social life and in thought, and its position in history, language and learning. Street (1994) has criticised the expansion of literacy and the notion of multi-literacies whereas Barton and Hamilton (2000: 10-11) advocate the notion of different *literacies*. These authors state that practices involving different media or symbolic systems, such as film or computer, can be regarded as different literacies, as in *film literacy* and *computer literacy*. These practices are associated with particular aspects

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of cultural life and are often identifiable and named, as in academic literacy or work-place literacy. Thus, within a given culture, different literacies are associated with different domains of life.

3.2.2 Literacy Practices

Barton and Hamilton (2000: 7-8) define the notion of literacy practices as the basic unit of a social theory of literacy. What people do with literacy is called practices. These authors do not define practices as observable units of behaviour since it also involve values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships. Literacy practices refer to behaviour and the social and cultural conceptualisations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing (Plüddemann et al. 2000: 7-8). Practices internal to an individual include a person's awareness of literacy, construction of literacy and discourses of literacy, how literacy is talked about and made sense of.

At the same time, practices are the social processes, which connect people with one another. These social practices include shared cognitions represented in ideologies and social identities. Therefore, rather than as a set of properties residing in individuals, literacy practices are more usefully understood as existing in the relations between people, within groups and communities. The literal meaning of the word *practices* i.e. learning to do something by repetition, should not be attached to it, but rather its abstract meaning i.e. one that cannot wholly be contained in observable activities and tasks (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 8).

3.2.3 Literacy Events

Barton and Hamilton (2000: 8-9) define literacy events as activities where literacy has a role. Events are observable episodes that arise from practices and are shaped by them. The notion of events emphasises the situated nature of literacy, namely that it always exists in a social context. Many literacy events are regular, repeated activities with some events linked into routine sequences that may be part of the formal procedures and expectations of social institutions like work-places, schools and welfare agencies. On the other hand, the more informal expectations and pressures of the home and peer group structure some events.

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Many literacy events also include a mixture of written and spoken language. In literacy events, written language is used in an integrated way as part of a range of semiotic systems. These semiotic systems include non-text based images such as mathematical systems, musical notation and maps. A cookery text is another example of the use of language in an integrated way whereby numeracy is mixed with print literacy and the recipes are taken from books, magazines, television as well as orally from friends and relatives (ibid. 2000: 9).

Similarly, Heath (1983: 190-260) describes literacy events as any event involving print. This can be a group negotiation of meaning in written texts (e.g. an advertisement), individuals 'looking things up' in reference books, and other types of occasions when books or other written materials are integral to interpretation in an interaction. How a community uses print to take meaning from the environment and how they use knowledge gained from print are interdependent with the ways children learn language and are socialized in interaction with peers and caregivers.

3.3 Family Literacy

Family literacy or parental involvement refers to parents being actively involved in the education of their children (NCCRD 2000: 30). Pitt (2000: 108-116) refers to the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) model of family literacy whereby parents in the United Kingdom are guided in developing their children's literacy by e.g. learning how to encourage their children's emergent literacy skills[9] and by creating a supportive environment. The BSA model of family literacy thus focuses on three kinds of literacy practices namely separate work with parents, separate work with children and joint activities. This model of family literacy is presented in four half-an hour programmes on the British television (BBC).

The BSA model of literacy focuses on the establishment of partnerships between the school and its parents. This model also agrees with research concluding that parents' own literacy practices at home are significant.[10] The view of using literacy in a fun, creative way, as presented by the New Literacy Studies, is evident in this model of

[9] See 3.5.
[10] See Pitt 2000: 115, 116, 119.

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family literacy. This particular view of literacy, which is part of contemporary school practices, clashes with the formal school literacy practices many parents have experienced in their own schooling. In learning about emergent literacy, parents and children engage in joint literacy activities whereby they experience the joy and creativity of making and sharing books, games and songs together (ibid. 2000: 117). Parents are changing their literacy practices in the home and their self-esteem is positively influenced once they engage with literacy in this informal and more enjoyable manner instead of some kind of formal teaching.

The experience of reading for pleasure also enables parents to experience literacy practices, which differ from those in the adult strand of family literacy. Parents learn that stories are vehicles to a fantasy world and that stories help children to make sense of their world. By assisting their children with reading, parents thus rediscover the joy of reading children's fiction (ibid. 2000: 117). Thus, the focus of children's reading, and parents' support and interaction with them in literacy events, is on pleasure and creativity whereby educational resources such as story tents, story sacks and personalized games and books are used. Research concludes that there is a relationship between children's literacy practices and their subsequent success at school (Pitt 2000: 118). Such a relationship implies the following:

(i) Children's literacy practices are shaped by literacy practices in their home environment.

(ii) Children learn the values and meanings of literacy from home environments where reading and writing form part of multiple daily practices.

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The reading project at Flavius Mareka high school is an example of a local literacy intervention programme conducted by the Academic Literacy Research Unit (ALRU) at Unisa (Pretorius 2002: 2). The overall aim of the reading project is literacy oriented namely to establish a culture of reading at the school. The project is aimed at two groups of people namely the language teachers and the learners. The reading project aims at building capacity amongst the language teachers by means of interaction between the research team and the teaching staff. For the teaching staff such interaction is in terms of the following:

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(i) Drawing attention to the importance of reading in the learning environment.

(ii) Identifying good reading practices.

(iii) Establishing and managing a practical and sustainable reading programme that promotes pleasure reading.

For the learners intervention is aimed at improving their reading skills through the following:

(i) Encouraging and motivating learners to read.

(ii) Role modelling good reading practices for learners.

(iii) Providing learners with opportunities and books for pleasure reading (ibid. 2002: 2).

Such intervention programmes advocating the extension of school practices into the home are on par with the New Literacy Studies (NLS) research into emergent literacy and the everyday uses of literacy in the home. However, the emphasis on school practices implies that there is no or very little room for alternative literacy practices such as those illustrated by Cindy, one of the participants in the research study. *(See Chapter 5.)*

3.4 Theories about Reading

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Bloch's (2000) research into the literacy practices at pre-school and foundation phase level in multilingual Western Cape schools uncovers skills-based approach to reading and writing, that correspond largely to the autonomous view of literacy critiqued by Street (1994). The skills-based approach to reading and writing focuses on 'pre-reading' and 'pre-writing' skills, which are taught in a particular order, with each skill building upon the other. Children are taught a set of sequential skills that includes auditory discrimination, auditory memory, rhyming, letter recognition, listening skills, sound letter correspondence, etc. prior to formal reading instruction. In pre-writing activities, the emphasis is on patterns and letter formation. Within the skills-based approach, learning to read and write becomes a mechanical or technical process and literacy becomes the core basic skill for further education (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 465).

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Pretorius (2002: 13) proposes that learners' reading abilities are not improved by their language proficiency. Instead, reading improves reading[11]. Pretorius (2002: 13) substantiates this statement by referring to fifty years of reading research as well as results from the Tsonga reading test as part of the Reading Project at Flavius Mareka high school, obtained by the Academic Literacy Research Unit (ALRU) at the University of South Africa (Unisa). The tests confirmed that these learners have a reading problem, which cannot simply be attributed to their poor proficiency in English. Even in Tsonga, which is their home language, the learners were reading at frustration levels, which were well below their maturational levels (ibid. 2002: 10). However, these tests are examples of school literacy practices, with their own rules and biases and institutional culture, and socio-economic circumstances. It is important to note that being examples of school literacy practices, these tests do not refer to how literacy is socially situated.

Broom (2000: 23-25) refers to a stronger relationship between home language, academic performance and literacy practices in her research pertaining to the English reading abilities of grade 3 learners attending schools formerly administered by different Departments of Education. There is a relationship between home language, academic performance and literacy practices since learners' low performance on reading comprehension may result from circumstances at home and the availability of English reading materials (ibid. 2000: 23-25). As a result of available reading material, reading one million words a year is easily attainable by middle class children (Krashen 1993: 9).

Students who read a lot and understand what they read are academically more successful than those students who do not read (Pretorius 2002: 2-3). Learners who say they read more naturally read better and have a more advanced writing style (Krashen 1993: 5). Vocabulary knowledge and reading ability are closely related as learners who read a lot usually have larger vocabularies than learners who read very little. However, it is learners' ability to construct meaning while reading that determines reading success (ibid. 2002: 6-7). Learners' ability to make inferences

[11] See Krashen 1993.

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(e.g. the ability to make connections during reading, to relate new information in the text with given information and to see how different elements in the text are linked) is a reliable indicator of how well they understand a text.

Learners with limited exposure to print, whether due to impaired decoding skills or inadequate availability of printed material, are unlikely to acquire a level of reading comprehension expected of their level of linguistic comprehension (Braam et al. 2000: 25). The successful acquisition and development of reading include factors such as the home environment and socio-economic factors. A supportive home environment for literacy development includes parents who read storybooks to young children on a regular basis, parents who engage with literacy activities such as reading and writing at home, e.g. engaging with written work at home, reading books, buying reading material such as magazines, books and newspapers. A supportive home environment also refers to parents acting as literate role models for their children.

Such literacy activities provide children with frequent exposure to and ample opportunities for reading and writing in the home (Pretorius 2002: 4). A print-rich environment in the home is related to the quantity of reading material children read. Children who read more have more books at home. However, a print-rich environment only results in literacy development if more reading is actually done (Krashen 1993: 33-34, 36).

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Reading with comprehension involves an internal replaying of the same types of questions adults or caregivers ask children of bedtime stories. Also, *what*-explanations are replayed in the school setting in learning to pick out topic sentences, write outlines and answer standardized tests. Children in middle class homes repeatedly practise routines which parallel those of classroom interaction through the bedtime story routine and many other similar practices, in which they not only learn how to take meaning from books, but also how to talk about it. Gee (1990: 64-65) concludes that there is a deep continuity between patterns of socialization and language learning in the home culture and what goes on at school.

Socio-economic factors are also a determinant in reading ability. The physical characteristics of the reading environment are important. Generally, children from

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disadvantaged homes do not have a good reading environment that includes comfort and quiet (Krashen 1993: 36).

Krashen (1993: ix-x) recommends free voluntary reading, which means reading out of choice. It also means putting down reading material you don't like and instead choosing what you like. Free reading results in better:

- Reading comprehension
- Writing style
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Grammatical development (Krashen 1993: 12).

Those who read in an additional language have better writing and spelling abilities in that language. Thus, the reading hypothesis can be explained as literacy which develops through reading (ibid. 1993: 3-7).

3.5 Theories about Writing

Bloch and Prinsloo (1998: 468) refer to the underlying assumptions of learning, which guides teachers' approaches in classrooms. According to these underlying assumptions, learning to write needs to be teacher-centred and directed because learning involves transferring knowledge from the teacher to the learner. Thus, the skills-based approach to literacy ignores learners' role in constructing meaning in becoming literate. It is also in contrast with the social practices approach towards literacy whereby the social uses to which literacy is put within the homes and communities are emphasised.

Bloch (1997: 5) refers to an 'emergent literacy' approach which centres around the following:

(i) In literate societies, oral language develops to include written language.

(ii) Many young children engage spontaneously with written language before school-going age.

'Emergent literacy' describes becoming literate as a process whereby reading, writing and oral language are all integral parts of literacy learning (Bloch and

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Prinsloo 1998: 471). The 'emergent literacy' perspective assumes that reading and writing begins when young children become aware that written language makes sense, and when they start asking questions about how it makes sense. For young children, this awareness develops as a result of the following:

(i) Exposure to print in their environment.
(ii) By observing in which ways this print is useful and provides access to enjoyment.
(iii) By having their questions (about written language) answered.
(iv) In being encouraged and extended in their attempts at making written language work for them (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 470).

Bloch and Prinsloo (1998: 471) refer to the relationship between the development of written language and symbolic play in young children. Through play, children grapple with the symbolic nature of written language. When young children play imaginatively, they use symbols by making one thing represent another (e.g. a stick can represent a car). This implies that, as they play, children invest meaning in objects and signs. Thus, their imaginary play underlies their literacy development (Bloch 1997: 5-6).

3.6 Current perceptions on Literacy Learning

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According to a study conducted by the Western Cape Education Department in 1998, many Grade 1 teachers regard it as imperative that children first complete the basics (i.e. phonics learning) before they continue with Outcomes Based Education (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 473). Teachers are concerned with when to do the basics, as it is not explicitly stated in the Curriculum 2005 policy document in terms they can relate to. Teachers also do not view the basics as integral to the specific outcomes expressed within each learning programme; instead, they view it as something separate. How teachers interpret the specific outcomes is critical to the following:

(i) How they approach the basics.
(ii) How they will assess the basics.
(iii) Where they place the emphasis of assessment (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 473).

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The report proposes that teachers need a reconceptualisation of what "the basics" entail. This reconceptualisation can be achieved through analysis and critical review of understanding the following:

(i) How children learn best.

(ii) How to plan this learning.

(iii) How reading and writing develops (ibid. 1998: 473).

Likewise, pertaining to the state of education in general, Heugh (2000: 9) cautions that no effective remedy for the deteriorating education system will be found unless the misguided and faulty perceptions of how and why it is that language is a key to the learning and teaching process is acknowledged. Many teachers may become victims of out-dated teaching methods and current attempts at innovation, if these reconceptualisations pertaining to literacy learning do not take place (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 473-474). Thus, language and literacy remain problematic areas where policy makers and teachers are experiencing difficulties in finding coherent strategies.

Many teachers do not understand the reflexive intentions pertaining to literacy of Curriculum 2005 and it is not clear how the interactive ambitions of policy makers take shape in literacy activities in the classroom. Therefore, Bloch and Prinsloo (1998: 474) recommend a further reconceptualisation of school literacy in relation to the everyday literacy and language practices of children and their communities. This reconceptualisation is also necessary if the progressive aims of the new policies are not to be cancelled by traditional approaches to literacy teaching, which are based on assumptions that are culturally deficit (ibid. 1998: 474).

Through modelling and specific instruction, school oriented, middle-class parents give their preschool children ways of using language and of taking knowledge from books which seem natural in school and in other institutional settings such as banks, post-offices, business or government offices. Hearing stories positively impacts on literacy development. Therefore, children read more when they listen to stories and discuss stories (Krashen 1993: 39). Heath's (1983: 222-233) analysis of the bedtime story as an example of a major literacy event in mainstream homes is applicable here. This is because the bedtime story sets patterns of behaviour that recur repeatedly through the life of mainstream children and adults at school and in other institutions.

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The bedtime story routine involves parents or caregivers setting up a 'scaffolding' dialogue with the child by asking questions and then supplying verbal feedback and label after the child has vocalized or given a non-verbal response. Thus, before the age of two, the child is socialized into the 'initiation-reply-evaluation' sequences typical of classroom lessons.

According to Barton (1994: 157) early writing provides an example of children learning first through social interaction, and later internalizing their knowledge. Also, the activity which the writing is part of is more important than the writing itself. Children's writing has a purpose; for example, some children demonstrate their ownership by writing their names on their belongings. Children also illustrate the purpose of writing by writing a note with or to a friend.

Bloch and Prinsloo (1998: 475) refer to Goodman's (1997) use of the term "multiple roads to literacy" in her argument against the perception that reading stories to children is the most important way of influencing children in becoming readers. Although story reading is one of the roads towards becoming literate, there are many others, which includes the following:

(i) Writing and reading concerned with health, business, bills, etc.

(ii) Writing and reading concerned with family relationships such as notes, calendars, messages, lists, etc (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 475).

The "playing-at-literacy-road" includes all the imaginary activities with written language that children like to engage with. Bloch's (1997: 12-32) research on her own child's early engagement with writing is an example of informal learning in a family situation. Chloe's writing-in-play, are examples of some of these "playing-at-literacy-roads" which include the following:

(i) Writing to name and to label (writing her own name and the name of her baby brother, labelling places at the table).

(ii) Writing to organise daily life (making lists of people, things like a calendar and shopping lists).

(iii) Writing to communicate at home (writing notes to family members).

(iv) Communicating further afield (filling in forms e.g. bank slips and competition forms, writing letters to family and friends and imaginary people like fairies, the Easter Bunny and Father Christmas).

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(v) Creative writing (dictating and writing stories).

(vi) Working at writing (writing out numbers, the alphabet and menus)

(vii) Writing in play (drawing and labelling pictures, advertising goods in a shop and writing scripts for a ghost play)

Chloe's early engagement with literacy activities in the home illustrate that, for children from middle-class homes, it is normal practice to observe adults and more experienced children use written language in a variety of ways. As the school literacy practices and the home literacy practices of these children are similar, teachers and children thus share a general language and understanding about their reasons for using written language. However, for children from disadvantaged homes, reading and writing are used in different ways from the generally middle-class norm. This is most likely due to the following:

(i) Financial constraints, which makes buying reading material, educational resources (such as books to write in, colouring books, etc.) and educational toys (such as snakes and ladders, monopoly, scrabble, etc.) very difficult.

(ii) Most South African children live in multilingual homes and communities where oral language is used far more than written language (Bloch 1997: 34).

However, this oral tradition is a valuable literacy resource as oral language is an important component of written language. Thus, parents or caregivers who cannot read or write need not feel redundant as they can, through their oral tradition, contribute to their children's literacy development (Bloch 1997: 38). Although many children have experience of listening to stories and seeing environmental print e.g. road signs, advertisements, labels on household products, logos of shops, etc., the school does not use or value these home literacy experiences (ibid. 1997: 34). These children are at a disadvantage because of a mismatch between home culture and literacy practices and school culture and literacy practices. Therefore, Bloch and Prinsloo (1998: 475) emphasise that it is the task of teachers to recognise and value the literacy practices children bring from their homes and communities and to build on these.

As a teacher in a linguistically diverse context, I am aware that the various strategies I employ to facilitate learning are being underpinned by my assumptions about oral and

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written language development. As a teacher in the Intermediate phase, I can identify with concerns raised by Bloch and Prinsloo (1998: 473) about teachers being unable to understand how the technical aspects of written language are learnt as children engage with meaningful social activities. Initially, it was extremely difficult to replace my methods of teaching and assessing learners, which focused on the skills-based approach to literacy, with an outcomes-based approach to literacy. After six years of teaching in a school where the learners and I shared the same language and culture, I was re-deployed to a multilingual school and therefore faced the challenge of having to teach English in a multicultural classroom.

In my opinion, the skills-based approach provided clearer guidelines pertaining to the expected level of literacy in each grade. On the other hand, I did not make much progress with this approach as those learners (in my previous and new school) who could not read and write found activities aimed at developing and improving the basics (i.e. phonics-drill exercises) frustrating and boring. This approach was also damaging to their self-esteem as the focus was on what they couldn't do instead of the knowledge they already had and how they made meaning of this knowledge. According to Bloch (2000: 22), many teachers regard the practice of teaching language in such decontextualised bits, as 'normal'. Teaching phonological awareness through exercises in a first, or additional language is a much harder and less efficient way of assisting young children in making sense of the language (ibid. 2000: 23). As my teaching method was clearly not working for all my learners, I therefore had to rethink my understanding of how reading and writing takes place. In this regard, the social practices approach to literacy provided a basis for understanding how reading and writing develops and how literacy is socially constructed. How learners understand languages and interpret the value of literacy in their lives depends on the following:

(i) The way in which their encounters at home, school and in the community are intertwined with activities which involve reading and writing.
(ii) How learners make sense of literacy in their daily lives.

Therefore, I disagree with the skills-based approach of literacy as a set of neutral skills as I realised that my own literacy practices and the literacy practices of the children in my class are not neutral, singular processes, but are embedded in our

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broader social activities. As a teacher, I therefore draw upon these social activities to make meaning of my classroom practices. The emergent literacy perspective, which implies that literacy learning happens best when children are actively and meaningfully engaged, also proved useful in rethinking my approach towards the 'teaching' and assessment of learners' literacy.

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. In this chapter the qualitative aspect of my research orientation is foregrounded. Firstly, the research orientation is exemplified by three case studies, which are based on an ethnographic research approach. Secondly, reasons are given why this particular research orientation is applicable. Thirdly, the main and secondary research questions are stated. This is followed by a detailed account of the research instruments. In the section about data collection I give a detailed account of how I went about collecting my research material. I describe my selection criteria and also account for the approaches I selected. Finally, I describe my method of analysis, my objectives, expected results and procedures of verification.

4.1 Research Orientation

This mini-thesis contains three case studies with an ethnographic orientation.

4.1.1 The Case Study as research method

The case study researcher observes the characteristics of a single case e.g. a child, a school or a community with the intention to investigate deeply and to analyse intensively phenomena about this case. This is done in order to establish generalisations about the wider population to which that entity belongs (Cohen and Mannion 1980: 99). The method of observation is central to every case study. There are two main types of observation, namely participant observation and non-participant observation. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 95) refer to these two terms as 'complete participant' and 'complete observer'. In participant observation, observers engage in those activities they want to observe e.g. the teacher as participant observer can simultaneously observe, facilitate and participate in classroom activities. In non-participant observation, observers do not engage in those activities they want to observe; instead, they assume the role of an outsider by e.g. taking notes at the back of a classroom (ibid. 1983: 102).

While there are criticisms against observation-based research, I went ahead for the following reasons:

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(i) Observation studies are ideal when data is being collected on non-verbal behaviour.

(ii) The researcher can discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and make appropriate notes about its salient features.

(iii) As case study observations take place over an extended period of time, more intimate and informal relationships can develop between researchers and those they are observing. Generally, these relationships develop in more natural environments than those in which surveys and experiments are conducted (Cohen and Mannion 1980: 103, 104).

(iv) The 'complete participant' gets access to inside information.

(v) The 'complete participant' and other participants have more or less the same experiences of the world (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 97)

These advantages outweigh criticism pertaining to the internal and external validity of observation-based research. The internal validity of research may be queried when researchers' judgement may be affected by their close involvement in the group. The external validity of research may be queried when researchers lose perspective because of their over-involvement with the research subjects and thus fail to take note of relevant detail. Subsequently, this may lead to doubts whether this kind of research will be applicable to other situations (Cohen and Mannion (1980: 104, 105).

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As a teacher conducting research at my workplace, it was unavoidable for me to assume the role of 'complete participant' whereby my activities as ethnographer were completely concealed.[12] Being a member of the school setting, I also had access to insider information and had full contact with the principal, teachers and the three Afrikaans-speaking learners. At the same time, I had to guard against the danger of allowing familiarity with the school setting to obscure any significant or analytical perspective. Although 'complete observers' generally escape the danger of becoming too familiar with the research situation on the one hand, it is at the cost of failing to understand the perspectives of the participants on the other hand. This may lead to misunderstanding of the behaviour observed (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 100).

[12] See Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 93, 94, 97.

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To avoid such situations, (ibid. 1983: 100) propose a marginal position whereby the researcher adopts a balanced role between an insider-outsider. Thus, to some extent, the researcher should always maintain a social and intellectual distance in order to give an analytical account of the study (ibid. 1983: 102). During my role as complete participant I was able to conduct participant observation and also make fieldnotes in order to record observational data (ibid. 1983: 145, 146).

As a teacher and researcher, I faced certain dilemmas. As a participant observer at my workplace and in my own class, I was faced with the dilemma of giving an objective account of my observations while at the same time maintaining an analytical perspective. As participant observer, I thus also became the observed and therefore had to unpack myself in terms of my teaching strategies, my beliefs and my motives. Furthermore, I was also acutely aware that an account of what is happening in our school and in our classrooms would also be a reflection on myself as a teacher.
I also had to confront the reality that my assumptions about everything pertaining to teaching would be nothing more than assumptions unless I provided adequate proof to substantiate my opinions.

My position as a teacher at a dominant group institution namely the school implied that I was part of existing relations of power between the school and its families *(See Chapter 2)*. As a result of these power relations I faced the dilemma of being regarded as an outsider despite similarities between the three mothers and myself with regard to race, culture, language and social background. Issues of power, which are enacted in classrooms, refer to the teacher's power over the learners (Delpit 1995: 24-26).

"Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. It is a most important tool for advancing knowledge, promoting progress, and for man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes, and to resolve his conflicts." (Cohen and Mannion 1980: 29). The dilemma of having learners who are eloquent in their home languages, but otherwise 'silenced' when having to speak, read or write English, thus prompted me to search for possible solutions and in doing so, gain the required knowledge i.e. the tools to resolve this 'conflict'.

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These three case studies contain prominent features of ethnographic research. These features include the following:

(i) The development of theory.

(ii) A flexible research approach.

(iii) The use of multiple data sources.

4.1.2 Development of theory

Ethnography allows for the development of theory, which implies that, through close contact with the respondents and settings concerned (i.e. through systematic data collection), ethnographers can substitute pre-conceived ideas and misconceptions by checking out their understanding of phenomena during the course of the study (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 23, 29). A setting is defined as a "named context in which phenomena occur that might be studied from any number of angles" (ibid. 1983: 43).

As ethnographic research investigates social processes in everyday settings, the possibility for the findings to apply only to the research situation is fairly low (ibid. 1983: 24). An ethnographic approach enabled me to study real-life events such as the literacy practices of the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers over a period of time in their social contexts. My research orientation was thus influenced by the theory of literacy as social practice, which I refer to in earlier chapters.

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4.1.3 A flexible research approach

Ethnographic research allows for flexibility, which means that the strategy and direction of the research can be changed if necessary (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 24). This implies that I could find out what I wanted to know during the course of the research and that existing ideas about the research could also be changed and if necessary, followed up.

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4.1.4 The use of multiple data sources

As ethnography is interpretative and aims to represent the participants' perspectives, I gave a detailed account of the actual words used by the participants about literacy issues (Barton and Hamilton 1998: 58). I collected data by means of participant observation, semi-structured interviews with the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers, their teachers and principal as well as examples of the children's print.

However, Barton and Hamilton (1998: 65, 71) describe interview data as fundamentally self-report and therefore emphasize the importance of complementing or triangulating this kind of data with data from other sources. Cohen and Mannion (1980: 208) define the concept of triangulation as 'the use of two or more methods of data collection'. Likewise, Hammersley & Atkinson (1983: 24) also emphasise the advantages of using multiple data sources as opposed to being reliant on only one kind of data. In order to collect and analyse my data objectively, I thus used the concept of triangulation (ibid. 1983: 24). In this particular study, the process of triangulation involved making use of three different sources of data in order to corroborate evidence gained from each source. These sources included data collected in semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and observations of literacy practices in the children's homes.

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4.2 Research Questions

The research design was aimed at answering the following research questions:

Main Research Question

What is the relationship between the home language and literacy backgrounds of the three Afrikaans-speaking learners and their proficiency in English?

Secondary Research Questions

(i) Is there a relationship between learners' access to English reading books and their proficiency in English?

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(ii) Is there a relationship between literacy practices at home and learners' proficiency in English?

4.3 Research Instruments

I used the following research instruments:

- Two questionnaires *(in English),* one for the three Afrikaans-speaking children and one for their mothers. Although I formulated the questions differently for each constituency, each questionnaire covered similar ground, namely home language/s, additional language/s e.g. English and literacy practices (See Appendix B).
- A questionnaire *(in English),* for the three Afrikaans-speaking children, which focused on literacy practices outside the school domain (See Appendix C).
- An English comprehension task on a familiar topic, Athletics, set at grade four English (L2) level to determine the learners' language proficiency in English (See Appendix A).
- Semi-structured interviews with the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers.
- Two questionnaires *(in English)*, one for the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers. The questionnaire for the children focused on literacy practices at home and at school while the questionnaire for the mothers focused on literacy practices at home (See Appendices E and F).
- A questionnaire *(in Afrikaans)* for the three mothers, which focused on relations of power between the school and the parents (See Appendix D).
- A camera to take photographs of literacy practices.
- Fieldnotes to record observational data.

Self-rating plays an important part in Continuous Assessment, which is one of the key methods of assessment in Outcomes Based Education. By making use of self-assessment, learners are encouraged to become active participants in learning and assessment and to be involved in self-evaluation[12]. The questionnaires gave the three children and their mothers an opportunity to assess themselves. The literacy task was chosen to offer useful insights into the learners' proficiency in English reading and

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writing. I also provided them with contextual clues such as four pictures of a sports day. Each picture depicted a different sports event namely the 100 m sprint, the high jump, long jump and a cross- country race. These pictures were culturally inclusive as they included children of different races. The respondents had to look at the pictures in order to activate their background knowledge, answer low-level inference and factual questions and then lastly, write two paragraphs of three or four meaningful sentences about their favourite sport or their favourite sports star. Examples of these low-level inference questions were:

- "*If Khazi jumps 1,4 metres, will he beat Mandla?*"
- "*Why do you think the children practised so hard?*"
- "*How did the children feel about the sports day?*"

Examples of these factual questions were:

- "*Who is the fastest runner?*"
- "*Who is slower than Thabo?*"
- "*If Jane falls, who will win the race?*"

I decided upon the semi-structured interview and questionnaire based on its advantages as proposed by Cohen and Manion (1980: 241-260). The questionnaires tended to be reliable and economical in terms of time and money. The semi-structured interview allowed greater flexibility and when necessary, allowed me to modify the questions as well as explain or change the wording.

When interviewing the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers I based my questions on responses given in the questionnaires. When necessary, I translated or clarified these questions. I encountered some limitations of the questionnaire in the data analysis procedure. As some questions pertaining to proficiency in languages other than the home language were flawed, I therefore did not give these questions much weight. Instead, I used other sources of information e.g. overlapping questions in the interviews to elicit the necessary information. The questions pertaining to "Home language profile" were similar in both questionnaires; the questionnaire administered to the three children and the questionnaire administered to their parents/caregivers. As question 2.2 relates only to question 2.1 "How well do you

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understand this language?" question 2.2 "How well do you understand this language?" therefore does not elicit the learners' as well their parents/caregivers' proficiency in other languages. Question 2.2 -2.5 should rather have been, "How well do you understand/speak/read/write the following languages?" When analysed in isolation, Questions 2.1-2.5 would have been potentially problematic questions. However, since my main focus was the interviews with the three learners and their parents/caregivers, I clarified these questions in the interviews with the three learners and their parents/caregivers.

4.4 Collection of Data

The following timeline indicates when the data collection took place:

DATE	DATA COLLECTION
October 2001	Issuing of questionnaires and English Comprehension task to 120 grade four learners
November 2001	Issuing of questionnaires to twelve grade four learners
February 2002	Issuing of questionnaires to three Afrikaans-speaking mothers
March 2002	Interviews with three Afrikaans-speaking mothers
April 2002	Interviews with three Afrikaans-speaking children
May 2002	Interviews with School Governing Body Members
June 2002	Interviews with school principal
August 2002	Interviews with class teachers
September 2002	Discussions (Language Workshops) with SGB Members, principal and teachers
October 2002	Issuing of questionnaires to three Afrikaans-speaking children
November 2002	Interviews with three Afrikaans-speaking mothers
February 2003	Interviews with three Afrikaans-speaking children and mothers
March 2003	Issuing of English Comprehension task to three Afrikaans-speaking children
April 2003	Interviews with class teachers
May 2003	Reading Texts: Three Afrikaans-speaking children
June 2003	Photos of Literacy practices at home: Oscar
August 2003	Photos of Literacy practices at home: Cindy

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4.5 Procedure

During October 2001 I gained written permission from the principal and Governing Body to conduct my research at this particular school. A Xhosa-speaking colleague, Ms N. Mtsha, assisted me in issuing the questionnaires and English Comprehension task to a widely representative group namely 120 grade four learners at the school. I chose these 120 learners as my research assistant, Ms N. Mtsha, and I had access to them and could spend ample time administering the English Comprehension task and questionnaire. These 120 learners represent the language profile of the school *(See Table 1: Language Profile of the School).*

The questionnaires were issued during school hours, in a one-hour period. My research assistant and I divided the120 learners equally and placed them in two big classrooms where we issued the questionnaires. Each one of us was responsible for a specific classroom and we explained each component of the questionnaire beforehand. Being proficient in isiXhosa, Ms Mtsha, explained in English and isiXhosa while I explained in English and Afrikaans. We also encouraged the learners to request clarification at any stage of the questionnaire. We did not place any time limit on the completion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire took longer than anticipated. We repeated the instructions several times as most of the learners struggled to understand what they were supposed to do. We therefore found it necessary to move between the two classrooms in order to translate, clarify or explain certain questions. In both classes my research assistant went through the questionnaire item-by-item as the learners experienced difficulty filling in the questionnaire. We explained to the class as a whole and translated each item to ensure maximum comprehension. On another occasion during October 2001 my research assistant and I followed the same procedure for administering the Comprehension task as for the questionnaires.

4.6 Selection Criteria

The process known as "sampling within cases" occurs along three major dimensions namely time, people and context. This process is just as important as selecting cases for investigation and implies deciding what is relevant to the research (Hammersley &

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Atkinson 1983: 45, 46). I thus used a more selective approach in terms of who to talk to, what, where and when to observe, what questions to ask the respondents as well as what and how to record. I used the English Comprehension task and questionnaires to select 12 respondents as a 10% representative sample of the 120 respondents. The English comprehension task was assessed out of 25 and the respondents were grouped according to the following criteria:

1) 4 learners who performed well (a score between 20 – 23 i. e. 80% – 92%).
2) 4 learners who performed in the middle of the range (a score between 15 – 19 i. e. 60% - 76%).
3) 4 learners who performed poorly (a score between 8 – 14 i. e. 32% - 56%).

Each group was carefully selected in terms of language and gender and consisted of an equal number of Xhosa- and Afrikaans-speaking boys and girls (i.e. 1 Xhosa-speaking boy and girl and 1 Afrikaans-speaking boy and girl).

I narrowed down these 12 respondents in order to select three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers as my prime group. The main reason for selecting these Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers as my prime group was linguistically oriented. Being proficient in Afrikaans, I was able to conduct the interviews with the Afrikaans speaking children and their mothers myself. The three Afrikaans-speaking children were chosen according to the three performance groups, i.e. one learner who performed well, one learner who performed in the middle of the range and one learner who performed poorly.

After selecting the three Afrikaans-speaking children, I made initial contact with their mothers via notes explaining the purpose of the questionnaires and interviews and requesting them to indicate the time and place for the interviews. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 71) caution against explicitly informing the respondents about the purpose of the research as such information could influence the behaviour of the respondents and, in doing so nullify the findings. Therefore, when negotiating access with the principal, governing body members and the three Afrikaans-speaking parents, I did not give a full account of the purpose of the research. Instead, I discussed the possible educational value of this type of research and informed them

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that all information would be handled discreetly and confidentially. I also promised them that the findings of the research would be made known to them at the end of the study. By unpacking the concept of family literacy *(See Chapter 2)* between school literacy practices and literacy practices at home, I also indicate why I interviewed the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers at their homes.

4.7 Family Literacy

Family literacy or parental involvement refers to parents being actively involved in the education of their children (NCCRD 2000: 30). The work of Taylor and Wells concludes that there is a relationship between children's literacy practices and their subsequent success at school (Pitt 2000: 118). The main objective of family literacy focuses is the establishment of partnerships between the school and its parents by encouraging parents to assist their children in becoming successful users of literacy in school (ibid. 2000: 115, 116).

According to the mothers' preference, some of the interviews were held at school and some were held at their homes. I used a reformulated version of the same questionnaire given to the children. When interviewing the parents and children at home I looked for specific things namely evidence of writing as well as individual and collaborative literacy activity. Such examples of the children's or mothers' print included letters to family members and friends, diaries and notes taken during church or community meetings. As a print-rich environment in the home is related to the amount of books children read, it implies that children who read more have more books at home (Krashen 1993: 33-34). I thus observed whether these households had any reading material, the kinds of reading material and the languages of these reading materials. I also wanted to know whether the three children visited the public library as access to public libraries also affects how much children read (ibid. 1993: 35).

I also discovered evidence of alternative literacy practices. Such literacy practices included role-play whereby the one Afrikaans-speaking child who appeared to be the least proficient in English, showed potential for literacy in her role as 'employee' and 'bank client' at an 'automatic teller machine'.

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4.8. The Use of Photographs

The use of visual data such as photographs can be used to focus on literacy as social practices. Moments in which interactions with literacy events take place can be captured in photographs. Therefore, photographs are appropriate for documenting observable data about literacy events e.g. who is using written texts, where and how these texts are used. Thus, ethnographic photographs are sources of data about literacy practices (Hamilton 2000: 16-17, 21). The ethnographic researcher is interested in 'direct documentation of literacy practices' and in doing so, capturing the 'visual traces' of such literacy practices. The ethnographer looks for 'typical' or 'critical' literacy moments in order to record everyday literacy practices. Ethnographic photographs elicit questions, explanation and discussion (ibid. 2000: 21-23).

By taking photographs of literacy events such as Cindy's role-play activities and Oscar's imaginative story on the back of his wardrobe, I thus documented their literacy practices. These typical' or 'critical' literacy moments document their literacy practices at home and amongst their friends.

By tracking the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers for a specific period at home, I was able to build up a profile of language use. I was also able to compare their present literacy practices with their literacy practices in grade four. I therefore re-administered the English Comprehension task to the three Afrikaans-speaking children during March 2003. Two of the three children were in grade six, while the one child who previously performed poorly in the English Comprehension task repeated grade five.

4.9 Ethnographic Interviewing

In ethnographic interviewing, similar to any kind of social interaction, both the researcher and the interviewee structure the interview (Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 112-113). Therefore, although I had a list of specific questions to ask, I allowed for flexibility by allowing the interviewees to give their input as well as to explain or clarify their answers and to give their own opinion about certain issues. I thus re-visited the homes of the three children and their mothers in order to conduct

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semi-structured interviews with the three children and their mothers and to observe what reading and writing practices occur at home. Information derived from a questionnaire issued to the three mothers used in conjunction with semi-structured interviews conducted with the school principal and the teachers of the three learners shed some light on existing relations of power between the school and its parents. These semi-structured interviews were followed-up with a questionnaire for the three children and one for their mothers. The questionnaire for the children mainly focused on literacy practices at home and at school while the questionnaire for the mothers focused on literacy practices at home.

During the semi-structured interviews, I used a directive as well as a non-directive approach. I made use of the following non-directive/open-ended questions in order to stimulate discussion (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 113) about issues such as literacy practices at home and at school as well power relations between the school and its parents:

(i) "Who should be responsible for teaching children to read and write?"

(ii) "How do you experience learning to read at school/home?"

(iii) "Explain the ways in which you use your child's proficiency in Afrikaans in order to assist him/her in making meaning of an English text."

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I posed the following directive/specific questions in order to test out my hypothesis (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 114):

(i) "What kinds of things do you read?"

(ii) "In what language(s) are these books, magazines or newspapers?

(iii) "How many books, magazines or newspapers do you have at home?"

(iv) "Do your family members assist you with your homework?"

I verified self reported data by observing the three children in two different settings, at home and at school. I investigated the children's decoding and narrative skills by giving them age appropriate English school readers and short texts to read. The children had two weeks to practise reading the school readers and texts. Two weeks later, I called the three children separately at school to read the school readers and texts and to re-tell the stories in English in their own words. I wanted to know

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whether the three children would be able to meet the following learning outcomes for reading and viewing in Grade 6 English as First Additional language:

Learning Outcome 2: **Speaking**
The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively.

Learning Outcome 3: **Reading and Viewing**
The learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment (DoE 2002: 48).

By asking the learners to re-tell the texts in their own words, I wanted to test their comprehension skills. I was thus mindful of the tendency of learners to read aloud fluently, without understanding what they are reading. This tendency is referred to as 'barking at print' (Pretorius 2002: 11).

4.10 Method of Analysis

I analysed the data separately, but also comparatively. I based my analysis on the theory of *Literacy as social practice*, which provided a framework for the study as well as for viewing the data. I therefore analysed what people do with literacy (literacy practices) and looked at activities where literacy had a role (literacy events). In analysing the data, I used the following steps as proposed by Barton and Hamilton (1998: 69):

- Reading and re-reading

This activity is also known as memoing whereby I read and re-read the notes as a whole before breaking them into parts and writing short notes, phrases, ideas or key concepts.

- Selecting

This activity involved constant interpretation, which is characteristic of qualitative research. This process of selecting some parts of the data as more important than others began from initial decision making (e.g. who to interview and what questions to ask) to the final decision-making (e.g. what to include and emphasise in the study).

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- Coding and categorizing

The observations I made in the homes of the children enabled me to classify the data in the follow categories:

  - The quantity and quality of literacy practices and literacy events.
  - Homework support given by mothers or older siblings.
  - The childhood literacy practices of the three mothers.

- Linking data

This process involved making connections between different parts of the data e.g. the availability of English reading material and the children's reading ability in English. I also sorted the data by making use of differences and similarities e.g. differences and similarities between the amount of English homework support each of the three learners receive compared to their reading and writing proficiency in English. I therefore assessed the Comprehension Task according to Curriculum 2005 Language outcomes (WCED 2001: 95) pertaining to reading in the Intermediate Phase:

Language Outcome 1: Learners make and negotiate meaning and Understanding	
Reading	• Make meaning through comprehension of text • Make meaning of visual texts (pictures) • Identify key message
Language Outcome 5: Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context	
Reading	• Comprehend whole units (sentences, paragraphs)

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4.11 Objectives

My objective was to build up a profile of language use of the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers by investigating the following:

1) The social context and home language profile of the three children and their mothers.
2) The language proficiency of the three children and their mothers.
3) The literacy practices of the three children and their mothers.
4) The childhood literacy practices of the three mothers.
5) Power relations in literacy learning.

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4.12. Expected Results

I expected to find a relationship between learners' proficiency in English and their home language/s and literacy backgrounds. This relationship is positive and implies that learners who read more will do better in school than those learners who read less. Learners who receive homework support will also do better than those learners who never or seldom receive homework support. Furthermore, the literacy practices (story reading, letter writing, etc.) of parents/caregivers will also have an influence on learners' performance in school. As the caregivers of the respondents were from previously marginalized communities, I also expected to find that they would have negative attitudes towards education in the home language and that they would regard English as the language of empowerment.

4.13. Procedures of Verification

According to Creswell (1998: 193), the credibility of qualitative research refers to amongst others, approaches of verification. I verified the credibility of my research by making use of four verification procedures, namely prolonged engagement and persistent observation, a rich, thick description, peer review or debriefing and triangulation. I decided on these four procedures of verification as they proved to be relatively easy to conduct and also cost-effective.

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- Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation

This procedure of verification includes building trust with participants while learning the culture and checking for half-truths that exist due to distortions introduced by the researcher or informants (Creswell 1998: 201). This also implies that the researcher makes decisions about what is significant to the study in terms of relevance and interest. The following factors enhanced the reliability of my findings:

(i) Being responsible for teaching English in grade four, I was able to observe and monitor the learners' literacy development in English.

(ii) As the class teacher of the Afrikaans-speaking learner who repeated grade five, I was also able to give a first-hand account of her literacy development in English.

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(iii) As a teacher at the school I had first-hand knowledge of how the school's language policy is implemented.

- A Rich, Thick Description

This procedure of verification implies that researchers provide a detailed description of the participants or settings, which they are studying in order to allow the reader to make decisions regarding transferability. Such detailed description enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics (Creswell 1998: 203). While engaged in semi-structured interviews, I took detailed notes in order to give a detailed description of the participants in my study.

- Peer Review/Debriefing

Peer Review or debriefing 'provides an external check of the research process.' A reviewer may be a peer who keeps the researcher honest by enquiring about methods, meaning and interpretations. The researcher and the peer keep written account of these peer-debriefing sessions (Creswell 1998: 202). I thus regularly met with colleagues who were not directly involved with my research for informal discussions and to determine whether my opinions were applicable in our school context. These informal discussions resulted in the forming of a literacy committee at our school consisting of educators, non-teaching staff and school governing body members. Although I did not keep a written account of these peer-debriefing sessions, suggestions and ideas deriving from the research were incorporated into two reports compiled by the literacy committee at our school.

- Triangulation

As discussed earlier, the concept of triangulation refers to the use of multiple and different sources to provide corroborating verification (Creswell 1998: 202). I therefore made use of three different sources of data in order to substantiate evidence gained from each source. These sources included data collected in semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and observations of literacy practices in the children's homes.

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Chapter 5 Research Findings

This chapter contains a detailed description of the findings pertaining to the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers. This study covers a time frame of almost two years. I collected data since October 2001 until August 2003. I focus on the literacy practices of the three children in the school and home domains whereas the focus of the literacy practices of the three mothers is restricted to the home domain. As literacy is socially situated, I introduce this section by discussing and analyzing data pertaining to the social context and home language profile of the three children and their mothers. I investigate the language proficiency of the three Afrikaans-speaking children in order to establish my hypothesis that there is a relationship between the home language of the three children and their proficiency in English. The language proficiency of the three mothers is also significant because firstly, it is an integral aspect of the literacy backgrounds of the three children and secondly, it may impact on their children's proficiency in English.

5.1 Social Context: The three children and their mothers

To protect the identity of those concerned, pseudonyms were used in accordance with the general academic norm[13]. The following information derives from semi-structured oral interviews conducted with the three children, their mothers and teachers. I visited the three mothers in their homes to conduct these interviews individually. I interviewed the three children and their teachers at school. I also administered written questionnaires to the children and their mothers. (See Appendices B, D, E and F for copies of the questionnaires.)

The demographic data and home language profiles of the mothers highlight important factors contributing to the children's literacy practices. By looking at the demographic data we can gain insight into the social and linguistic environments of the mothers and children. The following table illustrates their family background.

[13] Mrs O. is Oscar's mother, Mrs D. is Denica's mother and Mrs C. is Cindy's mother.

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Table 4: Demographic data

Respondents[14]	Position in family	Mother's Education	Accommodation
Oscar (Aged 10)	Youngest child (3/3)	No schooling	Four-roomed house
Denica (Aged 10)	Second youngest child (3/4)	Grade four	Three-roomed house
Cindy (Aged 9)	Youngest child (3/3)	Grade five	Wendy-house

Oscar is the youngest child and has two older siblings. Denica is the second youngest child and also has two older siblings. Cindy is the youngest child and also has two older siblings. The three children have older siblings between the age range fourteen to twenty-six living at home. These older siblings may play an important role in these children's literacy development. In some cases, these older siblings acted as literacy mediators by being role models and assisting the younger children with their homework.[15] Literacy mediators are people who engage with literacy tasks on behalf of others (Malan 1996: 105). Table 5 illustrates the pattern of employment of the three children's parents.

Table 5: Pattern of Employment

Respondents	Father's Occupation	Mother's Occupation
Oscar	Labourer	Housewife (Unpaid housework)
Denica	Labourer	Cleaner in a Bank
Cindy	Unemployed	Unemployed (Usually a domestic worker)

I focus on the education levels of the mothers as they are generally regarded as the gatekeepers of their children's literacy development (Van Der Avoird et al. 2001: 13). Economically, all three mothers fall into the low-income group of society. Denica's mother, who is permanently employed, works in a multicultural, multilingual environment. As a cleaner in a financial institution, she is exposed to formal registers of English and Afrikaans. Although her job as cleaner does not require English literacy skills, she is exposed to a great deal of oral language as she uses English as a

[14] Ages of children in 2001: Oscar 10, Denica 10, Cindy 9. Ages of children in 2003: Oscar 12, Denica 12, Cindy 11.

[15] The term 'Literacy mediators' will be discussed in detail later in this chapter (See Section 5.4).

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language of communication with her Xhosa-speaking colleagues. She reported that she does not feel comfortable speaking English, but is able to express herself to her colleagues and supervisors if necessary. In other words, Mrs D. has conversational competence in English. Mrs O. is a housewife and mainly communicates with family members and friends in her home language, Afrikaans. Mrs O. reported that she prefers using Afrikaans when conducting business or when shopping. When being employed as a domestic worker, Mrs C. usually works for professional people. She reported being able to communicate in English or Afrikaans with her employers. All three mothers reported that they only speak Afrikaans with family members and friends. However, they use English to communicate with their Xhosa-speaking neighbours.

The social environment of the mothers and children can be compared to that of Trackton.[16] (Trackton is an 'African'-American working-class community in the southern United States. All adults in Trackton can read and write and most of them are employed in the local textile mills. Like the Trackton community the homes of the mothers and children in the present study have very limited space and their cramped accommodations means that their personal space is very restricted. There is no separate room or book corner where the mothers and their children can do reading or writing activities without being disturbed or interrupted by the rest of the household. Only one child, Oscar, had his own bed and wardrobe. None of the children had a place of their own to do their homework. All three of the children reported reading or doing their homework on the bed or on the floor.

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As the physical characteristics of the reading environment are important it is highly likely that socio-economic factors[17] such as crammed accommodations are not conducive to these learners' academic performance (Krashen 1993: 36). Whether the parents of the three children are able to buy reading materials, writing resources or educational toys depends largely on family income and whether they are employed or not. In turn, factors like family income, employment status and education levels of the parents/three mothers, are all interrelated. The socio-economic status of these three mothers determines what type of accommodation they have and whether their

[16] See Heath (1983: 1).
[17] See Table 1: Socio-Economic characteristics of the Area.

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children have ample space to do reading or writing activities without being disturbed or interrupted by the rest of the household. Unlike children from middle class homes who generally have a place of their own to do homework or reading activities, none of the three children were privileged in this regard.

None of these respondents had a print-rich environment at home. Bloch (1997: 8) defines a print-rich environment as "one which actively promotes the use and display of written language in a variety of ways." These children are thus deprived of countless opportunities to observe how written language works, how adults use it and how to make written language work for them. Just like parents in the Trackton community, none of the children's parents buys them any educational resources or toys (such as jigsaw puzzles, books to read or colouring-books, etc.). However, this is not surprising; due to financial constraints, these parents reported having very little or no extra money to spend on basic household supplies, let alone reading material and educational toys.[18]

5.2 Home Language Profile of the three mothers

Home language profile refers to language/s spoken in the home and language competence, which includes the four basic language abilities namely listening/understanding, speaking, reading and writing. These four language abilities fit into two dimensions namely receptive and productive skills/oral language and literacy. I use the term language proficiency because it makes sense in terms of Cummins' common underlying proficiency hypothesis. The two dimensions, receptive and productive skills are illustrated in the following table (Baker 1993: 6)

Table 6: Language Proficiency

	Oral Language	**Literacy**
Receptive Skills	Understanding[19]	Reading
Productive Skills	Speaking	Writing

[18] See Table 5: Pattern of Employment.
[19] As understanding skills subsumes listening skills, I use the term understanding when referring to listening.

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Language ability can be developed at the same or at different levels and may vary from simple and basic to fluent and accomplished. Some people may have receptive skills in a language, but may lack productive skills. The fifth area of language use includes the language used for thinking. The ability to think refers to cognitive competence i.e. the ability to use language for reasoning (ibid. 1993: 7).

The homes of the three children and their mothers are homogenous as the home language, Afrikaans is the only language used at home. Clear limits exist in terms of language use in the home and work domains e.g. English is used at work or when conducting business while Afrikaans is used for interactions at home, in church and in the community. A domain is "an area of human activity in which one particular speech variety or a combination of several speech varieties is regularly used" (Kaschula & Anthonissen 1995: 72).

The three mothers responded to the question ***"How well do you understand, speak, read and write Afrikaans/English?"*** according to a three point scale namely ***"very well"***, ***"a little bit"*** and ***"cannot"*** (refer to Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.) I used a three-point scale because the term ***"a little bit"*** is a sufficient category to cover the gap between the ***"very well"*** and ***"cannot"*** categories. The following table illustrates the response of the three mothers pertaining to their proficiency in their home language, Afrikaans.

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Table 7: Language Proficiency of the three Mothers in Afrikaans: Self-rating

	Afrikaans											
	Oscar's Mother				**Denica's Mother**				**Cindy's Mother**			
	Understand	**Speak**	**Read**	**Write**	**Understand**	**Speak**	**Read**	**Write**	**Understand**	**Speak**	**Read**	**Write**
Very well	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
A little bit												
Cannot			1	1								

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All three mothers have communicative competence in their home language, Afrikaans, and rated their oracy skills in Afrikaans, as "*very well*". Kaschula & Anthonissen (1995: 14) define communicative competence as the ability to use grammatical sentences in the appropriate context, at the right time and place. Communicative competence thus involves having grammatical as well as cultural competence. For the three mothers having communicative competence refers to the oral domain.

Mrs. O., Oscar's mother, had no formal schooling and indicated that she does not have any literacy skills, i.e. reading and writing proficiency in Afrikaans. It is also significant that Oscar's mother never volunteered to fill in the questionnaires. I thus asked her the questions orally, explained when necessary and filled in her answers. Mrs O. based her assumption on being "illiterate" on the fact that she had never attended school.

"Ek het mossie skool geloepie." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[ɛk hɛt mɔssi sko:l xəlupi.] (Phonetic Transcript)
"I never attended school." (English Translation)

However, Heath's (1983) ethnographic study *Ways with Words*, defines literacy events as any event involving print. Because Oscar's mother engages with multiple literacy events and is able to use print independently, e.g. when shopping, she has literacy skills. Her ability to visually recognize the colours and shapes of brand names such as "sout" (salt), household products such as "Omo" (washing powder) and the name of shops e.g. "Shoprite" has enabled her to function independently e.g. when doing her shopping. Her ability to use environmental print to make meaning in her environment and to use knowledge gained from print is an example of her uses of literacy. On the other hand, her ability to decode brand names cannot be classified as reading as she reported being unable to formally decode the phonemic sounds of these words.

Furthermore, Oscar's mother's literacy experience can be related to ethnographic studies indicating that a lack of schooled literacy may in practice be less of an impediment than is generally assumed (Malan 1996: 105). The other two mothers,

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Mrs D. and Mrs C. who had four and five years of schooling respectively, rated their literacy skills, i.e. reading and writing proficiency in Afrikaans highly (*"very well").*

The three mothers also reported a linguistic repertoire that included the standard form of their home language, Afrikaans, as well as the colloquial form. They are thus able to switch between different language varieties depending on which one is more appropriate in certain contexts or domains. This implies that these mothers may use the standard variety in formal situations e.g. when conducting business and the colloquial variety in informal situations e.g. when socializing with friends and relatives. The following table illustrates the response of the three mothers pertaining to their proficiency in English.

Table 8: Language Proficiency of the three Mothers in English: Self-rating

	English											
	Oscar's Mother				**Denica's Mother**				**Cindy's Mother**			
	Understand	**Speak**	**Read**	**Write**	**Understand**	**Speak**	**Read**	**Write**	**Understand**	**Speak**	**Read**	**Write**
Very well					1		1					
A little bit	1					1		1	1	1	1	1
Cannot		1	1	1								

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These mothers' proficiency in their primary language, Afrikaans, contrasts sharply with their proficiency in English. Only Mrs D. rated her understanding/listening proficiency in English as *"very well"* compared to the other two mothers who rated their understanding/ listening proficiency in English as *"a little bit".* Two of these mothers, Mrs D. and Mrs C., also rated their speaking proficiency in English as *"a little bit"* while one mother, Mrs O. indicated that she couldn't speak English. Only Mrs D. displayed confidence in her reading ability in English and thus rated her reading proficiency in English as *"very well".* Mrs C. rated her reading proficiency in English as *"a little bit"* and Mrs O. indicated that she couldn't read English. Mrs D. and Mrs C. rated their writing proficiency in English as "a little bit". Table 8 indicates that Mrs D. has higher oracy (understanding/ listening) and literacy (reading) skills

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than the other two mothers. Thus, of the three mothers, Mrs D. is in the best position to assist her daughter with English homework.

For all three mothers their receptive and productive skills in English are much lower than their receptive and productive skills in their home language, Afrikaans. One of the troublesome implications is that the school's language of learning and teaching (LoLT), English, is thus orally and in written form, minimally supported and reinforced at home. On the other hand, Mrs D.'s and Mrs C.'s proficiency in Afrikaans indicates that they are both competent to assist their children with Afrikaans homework. They are thus able to support and reinforce their children's literacy development in their home language. However, things are not as straightforward as they appear to be given that exposure to a language coupled with meaningful use is the key for successful acquisition. The amount of talk children are exposed to and participate in does not guarantee educational success; instead, *what* the talk is about, *how* and *why* it is it is conducted determines educational success Heath (1983: 350-352). This meaningful use of a language will be discussed in the next section pertaining to the home language profile of the three children.

5.3 Home Language Profile of the three children

I discuss the home language profile of the three children by including data about their language competence and the availability of reading material. The amount and type of reading material found in the children's homes is significant in the following manner:

(i) It will reflect on their reading habits.

(ii) It will validate or alternatively, disprove my hypothesis that there is a relationship between the amount and the type of reading material found in the children's homes and their reading ability.

5.3.1 Language Proficiency of the three children

Self-rating plays an important part in Continuous Assessment, which is one of the key methods of assessment in Outcomes Based Education. By making use of self-assessment, learners are encouraged to become active participants in their learning

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and assessment and to be involved in self-evaluation.[20] The questions in the questionnaire pertaining to their oracy and literacy skills in English and Afrikaans, gave the three children and their mothers an opportunity to appraise themselves. Tables 9 and 10 illustrate the response of the three children pertaining to their proficiency in their home language, Afrikaans and their first additional language, English. These two tables will be discussed in conjunction with each other.

Table 9 Language Proficiency of the three children in Afrikaans: Self-rating

	Afrikaans											
	Oscar				Denica				Cindy			
	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Understand	Speak	Read	Write
Very well	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1		
A little bit				1								
Cannot											1	1

Table 10 Language Proficiency of the three children in English: Self-rating

	English											
	Oscar				Denica				Cindy			
	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Understand	Speak	Read	Write	Understand	Speak	Read	Write
Very well												
A little bit	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Cannot											1	1

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All three children rated their oracy skills in English as *"a little bit"*. Their self-rating is supported by anecdotal evidence (from themselves and their teachers) that they are unable to initiate and sustain interactions using English; instead, they merely respond to questions or revert to their home language, Afrikaans. However, they make use of

[20] See DoE (2002: 113-115).

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cues such as gestures and body language in face-to-face interactions in order to get their message across, i.e. to participate meaningfully in conversations.

This way of communication is known as everyday language or in a school context, it is also known as playground language. However, playground language differs from the language used in classrooms, as it normally does not require the language associated with higher-order thinking skills. In other words, playground knowledge only is not sufficient for meaningful use in academic contexts such as the classroom. This 'meaningful use of a language', has bearing on Cummins' (2000: 69-70) distinction between conversational aspects and academic aspects of language proficiency.

Baker (1993: 138-139) refers to Cummin's (1981) development of two continua, of context embedded, cognitively undemanding communication and context reduced, cognitively demanding communication, which is an extension of the thresholds theory in language development, is applicable here[21]. Playground language is an example of context embedded, cognitively undemanding communication whereas higher-order thinking skills associated with the classroom are an example of context reduced, cognitively demanding communication. This situation has serious implications for the three children's academic performance. Being dependent on contextual cues to communicate in context embedded, cognitively undemanding contexts, it is highly likely that they lack the required language tools to operate successfully in context reduced, cognitively demanding contexts such as the classroom. They would also not be able to engage successfully with unseen texts, which e.g. do not activate their background knowledge. As the three children have a limited vocabulary they would also not be able to express themselves clearly and effectively in order to respond critically to information in the classroom. As these learners are unable to communicate confidently and effectively in the first additional language, English, the learning outcome for listening and speaking would thus not be met.[22] The learning Outcomes for Listening and Speaking are the following:

[21] See Chapter 1 1.1.2 for a discussion of Cummins' interdependence hypothesis and his development of two continua of context embedded, cognitively undemanding communication and context reduced, cognitively demanding communication.
[22] See DoE (2002: 54-61).

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Learning Outcome1: **Listening**
The learner is able to listen for information and enjoyment, and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.

Learning Outcome 2: **Speaking**
The learner will be able to communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.

Thus, like the children in the Trackton community, these children receive and participate in a lot of talk at home on a conversational level. However, it may not be sufficient to enable them to develop decontextualized skills, which are an integral part of literacy practices at school entry level (Heath 1983: 350-352). Having decontextualized skills refer to a persons' ability to make inferences out of context. *bit".* Cindy reported that she does not have any literacy skills in English. Cindy's predicament is evident in the following statement made by her.
"Ek maak of ek lies." [Kaaps- Afrikaans]
[ɛk ma:k ɔf ɛk li:s] (Phonetic Transcript)
"I pretend to read." [English Translation]

Cindy's statement that she pretends to read in class is indicative of many of the injustices children in her position have to suffer on a daily basis. In many township schools, factors like a large learner-teacher ratio imply that learners, who have learning difficulties, do not get any individual attention in class. For Cindy, it is highly likely that this experience is extremely humiliating as she must be constantly afraid of her 'secret' being discovered by her teacher and classmates. Such negative experiences with literacy may result in her school-going experience becoming unpleasant, even unbearable. Being forced to read in any language, learners like her are not given the opportunity to feel confident about who they are and about their home language. Due to no fault of their own, they miss out on countless opportunities whereby their self-esteem could have been enhanced (Bloch and Mahlalela 1998: 24).

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5.3.2 Reading Material

The reading material found in the homes of the three families reflected the families' social, educational and religious background. These reading materials were primarily in Afrikaans, the respondents' home language. I use the term home language, as it is the language literally spoken in the children's homes. The term home language is also used in the revised curriculum. Table 11 illustrates the type and number of Afrikaans reading materials found in the homes of the three children.

Table 11: Afrikaans Reading Material in the three households

Reading Material (Afrikaans)			
	Oscar	**Denica**	**Cindy**
Storybooks	1	0	0
Bible	2	4	1
Magazines	6	3	2
Newspapers	5	4	4

There were no reading materials on display in any of the three households; all reading material was kept in or on top of a cupboard. Most of the households had more than one Afrikaans copy of the Bible. Oscar also had his own Afrikaans Children's Bible. All the households had less than ten Afrikaans newspapers and magazines. Oscar was the only one of his family members who had his own books, i.e. storybooks from the public library. In contrast, the other two children, Denica and Cindy were the only ones in their households who did not have their own storybooks. Being only in their third year of formal Afrikaans tuition, these learners are still in the early stages of developing literacy skills in Afrikaans. Although all these children spoke their home language fluently, the paucity of Afrikaans literature will in some way or the other impact on their literacy development (i.e. reading and writing) in Afrikaans. Table 12 illustrates the type and number of English reading materials found in the homes of the three children.

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Table 12: English Reading Material in the three households

Reading Material (English)			
	Oscar's home	**Denica' home**	**Cindy's home**
Storybooks	5	0	0
Bible	0	0	0
Magazines	0	0	0
Newspapers	0	6	1

The following English reading materials were found in separate households:

- Oscar's home-**5** children's storybook
- Denica's home-**6** newspapers (*Cape Times*[23]).
- Cindy' home-**1** newspaper (*The Argus*[24])

Elley (1992: 83) refers to a strong relationship between the amount of reading material such as books, magazines and newspapers found at home and the total amount of voluntary reading of these reading materials. Children who have fewer than ten books at home read very little whereas those who reported having more than 200 books at home are avid readers. The relationship between the amount of reading material found in the home and reading habits was confirmed by the children's reported reading habits. Table 13 and Table 14 illustrate the reading habits and reading frequency of the three children. These two tables will be discussed in conjunction with each other.

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Table 13: Reading habits of the three children

Types of reading	Oscar		Denica		Cindy	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Read storybooks	√		√			√
Read school readers	√		√			√
Read magazines	√		√			√
Read newspapers		√		√		√
Read Bible	√		√			√

[23] The *Cape Times* is an English daily newspaper.
[24] The *Argus* is an English daily newspaper.

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Table 14: Reading frequency of the three children

	Oscar				**Denica**				**Cindy**			
	Every day	**Two/Three times a week**	**Once a week**	**Never**	**Every day**	**Two/Three times a week**	**Once a week**	**Never**	**Every day**	**Two/Three times a week**	**Once a week**	**Never**
Read storybooks	√						√					√
Read school readers	√				√							√
Read magazines			√				√					√
Read newspapers				√				√				√
Read Bible		√				√						√

The choice range of reading material available to the three children relates to whether they will participate in free voluntary reading (Krashen 1993). Free voluntary reading means putting down books you do not like and instead, choosing ones you like. Free voluntary reading implies that the reader's comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, grammatical development and spelling will improve as the reading hypothesis indicates that literacy develops through reading (Krashen 1993: 3-7). Yet, things are not as simple as they appear to be. While there are many advantages related to free voluntary reading, reading ability is related to reading material (ibid. 1993: 63). Thus, containing basic grammatical features and vocabulary, their storybooks do not provide them with the necessary tools to develop the competence to move from the ordinary conversational level to a cognitively advanced level (ibid. 1993: 84). On the other hand, their storybooks may be conduits to more complex, age-appropriate reading.

Although Oscar and Denica read similar types of material, their frequency of reading differs. Both of them read school readers, magazines and the Bible. Oscar reads storybooks every day, whereas Denica only reads them once a week. Both of them read school readers every day. Apart from stories written for children, school readers are compulsory reading material and do not reflect on the voluntary reading done by them. Both of them read children's stories in family magazines once a week. They attend church services during the week and also read the Bible two or three times a

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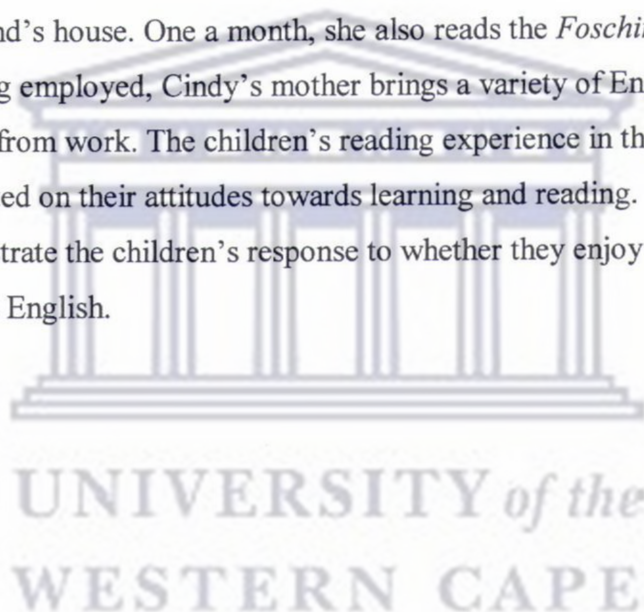
week. None of the three children read any newspapers. Cindy's reading activities are practically non-existent. She reported that she does not read any of these reading materials. She refers to her inability to decode the phonemic sounds of the words. However, she engages with reading materials by paging through them and by making use of coping strategies such as looking at pictures to infer meaning.

As said earlier, due to financial constraints the children's parents cannot afford to buy reading material such as books, magazines and newspapers. Instead, they depend on family members, friends and neighbours to provide them with these.
Once a week, Oscar's aunt brings them magazines from work. These magazines are the *Huisgenoot* and the *You*[25]. Once a week Denica reads the *Huisgenoot* or Afrikaans storybooks at her friend's house. One a month, she also reads the *Foschini Club* Booklet.[26] When being employed, Cindy's mother brings a variety of English and Afrikaans magazines from work. The children's reading experience in the home and school domain impacted on their attitudes towards learning and reading.
Tables 15 and 16 illustrate the children's response to whether they enjoy reading and writing Afrikaans and English.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[25] The *Huisgenoot* is an Afrikaans magazine, which is on sale weekly. It covers actuality topics and also focuses on local and international celebrities. Although its target audience is adults and teenagers, it also has educational activities and stories for younger children. The *You* is the English version of the Huisgenoot.

[26] The *Foschini Club booklet* is sold monthly to the clothing store's account holders at a minimal fee. It covers actuality topics and its target audience is adults and teenagers.

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Table 15: The children's experience of reading and writing Afrikaans.

	Reading Afrikaans				Writing Afrikaans	
Respondents	**Enjoys reading Storybooks**	**Do not enjoy reading Storybooks**	**Enjoys reading school readers**	**Do not enjoy reading school readers**	**Enjoys writing activities**	**Do not enjoy writing activities**
Oscar	√		√			√
Denica	√			√		√
Cindy		√		√		√

Table 16: The children's experience of reading and writing English.

	Reading English				Writing English	
Respondents	**Enjoys reading Storybooks**	**Do not enjoy reading Storybooks**	**Enjoys reading school readers**	**Do not enjoy reading school readers**	**Enjoys writing activities**	**Do not enjoy writing activities**
Oscar	√		√			√
Denica		√		√		√
Cindy		√		√		√

Oscar enjoys reading Afrikaans and English storybooks and prescribed school readers. He also enjoys reading children's stories in the *Huisgenoot,* but not always as they are "too difficult". When asked how he experienced learning Afrikaans as a subject, he responded positively in the following manner:

"Afrikaans is op sy kop." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[afrika:ns əs op səi kop] (Phonetic Transcript)

"Afrikaans is fine." (English Translation)

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Denica does not enjoy reading prescribed Afrikaans and English school readers because she struggles to read Afrikaans and English. Although she sometimes enjoys reading Afrikaans storybooks at her friend's house, she rated them as sometimes *"too difficult"*. Like Oscar, she enjoys reading children's stories in the *Huisgenoot,* but not always as they are sometimes "too difficult". Denica does not enjoy reading English storybooks, as they are *"too difficult"*. Denica rated learning Afrikaans as a subject *"easier"* than English.

Cindy does not enjoy reading English and Afrikaans storybooks and prescribed school readers at home or at school because she cannot read in either of these languages. Cindy takes her school reader home, but does not like reading it because it is *"too difficult"*. Although she cannot read, she enjoys looking at colourful pictures in magazines and books. Cindy's contrasting feelings towards compulsory reading at school versus voluntary reading at school and at home (i.e. looking at colourful pictures in magazines and books) provides a powerful argument for Krashen's (1993) free voluntary reading hypothesis. Whenever Cindy is not pressurized to read at school or at home, she enjoys the experience of reading out of choice. Cindy explains why reading at home is sometimes an unpleasant experience:

"Omdat hille (her older sisters) slat my." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[ɔmdat həllə (her older sisters) slat məi] (Phonetic Transcript)
"Because they [her older sisters] ***hit me."*** (English Translation)

Cindy explains why her older sisters hit her when she does not want to read.
"Because ek willie lyste nie." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[Because ɛk vəlli ləistə ni] (Phonetic Transcript)
"Because I do not want to listen." (English Translation)

However, Cindy reports not wanting to read because she cannot read.

Oscar takes his school readers home, whereas Denica only reads them during the compulsory reading period. All three children enjoy cutting out pictures from magazines. It is highly likely that these children's positive attitudes towards *learning* English and Afrikaans at school can be attributed to the amount of support they receive a school. At school they get support from teachers and classmates whereas at

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home they have to rely mostly on their own resources (See 5.6 for a detailed discussion of this point).

The three children's reported learning and reading experiences at home were somewhat negative. All three children reported that they do not use textbooks in class, as they are *"too difficult"*. Their teachers also reported that they do not prefer using these textbooks because most learners cannot read on their own. As these learners are unable to engage independently with grade five and grade six textbooks, they are unable to view for information or respond critically to texts on their own. These beginner-reader storybooks and school readers will not provide these learners with adequate vocabulary and linguistic competence to meet the learning outcome for reading and viewing, pertaining to critical reading.[27] However, these learners make use of coping strategies e.g. 'reading' pictures to infer meaning and by relying on fellow group members or their teachers for assistance. In other words, with a lot of support from their classmates they somehow manage to make meaning of texts.

As a teacher, I find it quite acceptable that they only look at or cut out pictures instead of reading any articles apart from children's stories in magazines. This is because adults and not children are the target audience for newspapers and magazines like *Huisgenoot*. However, the children's stories in the *Huisgenoot* are age-appropriate because they are aimed at children who have had at least two or three years of reading experience.

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None of the three children enjoy writing activities in Afrikaans or English. Oscar describes writing English as sometimes *"too difficult"*. Oscar also stated that he is more competent in reading and writing in English than in Afrikaans. Denica described reading and writing in English and Afrikaans as *"difficult"*. Cindy reported that she experiences reading and writing in English and Afrikaans, as *"too difficult"*. It can be expected that the children are more competent in English literacy than in Afrikaans because English has been their language of learning and teaching since Grade 1 whereas they only started learning Afrikaans as a subject since Grade 4. Judging by their negative reactions towards reading and writing it is highly likely that none of the

[27] See DoE (2002: 62-66).

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children enjoy the experience of learning through the medium of English. This may be because of their constant struggle to cope with a cognitively demanding curriculum through a language they are still learning.

These children's negative experiences resonate with similar situations where learners who are not adequately prepared to learn through the medium of English, are forced to do so. Such an example is Macdonald's (1990) Threshold Project, which found that grade four learners were unprepared for the sudden transition to English as LoLT. These learners only had exposure to about 800 words in English by the end of four years of school, but needed a vocabulary of about 5000 words in order to cope with the demands of standard 3 (grade 5) and beyond (Macdonald 1990: 48). Given their limited exposure to English, it is possible that these learners may have had surface fluency or basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), but not cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) that implies functioning at context reduced, cognitively demanding levels in the classroom.

The three children have different experiences of the library. Oscar has positive feelings towards the library. He has been a library member since January 2002. He visits the library twice a month and reads more English than Afrikaans. When taking out library books he usually selects three English and two Afrikaans storybooks. He is also eager to return his library books and to take out new ones. He mostly reads these storybooks at home, but also reads them at the library. Oscar's favourite stories are the fairy tale called *Snow White* and a story called: *Surprise!* This story is about a boy called Ryan and his friends meeting Nelson Mandela at the Waterfront.

For Denica the library has a negative connotation. Although she is a library member, she has not visited the library since December 2002. This is because she is afraid of the gangsters who pester the children and pass rude remarks. Although she was not involved in any incidents she has witnessed how gangsters terrorized her friends. Denica's favourite story is *Sneeuwitjie*, an Afrikaans version of the fairy tale *Snow White.*

Cindy associates the library with 'fun' and 'play'. At the library she is not pressurized to read and is allowed to choose books she likes and do those reading activities she

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enjoys e.g. looking at colourful books with pop-up pictures. Although she is not a library member she occasionally accompanies her older sister, who is in grade nine, to the library. Every second week she also accompanies her friend to the library.

It is significant that none of these children have a wide-ranging taste in reading. Their reading habits impact negatively on their writing proficiency. Their reported low language competence pertaining to literacy in English (See e.g. Table 10) indicates that they experience difficulty with writing activities. These difficulties can be linked to their limited reading experiences. As Edelsky (1996: 36) points out, it is wide reading rather than writing that gives access to what is to be learnt for writing. Also, good writing style is acquired by reading (Krashen 1993: 72). This hypothesis is consistent with what is known about language acquisition. Language acquisition comes from input and not output, from comprehension, not production (Krashen 1993: 75-76). Thus, good reading practices are a requirement for good writing practices.

The quantity as well as the quality (or level) of the reading material found in the homes of the three children is significant in terms of their English and Afrikaans literacy development. The small amount of children's reading materials and the absence of referencing literature (such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries and atlases) as well as the paucity of English and Afrikaans reading material indicate that none of these children have a stimulating literacy environment at home. The small amount of children's reading materials and the absence of referencing literature illustrates the vast difference between the rich literacy environments found in middle class households compared to economically disadvantaged homes.

During the oral interviews with the three children, their parents and teachers, it became clear that the level of English and Afrikaans storybooks Oscar voluntarily engages with at home are not age-appropriate. The same can be said of the English school readers Oscar and Denica read at school. Although they are able to read for enjoyment, the storybooks and school readers they read are ideal for beginner readers

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and not grade 6 learners.[28] This means that the type of stories they read and the degree of complexity of these stories is far below grade six level. However, these two children participate in free voluntary reading, as they read out of choice. As discussed earlier, free voluntary reading means reading because you want to and also putting down a book you don't like and instead, choosing one you like.

5.4 Literacy Practices at Home and at School

All three children reported that school literacy practices shaped their learning. Oscar and Denica said this was because they read and write more at school than at home. Cindy said it was because she reads and writes very little at home. Without hesitation, all three children mentioned their mothers having a positive influence on their learning and reading. This reflects on the significant role mothers play as gatekeepers for their children's literacy development. Oscar and Denica also credited their teachers for having a positive influence on their learning and reading.

Their teachers influence them on a daily basis by teaching them and by assisting them in class. Denica 's class teacher pays special attention to her during the thirty-minute compulsory reading period at school. Oscar 's mother, who cannot read and write long sentences or difficult words, calls him whenever she wants him to read to her. Denica's mother and older brother remind her to do her homework. Cindy's mother encourages her to read children's stories in the *Huisgenoot.* Being unable to decode the phonemic sounds of the words, Cindy reads the pictures to infer meaning and then make up her own story. Her mother would listen to her and then ask her to read another story by saying:

"Kô Cindy, lies nou dié." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[kɔ səndi, li:s nœu di] (Phonetic Transcript)

"Come Cindy, read this." (English Translation)

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[28] The school readers are part of the Sunny Day Series, which is used in the Maskew Miller Longman English Programme. Sunny Day Readers are graded readers aimed at children at the primary school level. Each level is equivalent to a year of school study; Level 1-3 is aimed at Grades 1-3).

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5.4.1 Literacy Events in the Home

The three children and their mothers or older siblings share real literacy events where spoken and written language is intertwined. In some of these literacy events all talk taking place is centered on a text and written language is fore-grounded.

The following table illustrates the type of literacy events the children are engaged in at home.

Table 17: Literacy events in the home

Literacy events in the home			
	Oscar	**Denica**	**Cindy**
Looking up telephone numbers	√	√	
Reading, Translating and Explaining letters or notes	√		
Reading what is written on envelopes		√	
Reading excerpts from the Bible	√	√	
Reading excerpts from school reader	√		
Reading devotional cards		√	
Acting as scribe	√		
Copying pop lyrics			√
Copying hymns		√	

Examples of these literacy events are when Oscar looks up phone numbers in the telephone directory, reads, translates and explains letters or notes from school and acts as a scribe when his mother dictates shopping lists to him. He also reads very short passages from the Afrikaans Bible at his mother's request. Sometimes he also reads interesting extracts from his English storybooks and translates them for his mother. His older siblings also assist his mother with reading and filling in of documents.

Denica also engages in literacy events by looking up phone numbers of family members in her mother's notebook and by taking out the post to read who the letters are for. She also copies hymns from the hymnal. During church service, which is held three times a week at night, she follows the scripture reading in her Afrikaans Bible. She also reads short devotional verses called Koringkorrels on her mother's request. On some afternoons, Denica also asks her older sister to read a children's story from the *Huisgenoot* to her. None of these respondents write letters to family members or friends.

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5.4.2 Examples of Print

As mentioned earlier, since these learners do not grow up in a print-rich environment they are deprived of countless opportunities to observe how written language works, how it is used by adults and how to make written language work for them. Oscar blends strategies learned at school by repeatedly writing English words and sentences done in school. He seldom writes in Afrikaans. He also draws pictures and usually spends about an hour doing these writing activities. When running out of paper he writes on the kitchen door or on the back of his wardrobe. He uses white chalk, which he brings from school.

Figure 1: Oscar's attempt at writing the title of one of his favourite stories.

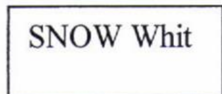

Figure 2 on page 88 is a photograph showing how Oscar blends strategies learnt during a spelling lesson at school.

Oscar rehearsed an Afrikaans-spelling lesson done in school by copying from his notebook. Both his English and Afrikaans teachers have more than twenty years teaching experience respectively and have attended all workshops presented by the WCED pertaining to Outcomes Based Education in the Intermediate phase. These two teachers use the Inductive-Functional method in teaching English as primary language and Afrikaans as additional language to the grades sixes. They introduce new learning material by using an interesting poem, text or comprehension as starting point. All aspects of language learning namely oral, spelling, reading, dictation, creative writing and grammar are based on this poem, text or comprehension and are thus taught in context. Both teachers encourage group work where possible as most of the learners are unable to work independently and can thus only benefit from peer interaction.

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Figure 2: Blending strategies learnt at school (Spelling Lesson)

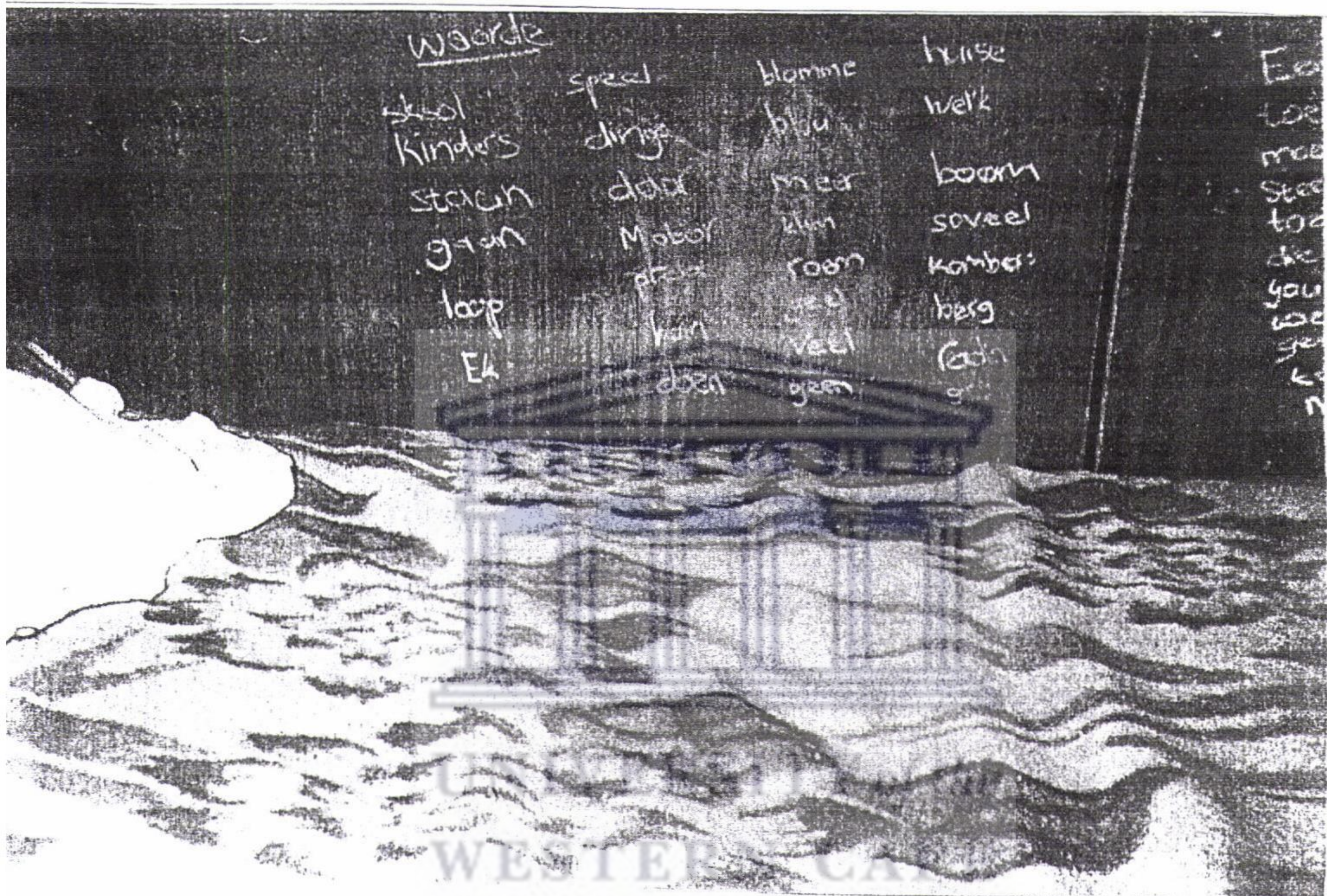

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Figure 3 on page 90 is a photograph showing how Oscar blends strategies learnt at school. Oscar also practised his understanding of Technology and also listed Natural Science themes for the 2003 academic year. The Life-Orientation lesson learnt at school made an impression on Oscar and he therefore decided to document this important message about Hands Off Our Children (HOOC) project. This time he chose to write on the fence in his backyard. Although Oscar has copied this list from his writing books it reflects on how his literacy learning is embedded in his social and cultural life.

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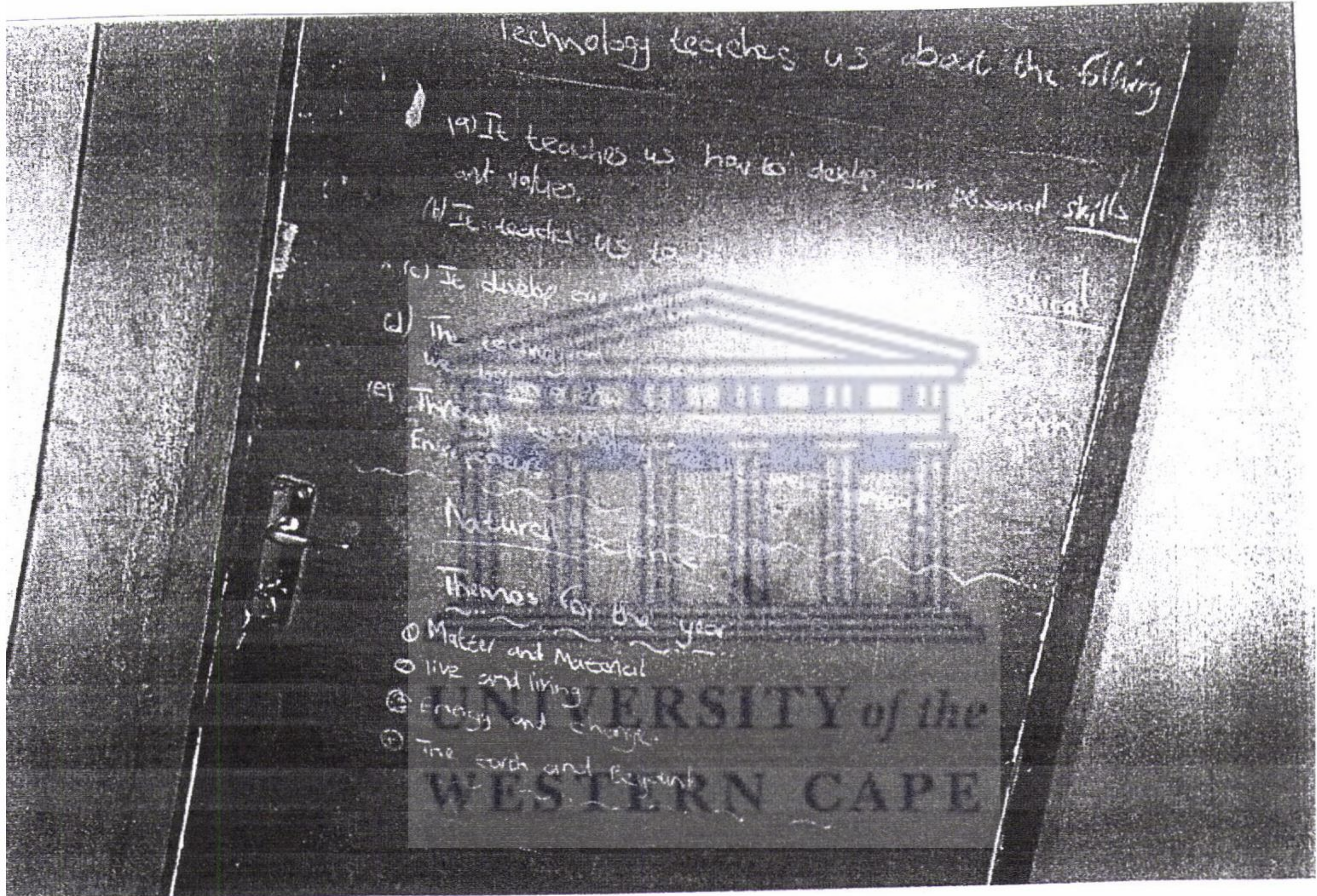
Figure 3: Blending strategies learnt at school (Technology and Natural Science)



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Apart from writing compositions and letters at school all of the three children reported that they have never written their own fictional stories in their home language, Afrikaans or in English. When I asked them whether they would like to write a short story in Afrikaans or in English Oscar was the only one who volunteered. He wrote a very imaginative story in Afrikaans about three siblings' encounter with a witch, which started on the back of his wardrobe and ended on the kitchen door. Although his story was without punctuation marks and contained a lot of spelling errors the storyline was easy to follow and in chronological order. It is obvious that Oscar's imagination was to some extent developed and that he benefited from his own regular story reading. Unlike the other two children, Oscar has learnt and used the language of stories and has acquired writing style, the special language of writing, by reading (Krashen 1993: 72). Oscar was able to re-tell the story orally. Unfortunately, I did not ask him to explain the meaning of the story. Figure 4a on page 91 is a photograph showing the first part of an unedited version of Oscar's imaginative story in Afrikaans. Figure 4b on page 92 is an unedited version of the full story in Afrikaans. Figure 4c on page 92 is an English Translation of the story.

As religion plays a central role in Oscar and Denica's life, their literacy events include activities related to religion (See Table 17). Figure 5 on page 93 illustrates a literacy event, which is important to Denica.

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Cindy's literacy is also situated and influenced by broader social relations i.e. the kinship between herself and her older sibling. What she does with literacy is related to what is important to her. She participates in a literacy activity, which illustrates what she regards as important and enjoyable; namely to copy the lyrics of popular songs her older sister writes down. Cindy, who appeared to be the least proficient in English, displayed evidence of alternative literacy practices. Figure 6 on page 94 are photographs of Cindy and her friends engaging in these literacy practices.

Such literacy practices included role-play activities whereby Cindy and two or three of her Afrikaans-speaking friends pretend to be prospective employees at a factory and bank clients who draw money at an automatic teller machine. These role-play activities usually take place once or twice a week, after school. The children speak their home language, Afrikaans during these activities. The children tear out pages

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from old school books (sometimes also their new ones) to make identity documents, employees clock cards and bankcards for each one of them. Although they copy from their parents' documents, they fill in their own details. Each one of the children completes their own documents and also cuts out pictures from magazines to use as ID photos.

- 'At the Bank'

Cindy's prepares thoroughly for going to the bank to draw money inside or at the ATM. By taking along her bankcard and ID document, she displays an awareness of the type of documentation required in official situations. During these role-play activities Cindy displays evidence of numerical literacy by helping to write out the amounts of money the group will be using. Although Cindy and her friends did not know financial terms like overdrafts and loan agreements, they understood the concepts and could easily say that they will ask the bank to give them more money if their own money is not enough.

- 'At the Workplace'

When job-hunting, Cindy and her friends ask to speak to the manager of the factory. They simulate interview situations where each one takes a turn to be the interviewer or the interviewee. They answer questions posed to them (such as age, previous job experience, etc.) and are able to say what kind of job they are interested in. When concluding the interviews, they present their IDs and collect relevant documentation such as employees' cards. In follow-up role-play activities they swipe these employees' cards in order to record their working hours. Sometimes Cindy also signs in or out.

These literacy practices emphasize the situated nature of literacy, namely that it always exists in a social context (Barton and Hamilton 2000: 8-9). The kind of writing activities Cindy and her friends engage in depends on the kind of situation they are in. They prepare official documents to be used in official domains such as the bank and the workplace. These literacy events also illustrate an ecological approach to literacy; how literacy is embedded in the children's social and cultural life (Barton 1994: 30). As a bank client and prospective employee, Cindy prepares herself by taking along

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the required documentation. She also understands the relevance of these documents in official domains and therefore prepares them meticulously. Her writing activities reflect on the inter-relatedness of literacy concerning what is important to her (e.g. applying for a job and drawing money). In this case, she needed to write (e.g. signing her name) as part of the record-keeping system at her 'workplace'. She also needed to prepare her personal documents (e.g. her ID and bankcard) in order to draw money at the bank. We also see how her literacy practices are situated in broader social relations. Cindy indicated that she wants to work in the clothing industry i.e. being a machinist in a clothing factory. As a machinist she will not need to engage with a variety of literacy practices and literacy texts. Therefore, her documents included basic items (such as an ID and employee's card).

Cindy's role-play activities signal the important relationship between the development of written language and symbolic play in young children (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 471). Through play, Cindy and her friends grapple with the symbolic nature of written language. They use symbols by making one thing represent another. Their handmade money notes, ID documents, bankcards and employee cards represent authentic documentation. Thus, as they play, they invest meaning in objects and signs. Their imaginary role-play activities underlie their literacy development (Bloch 1997: 5-6). The social relations existing in broader society (e.g. the relationship between employee and employer, bank official and bank client, etc.) are enacted in their role-play.

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Although Cindy showed potential for literacy in her role-play activities, these alternative literacy practices remain unused, as the school does not value them. The school does not tap into the knowledge and experiences children bring from home. These findings of Cindy's alternative literacy practices relate to Barton and Hamilton's (2000: 12) finding that socially powerful institutions such as schools support dominant literacy practices whereas alternative literacy practices which exist in peoples' everyday lives are less visible and less supported.

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Figure 4a: Creative Writing (Unedited)

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Figure 4 b: Creative Writing (Unedited)

Een was daar 'n 3 kinder 'n ma en 'n heks toe het die ma vir die kinders gesê Julle moet nie vir die heks groet nie toe een dag steer die ma vir die ouse kind winkel toe toe staan die heks langs die paat toe vraa die heks vir die kind het jou mammie vir jou geleer nie om ander mense te groet nie toe sê die kind vir die heks my ma het gesê ek moenie vir die heks groet nie toe sê die heks vir die kind ek gaan nou vir Jou toor laat Jy se vir 'n biejie gelt toe toor die heks vir die kind toe stier die ma vir die tweede ouse kind toe staan die heks langs die paat toe vraa die heks vir die kind het jou maa nie vir jou geleer om ander mense te groet nie toe sê die kind vir die heks my maa het gesê ek moet nie vir die heks groet nie toe sê die heks vir die kind ek gaan nou vir Jou toor toe stuur die maa vir die jongste kind toe vra die heks vir die kind het Jou maa nie vir Jou geleer om ander mense te groet nie toe sê die kind vir die heks my maa het gesê ek moet nie vir die heks groet nie toe sê die heks vir die kind ek gaan nou vir Jou toor laat Jy sê hêe gaat ons toe maak die heks asof sy doof is toe kom die polismaan daar an toe vraa die polismaan wie het die vrou dood gemaak toe sê die kinders ons het toe vraa die polisiemaan vir hoekom vir 'n biejie gelt antwoord die kinders toe sê die polisiemaan klim in die wen toe sê die kinders hêe gaat ons hêe gaat ons.

Figure 4 c English Translation (Edited)

Once there were three children, their mother and a witch. The mother told her children: "You mustn't greet the witch." One day the mother sent the eldest child to the shop. The witch was standing next to the road. The witch asked the child: "Didn't your mother teach you to greet other people?" The child told the witch: "My mother said I mustn't greet the witch." Then the witch replied: "I am going to cast a spell on you for some money." The witch put a spell on the child. Then the mother sent the second eldest child. The witch was standing next to the road. The witch asked the child: "Didn't your mother teach you to greet other people?" The child told the witch: "My mother said I mustn't greet the witch." Then the witch replied: "I am going to cast a spell on you. Then the mother sent the youngest child. The witch asked the child: "Didn't your mother teach you to greet other people?" The child told the witch: "My mother said I mustn't greet the witch." Then the witch replied: "I am going to cast a spell on you so that you say: " Here we go." The witch pretended to be dead. Then the police arrived and the policeman asked: "Who killed the woman?" Then the children replied: "We did." Then the policeman asked: "Why?" "For some money" answered the children. Then the policeman said: "Get in the van." Then the children said: "Here we go, here we go."

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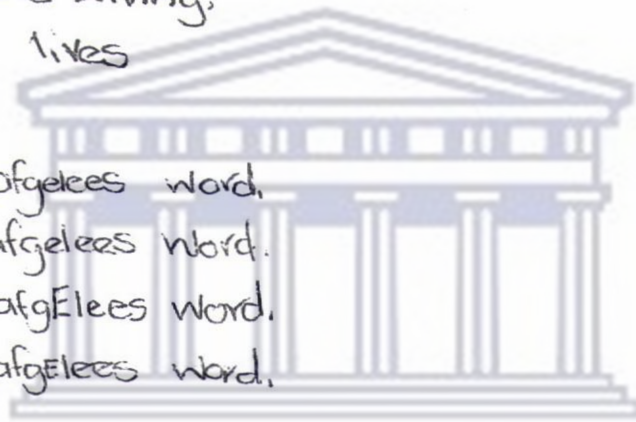
Figure 5: Copying Hymns

Because He lives
I Can face tomorrow
Because He lives
My fear is gone
Because I kaow
He holds the Future.
And lfe is worth the Living.
Just because He lives

As.. die rol... daar afgelees word.
As...die rol... daar afgelees word.
As...die rol...daar afgElees word.
As...die rol...daar afgElees word.
is Ek daar.



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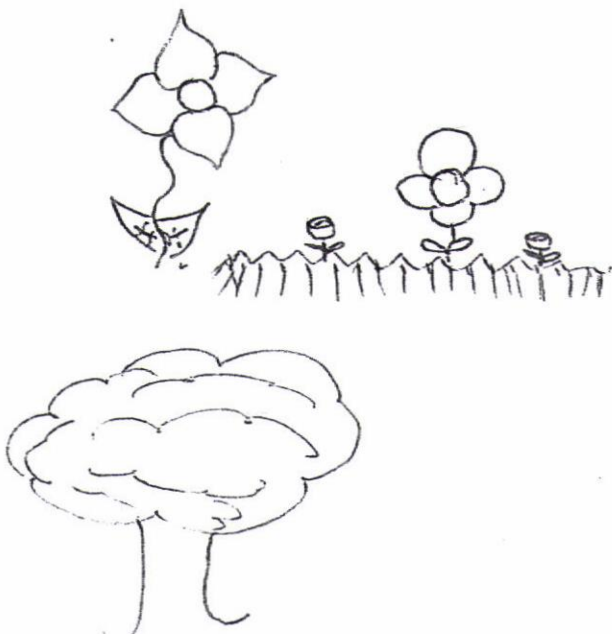

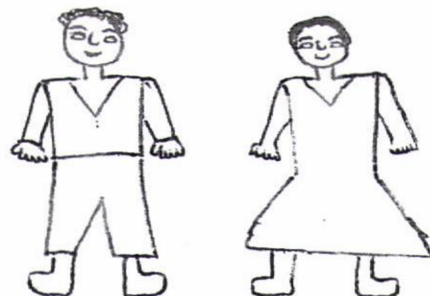

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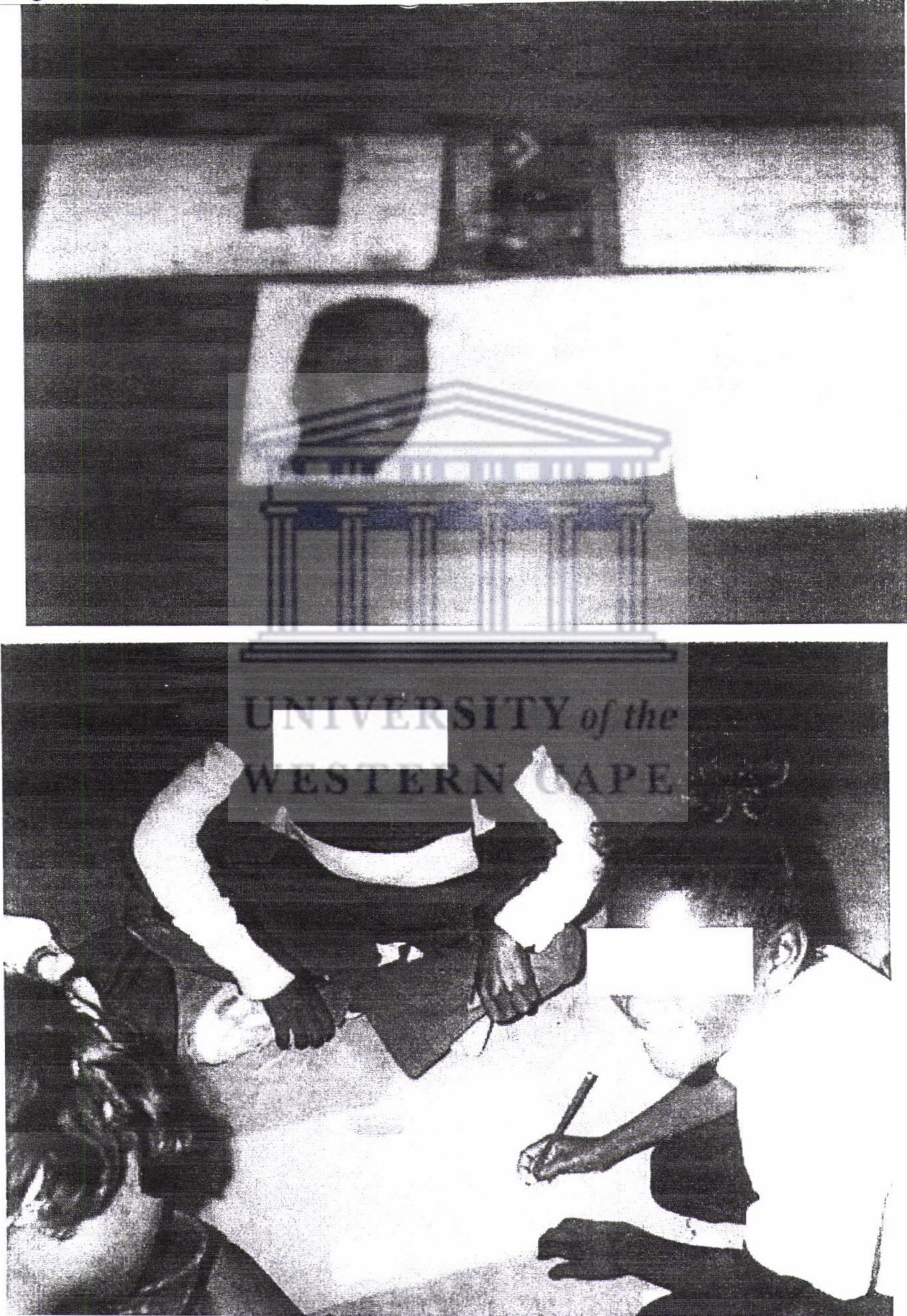
Figure 6: Alternative Literacy Practices



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5.4.3 The Reading Comprehension Task

When the English Comprehension task was administered the first time during October 2001, all three children were in grade 4. The literacy task offered useful insights into the children's proficiency in English reading and writing. The children had to look at the pictures of a sports day in order to activate their background knowledge, answer low-level inference and factual questions and then lastly, write two paragraphs of three or four meaningful sentences about their favourite sport or their favourite sports star. Examples of these low-level inference questions are:

- *"If Khazi jumps 1,4 metres, will he beat Mandla?"*
- *"Why do you think the children practised so hard?"*

The children's writing was assessed according to the following Learning Outcome for Grade 4:

Learning Outcome 4: Writing

The learner is able to write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.

I used the following Assessment Standards to assess whether the three children were able to meet this learning outcome for writing:

- The learner is able to write creatively (i.e. shows ability to write a simple story of two to three paragraphs).
- The learner is able to spell familiar words correctly.

I awarded a summative score out of ***ten (10)*** for this writing task and also used the following Formative Codes to record the children's achieved Learning Outcome 4 pertaining to writing:

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	Explanation of Formative Codes	Summative Score
5	Learner may be at the next level.	**9-10**
4	Learner has met the criteria (i.e. has achieved the requirements of the Learning Outcome) for this level and can move to the next level.	**7-8**
3	Learner is able to do task (i.e. meet the requirements of the Learning Outcome), Need more practice. Possibly only able to in one context.	**5-6**
2	Learner is only able to do task (i.e. meet the requirements of the Learning Outcome) at basic level with support.	**3-4**
1	Learner attempted task but not able at to meet the requirements of the Learning Outcome.	**1-2**
NY	Not yet been exposed to this	**0**

All three children scored very well on the questions that required one-word answers. However, Oscar was the only one who was able to answer Section C, which required answers in full sentences. The following table illustrates examples of two sentences (unedited) written by the three children.

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Table 18: Sentences written by the three children (2001)

Oscar	**"I Prektis very hard to win."** *(Unedited version)* [I practise very hard to win.] *(Edited version)*
	"Wen I grown up i want to play for South Afica." *(Unedited version)* [When I grow up I want to play for South Africa] *(Edited version)*
Denica	**"I lik play ing net ball"** *(Unedited version)* [I like playing netball.] *(Edited version)*
	"I can shoot in. But I cannot bans the ball tliois." *(Unedited version)* [I can shoot in, but I cannot bounce the ball twice.] *(Edited version)*
Cindy	**"My favourite sports star"** *(Unedited version)* [My favourite sports star…] *(Edited Version)*
	"yes Not yet my songs Mum coffee" *(Unedited version)*

Oscar and Denica showed a clear understanding of the topic as well as good syntax control. Both of them were able to write a simple story by using two or three

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paragraphs to express their ideas about the topic. However, both of them were unable to spell look-and-say words (such as like, when, to) correctly. These spelling mistakes illustrate that they were also unable to look for the correct spelling of certain words (such as practise, like, etc.) in the Comprehension task. Although these two children erred mostly in low-order writing skills by displaying spelling errors, their sentences illustrated that they have communicative competence. Oscar also has metalinguistic knowledge. Metalinguistic knowledge or awareness can be loosely defined as "the ability to think about and reflect upon the nature and functions of language" (Baker 1993: 122-123). This would imply that Oscar is able to reflect upon and manipulate the structural features of language. Learners who have metalinguistic awareness thus have cognitive control of linguistic processes such as the ability to determine whether sentences are grammatically correct or not. Metalinguistic awareness is also regarded as a key factor in the development of reading in young children.

Oscar's sentences were coherent and followed logically after each whereas Denica's sentences were not very coherent and logical. He also displayed a wider vocabulary than Denica. Denica wrote five paragraphs, but repeated herself. Her sentences were easy to read and her vocabulary was very basic. Oscar accordingly achieved a formative score of 3 and a summative score of 5 for his story. Denica achieved a formative score of 2 and a summative score of 3 for her story.

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Cindy erred in high-order writing skills by misinterpreting the topic. She had no idea what a sentence or paragraphs was, which indicates that she does not have metalinguistic knowledge. Cindy also erred in low-order skills by producing wrongly spelled words and incorrect use of capital letters and small letters. She did not write any sentences of her own, but copied sentences from the Comprehension task and also copied unrelated words from a reading list hanging on the walls of the classroom (See Table 18). She was thus unable to meet the learning outcome for writing and thus only managed to achieve a formative and summative score of 1.

I re-administered the English reading comprehension task in March 2003 for the following reasons. Firstly, I wanted to compare the three children's recent performance to their performance in the previous task administered to them in October 2001. Secondly, I wanted to find out whether they would be able to make

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meaning of the written text on their own, i.e. whether they were independent readers. Thirdly, I wanted to find out how they made meaning of written texts. I used a revised version of the Assessment Codes according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement for English as First Additional Language. Both Oscar and Denica were in grade six and Cindy was repeating grade five. I used the same Assessment Standards, which I used when the three children were in grade four, for the following reasons:

(i) The Comprehension task was exactly the same in terms of degree of complexity, etc.

(ii) I wanted to compare the children's writing proficiency with their writing proficiency in grade four and thus determine whether their writing proficiency has improved since grade four.

As before, I awarded a summative score out of ***ten (10)*** for this writing task and also used the following National Codes to record whether the children achieved Learning Outcome 4 pertaining to writing:

Explanation of Formative Codes		Summative Score
4	Learner's performance has ***exceeded*** the Learning Outcome.	**7-8**
3	Learner's performance has ***satisfied*** the requirements of the Learning Outcome.	**5-6**
2	Learner's performance has ***partially satisfied*** the requirements of the Learning Outcome.	**3-4**
1	Learner's performance has ***not satisfied*** the requirements of the Learning Outcome.	**1-2**

(DoE 2002: 118)

Oscar was able to read the instructions independently and completed the comprehension task on his own. Although the text and pictures were familiar to them, Denica and Cindy were unable to decode the written text and asked for assistance. I therefore read and explained each question and picture while the two of them followed with their fingers. Some questions were first read, explained in English, and if necessary, translated and explained in Afrikaans. They took one hour and fifteen minutes to complete the task. I asked them whether they knew the meaning of certain

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key words e.g. *"fastest"* and *"slowest".* Cindy understood the question pertaining to *"slowest",* which was asked in English, but answered in Afrikaans:

"Wie haloepi staragste." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[vi halupi stã:raxstə] (Phonetic Transcript)
"Who runs the slowest." (English Translation)

I explained the following question ***" Why do you think the children practised so hard?"*** in Afrikaans by appealing to their prior knowledge:

E.g. "As ons oefen vir atletiek, hoekom oefen ons atlete so hard?" [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[as ***ons*** ufə***n*** fər atlətik, hukom ufə***n ons*** atle:tə so: hart?] (Phonetic Transcript)
"When practising for the athletics, why do our athletes practise so hard?" (English Translation)

Although Denica has never participated in athletics or sport at school, she was able to draw on her existing knowledge about athletics and answered correctly in English:

"They practise to win." (English Translation)

We reread the story to find the answer to the following question:

"On which day was the sports day?"

Of the three children Cindy was the least able to work independently and posed questions in Afrikaans e.g.

"Moen ôsi hele sin skryf?" [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[m***un*** ɔ***s***i he:lə sən skrə***if?***] (Phonetic Transcript)
"Do we have to write the whole sentence?" (English Translation)

Oscar completed the task on his own, but did not follow the instructions for section C, which stated:

"Answer these questions in full sentences"

I reminded him to answer in full sentences. I assisted all three learners with Section E (Writing two or three paragraphs) by reading and explaining what was expected of them. I explained details like format, number of sentences and explicitly told them to base the content of their two paragraphs on questions like *"Who?"* *"What?"* *"When?"* *"How?"* and *"Why,* where possible.

Oscar needed assistance with the writing task and posed the following question:

Oscar: ***"Teacher, how many paragraphs must we write?"***

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Interviewer: ***"Two paragraphs. Did you write the topic of your story?"***

Oscar: ***"What is 'topic'?"***

Interviewer: ***"The name of your story."***

Despite being in grade six and supposedly having five years of writing stories and letters, Oscar's unfamiliarity with the term "topic" was a reason for concern. On further probing, I also discovered that none of the three children has ever written their own fictional stories in their home language, Afrikaans or in English. The following table illustrates examples of two sentences (unedited) written by the three children.

Table 19: Sentences written by the three children (2003)

Oscar	**"I like to play table tanes becaus it is fun."** *(Unedited version)* [I like to play table tennis because it is fun.] *(Edited version)*
	"And sometime then you go on a kampe." *(Unedited version)* [Sometimes you go on a camp.] *(Edited version)*
Denica	**"My favourite sport Nebol."** *(Unedited version)* [My favourite sport is netball.] *(Edited version)*
	I feel Good We I play with my friends." *(Unedited version)* I feel good when I play with my friends.] *(Edited version)*
Cindy	**"My favouri te sports"** *(Unedited version)* [My favourite sports is…]*(Edited version)*
	"you and I my tll hom." *(Unedited version)*

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The three children chose to write paragraphs about the same topic as before. As before, Oscar and Denica showed a clear understanding of the topic. Oscar displayed very good syntax control. Once again, they were able to write a simple story by using two or three paragraphs to express their ideas about the topic. Oscar's lower-order writing skills (such as the correct spelling of look-and-say words) have improved since grade four. However, although Denica also showed an overall improvement in her spelling, she still struggled to spell basic words (such as children, like, the, fun, etc.) correctly. As before, their sentences illustrated that they have communicative competence. Denica also displayed evidence of metalinguistic knowledge.

Oscar's sentences showed an improvement in terms of coherence, vocabulary and sentence structure whereas Denica's sentences showed an improvement in terms of

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coherence and spelling. Of the two children, Oscar displayed a higher level of metalinguistic awareness and achieved a formative score of 3, which is the same as in grade four, but an improved summative score of 6 for his story. Denica also achieved a similar formative score of 2 as in grade four, but an improved summative score of 4 for her story.

Overall, Cindy's writing skills showed no improvement. As before, she erred in high-order writing skills by not discussing the topic. Once again, she did not display any metalinguistic knowledge, as she was unable to write paragraphs, but wrote six sentences, which did not make any sense. However, Cindy showed an overall improvement in her lower-order thinking skills. She was able to use the correct spelling for basic look-and-say words (such as and, I, is, you, in, to, etc.) correctly. She also improved in using basic punctuation (such as capital letters and full stops) appropriately. However, she was still unable to write meaningful sentences of her own (See Table 12) and was thus unable to meet the learning outcome for writing. She achieved a similar formative score of 1 as in grade four, but an improved summative score of 2 for her story.[29] (See 5.6 for a detailed discussion.)

Of the three children Oscar was the only one who showed a significant improvement in his writing skills. All three children achieved the same formative score, but an improved summative score. All three children had English as LoLT since grade 1 and were thus exposed to the structural form of the language. However, since these learners were immersed in an English-only learning programme, they did not learn to think and function in their first language up to the CALP level. All three children's inability to achieve higher formative codes than in grade four is significant and illustrates the following:

(i) They did not acquire cognitive skills in their home language, Afrikaans, that can be transferred to English.

(ii) As concepts were not formed and learned in their home language, they did not get an opportunity to develop a strong foundation in thinking and imagination skills (Bloch and Mahlalela 1998: 24).

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[29] Cindy may have a genuine learning problem because she struggles with all her learning areas. During January 2003 she was referred to a remedial teacher to be assessed.

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(iii) Cindy, and to a lesser degree also Denica, demonstrated an inability to build her story on *'what'*, *'why'* or *'who'* questions. This implies that they are unable to respond to questions about purpose and cause, which are concepts basic to clear thinking.

Compared to the other two mothers, Oscar's mother's lack of oracy and literacy skills (See Table 7 & 8) in English indicates that she is unable to support his literacy development in English. Therefore, the significant improvement in Oscar's writing skills can be attributed to other factors, which includes free voluntary reading done by him, and his literacy practices at home. Furthermore, the limited amount of time Oscar spends on compulsory writing activities (such as homework) compared to the huge amount of time he spends on voluntary, 'unofficial' writing activities (writing on his wardrobe and the fence) indicates that he is actively involved in controlling his literacy development.

5.4.4 Types of uses of reading and writing

Heath (1983: 99) identified numerous purposes for reading and writing. Some of these purposes for reading and writing, which the three children and their families participate in, include the following:

5.4.4.1 Uses of reading

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- Instrumental Reading

Instrumental reading includes reading price tags on consumer items and environmental print such as traffic signs, house numbers, street signs, etc. The three mothers and their children read practical things (such as the instructions on electricity vouchers illustrating how to punch in pre-paid electricity) in order to operate successfully in their daily lives. The three children and their mothers mostly engage with instrumental reading and writing as this type of reading and writing is not dependent on reading proficiency.

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- Social/Interactional Reading and Writing

Of the three mothers, Denica's mother is the only person who engages with this type of reading in order to maintain social relationships. Once a year she sends a birthday card to her relatives in Ceres. The three children observe their mothers and neighbours publicly discussing informational leaflets such as announcements of community meetings or evangelical campaigns. This type of reading is dealt with as a group activity as friends, family members and neighbours all participate in explaining, clarifying or elaborating on the content of these leaflets.

- News-Related Reading and Writing

The families of the three children read to gain information from local or distant events. This type of reading includes reading daily and community newspapers as well as reading and writing notes from school. Denica's mother reads the *Cape Times* on a daily basis on her way home from work because she likes to learn real things and wants to be informed about current affairs. She also stated her reason for wanting to be informed:

"Ek is baie nieskierig." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[ɛk əs baiə niskirəx] (Phonetic Transcript)
"I am very curious." (English Translation)

Cindy's mother regularly reads the community newspaper. During one of the interviews held with her, she voluntarily related a story about local events she has read in the Sunday newspaper, *Die Rapport*[30].

- Confirmational Reading

Mrs D. and Mrs O. reported reading activities, which are done to support their religious beliefs. Both of them follow the scripture reading in the Bible and also read

[30] The *Rapport* is a national Afrikaans weekly newspaper.

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the Bible at home. Reading the Bible is part of Mrs O's daily routine as she daily spends considerable time (i.e. about twenty minutes) reading the Bible.

5.4.4.2 Uses of Writing

- Memory Aids

The three children and their families do very little writing to serve as a reminder for themselves and/or others. At the beginning of each year Mrs. D. updates her notebook by writing telephone numbers of her relatives. All three families circle important dates e.g. birthdays on the calendar.

- Substitute for Oral Messages

Denica's mother makes use of this type of writing when direct oral communication is not possible. As she works long hours during the day she relies on her fourteen-year old daughter to translate and write explanatory notes in English to school. Although Oscar's mother stays opposite the school she prefers writing notes to communicate with her son's teachers. She cannot speak English and therefore does not want to be embarrassed when having to interact with his teachers. Oscar's aunt or older brother usually writes these notes on behalf of his mother. As most of these reading and writing activities are taking place infrequently, it implies that these parents do not constantly model reading and writing behaviours for their children.

- Demonstrating Ownership

The three children demonstrate their ownership (cf Barton 1994: 157) by writing their names on their belongings.

As literacy practices at home are a determiner of reading abilities and subsequently of academic success, the three children, Oscar, Denica and Cindy are at risk of falling behind academically. To some extent, these children fit the profile of learners at risk portrayed by Snow et al. (1998: 5). Learners who are mostly at risk of falling behind

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from the onset of their schooling are those from low socio-economic areas, learners with limited proficiency in the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) and learners whose parents themselves have limited proficiency in the target language. (See Table 8.)

Research on early childhood literacy development (Bloch 1997) illustrates the significance of literacy experience at home and writing done by parents or caregivers as resources for young children's learning. Being constantly aware of the social significance of reading and writing, children are active participants in the continuing development of literacy practices. However, for the three children in my study, the absence of literacy practices in the home by their parents (such as letter writing) prevents them from making significant inferences regarding these kinds of texts. Firstly, these inferences include being aware of the social relationships involved in writing letters to their relatives. Secondly, they include demonstrating an awareness of the technical aspects of letter writing e.g. content, form and appropriate language. As Kenner (2000) suggests, experience gained by socially constructed literacy events like letter writing will enable children to develop their own writing. Edelsky (1996: 55) also reiterates that written language is acquired through actual use. "Some of that use occurs during interaction with others who demonstrate while they are using written language *what* written language is for and *how* it works." If children are not exposed to meaningful writing practices in their home environment, then the onus is on the school environment to provide these kinds of literacy practices.

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5.5 Literacy Mediators

Literacy mediators are people who engage with literacy tasks on behalf of others (Malan 1996: 105). The three children's mothers and older siblings act as literacy mediators by being instrumental in the children's literacy development. These literacy mediators play a significant role in the transmission of literacy skills by doing the following:

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5.5.1 Being a Role Model

Oscar's mother is a role model for him when she encourages him to join her in looking at interesting pictures in the *Huisgenoot.* He observes how literacy forms part of her daily activities as she spends five to ten minutes reading the Bible every day. Denica's older sister and mother are her role models. Denica's sister regularly reads library books and magazines (e.g. *Huisgenoot)*. By going to the library on a regular basis, her sister demonstrates the important role the public library plays in her life. Denica's mother reads regularly (i.e. three times a week) from her Afrikaans Bible during church meetings. At home her mother spends considerable time (i.e. for about twenty minutes) reading the Bible on a daily basis. Once a month she also reads the *Foschini Club* booklets. Cindy's mother and older sisters are her role models. Her sisters are fond of reading and read Afrikaans romance novels every day. Cindy's mother also reads regularly; she reads magazines and newspapers for about half an hour every day.

5.5.2 Teaching their children to read

These mothers do not have experience of teaching young children to read and write. However, they draw on their own childhood experiences of learning to read at school and at home. Although Oscar's mother and Denica 's mother do not technically assist them with their reading they provide them with ample opportunity to practise skills learnt at school. Oscar's mother does this by asking him to read short passages from the Afrikaans Bible to her. As mentioned previously, once a week Denica 's mother asks her to read short Afrikaans devotional verses called *Koringkorrels* [ko:riŋkɔrəls].

These children do not have experience of seeing their mothers or both parents engaging with literacy practices such as letter writing, making diary entries, filling in documents or writing recipes. Instead, their older siblings or they themselves act as literacy mediators on behalf of their mothers. These literacy mediators do most of the reading and writing in English. Oscar reads, translates and explains English notes or letters from school to his mother. He also acts as a scribe when she dictates her

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shopping list (in Afrikaans) to him. His older siblings assist his mother with reading and filling in of documents.

Whenever Denica's mother has to write notes or letters to school she explains the contents to her fourteen-year old daughter who translates and writes the letter in English. At work, her Human Resource Officer acts as a literacy mediator by reading and explaining the formal registers of these official documents to Denica's mother. His assistance enables her to make meaning of these formal written registers contained in employment contracts or official documents such as loan agreement forms. These children and their older siblings act as literacy mediators by explaining, reading or writing notes to or from school.

5.6 Homework Support

Homework is done in homework books supplied by the school. Writing resources includes stationery (such as pens and pencils and colouring pencils), which is bought at the beginning of the school year and are expected to last the whole year. Stationery is strictly bought for school purposes.

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Oscar gets homework on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from different teachers. Homework activities for all three children include reading and writing activities, completing worksheets and drawing or pasting pictures.

Oscar has a set time for doing his homework. At seven o'clock, he usually spends fifteen to twenty minutes doing his homework. This is after he has watched his favourite television programme, Sewende Laan.[31]

Oscar indicated that he does not read the English subtitles on the programme. However, when Oscar forgets to do his homework early in the afternoon, he usually stays up late in the evening to complete it. Oscar's family members seldom assist him with his homework. This is because he prefers to work independently and only asks for assistance when he doesn't understand clearly. On the few occasions he asks for

[31] Sewende Laan is an Afrikaans television soapie with English subtitles broadcast by the South African Broadcasting Corporation on SABC 2.

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assistance, his family members are willing to assist him by explaining difficult concepts or words, giving answers or collecting pictures.

His mother goes through his books and is very proud of their neatness. His mother does not check that his homework is done because he is very eager to do his homework and does not need to be reminded to do it. Sometimes, his mother asks his aunt to assist him with his writing tasks.

Denica gets homework on Mondays and sometimes on Fridays from different teachers. She usually waits until her mother comes from work to do her homework. Her mother comes home at five o'clock, prays and prepares supper. While their supper is cooking, her mother assists her with her homework. They spend about twenty minutes doing her homework. Sometimes, in the afternoon, Denica would ask her older siblings to assist her with her homework.

Whenever Denica does not ask for assistance with her homework, her mother and siblings ask her whether she has any homework. They translate her homework in Afrikaans, explain difficult concepts or words, give answers and help to collect pictures in the *Huisgenoot*. They use explicit directives to check whether she has completed her homework by saying:

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"Bring jou boek." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]
[brəŋ jœu buk] (Phonetic Transcript)
"Bring your book." (English Translation)

Cindy is repeating Grade five in 2003. Unlike the grade sixes, the grade five teachers do class teaching. Class teaching requires teachers to teach all of the nine learning areas[32]. This is significant as her teacher would be able to follow her progress in all learning areas. Like the other two children, Cindy also receives homework on a regular basis, i.e. almost every day. She has to do reading and writing activities, colour in worksheets and draw or paste pictures for homework. Parents are requested

[32] The nine learning areas are: Language, Literacy and Communication (English and Afrikaans), Mathematics (MLMMS), Natural Science, Technology, Life-Orientation, Social Science, Economics and Management Science, Social Science, Arts and Culture.

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to sign their children's work to indicate that they assisted them. However, her parents or older sisters have never signed Cindy's work. Cindy reported that she forgets most of the time to ask for assistance or ask her family members to sign her work.

Cindy does not have a set time or place for doing her homework. Once a week her mother or sisters assist her with her homework. This usually happens after seven o' clock at night because Cindy plays outside with friends during the day. Most of the time Cindy 's mother asks her whether she has any homework. Although her homework is written in her homework book, Cindy mostly forgets about homework and usually tells her mother that she does not have any homework. When her mother looks at her books, Cindy is usually too tired to write and falls asleep on the bed. However, during the few occasions Cindy asks for assistance with her homework her mother assists her with her homework by explaining concepts or difficult words, giving answers, and by collecting pictures. Cindy 's mother does her math homework and Cindy simply copies them. Her mother usually asks her older sisters to assist Cindy if she is unable to. Although Cindy 's mother usually reprimands her about the untidy state of her books, she expects her to take responsibility for her books.

Cindy 's class teacher has referred her to the Teaching Support Team (TST) at school. The TST's coordinator is a qualified remedial teacher who was appointed since January 2003 to render remedial services to the school as well as two other schools in the community. She is only available at school for two days, Mondays and Fridays. Initially, for various reasons, teachers at the school were reluctant to join the different sub-committees, Literacy, Numeracy, Health, Behavioural/Discipline and Social. However, during the second quarter the TST started having regular meetings on Mondays with the coordinators of the four sub-committees. Cindy 's teacher is assisting the coordinator of the Literacy Committee. Due to Cindy 's absenteeism, she missed out on consultation sessions with the TST teacher at school. Cindy's class teacher thus consulted one of her family members, a Foundation Phase teacher, who has specialised in remedial teaching about possible intervention strategies for Cindy.

This teacher recommended starting with a series of problem analysis sessions to identify why Cindy cannot read or write: Each problem analysis session would be conducted over a two-week period and followed-up with intervention strategies.

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However, Cindy 's teacher was unable to conduct this problem analysis because of Cindy's absenteeism from school. Cindy's literacy problems thus remained 'untreated'. This situation is typical of what happens in many classrooms. Although many teachers classify learners as having literacy problems, they are unable to diagnose and treat the problem. Often teachers mention factors such as high learner ratio, time constraints, learner absenteeism and also teacher absenteeism for the current state of affairs.

Many of the children in ex-HoR schools [33] are attending schools where a mismatch exists between their home language/s and the language of learning and teaching (LoLT), which is English. As these children generally have limited proficiency in English, teachers assume that they have learning problems and refer them to remedial teachers. However, any language support is inappropriate if it doesn't address the mismatch between the children's home language and LoLT (Plüddemann 1996). Before any claims can be made that children do have a learning problem, they need to receive home language support and the mismatch between home language and LoLT must first be addressed and/or alternative literacy practices must be incorporated into school literacy practices.

According to all three mothers, involvement in their children's learning should not be restricted to them as parents. Instead, both teachers and parents should share the responsibility of teaching children to read. Oscar's mother said parents should share this responsibility.

"Omie kint te inspireer om bieter te doen." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[ɔmi kənt tə ənspə re:r ɔm bi:tər tə dun] (Phonetic Transcript)
"To inspire the child to improve...[his work]" (English Translation)

Denica's mother felt that parents should share this responsibility to make the teachers' job easier. Cindy's mother felt that teachers should write notes or letters to parents explaining how they can assist them. All three mothers concluded that the transmission of literacy skills is not solely their responsibility, but the responsibility

[33] These schools were under the jurisdiction of the House of Representatives, which was an education department for 'coloured' schools.

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of all family members. These parents attempted to support their children's English literacy by providing writing resources and by organising their homes so that older siblings who are more proficient in English were able to provide homework support to the younger children. As in many households, it is an unspoken agreement that older siblings provide homework support to the younger children. All three parents support their children's English literacy learning at home by providing writing resources like books, pens, pencils and colouring pencils. However, for Denica and Cindy, this only happens once a year, at the beginning of the school year. Oscar's mother buys these writing resources while Cindy's mother gets them from her employers. Oscar's mother buys these resources twice a year on his request. Oscar usually prefers writing in thick hardcover books.

Oscar and Denica's teachers do not send any English reading resources like textbooks, storybooks, or worksheets home with the children for the explicit purpose of practicing or improving their English reading. The only reading resources they take home from school are their writing books. Oscar rated his English worksheets as *"too easy"* and indicated that he would like something more challenging. Cindy's reading resources sent home by her teacher includes her school reader, *Going To School*[34]. With the assistance of her Remedial teacher/family member, Cindy's teacher has compiled a remedial workbook, containing Level one reading activities. She issued this workbook to Cindy and all the children in her class who experience reading and writing difficulties, to work through. Homework activities included colouring in pictures, sounding words and reading sentences. The children wrote down instructions in their homework books for each day's reading activity. They were also reminded to ask their parents to sign their workbook after they assisted their children with the activities. However, Cindy's mother or older siblings never assisted her with this particular homework activity, they also never signed her workbook. Oscar's mother explained why she would like her son to read books without pictures:

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[34] *Going To School* is a Level 1 school reader, which is part of the Sunshine Reading Series. This book is in big format and contains colourful pictures and basic sentences e.g. "I walk to school."

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"Ek laiks meer hy moet boeke sôner prente lees, dan sien mens watter vordering daa is. Aners kyk hy die prenjies en maak sy eie stories." [Kaaps-Afrikaans]

[ɛk laiks me:r həɪ mut bukə sɔnər prɛntə le:s, dan sin mɛns vattər fɔrdərəŋ da: əs. anərs kəɪk həɪ di prɛntcis ɛn ma: səɪ əɪə sto:ris.] (Phonetic Transcript)

"I would prefer that he reads books without pictures so that a person can see whether there is any progress. Otherwise, he would look at the pictures and make up his own stories." (English Translation)

Of the three children, Oscar is the only one who has shown a high degree of independence concerning his literacy development. He has decided upon the most suitable time and place (sitting on his bed) to do his homework. His homework activities are an important part of his daily routine and his mother or older siblings do not need to remind him to do his homework, as he is very eager to show that he can cope on his own. Denica, on the other hand, is very dependent upon homework assistance from her mother or older sister. Of the three children, Cindy is the only one who does not have a set time or place for doing her homework. It is highly likely that the children's different attitudes towards their homework are related to their literacy proficiency (i.e. their ability to read and write) in English. Oscar, who is the most proficient in English of the three children, also has the most positive attitude towards his homework. By doing her homework regularly, Denica, who has some proficiency in English, also displays a positive attitude towards her homework. It is not surprising that Cindy, who struggles with English literacy, is reluctant to do any homework.

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Oscar's case indicates that we may be too conventional in how we see the role of parents and family members in fostering literacy. Children like Oscar who are very independent, are able to take charge of their own literacy development. Being an independent learner is significant as this is the kind of learner envisaged by an Outcomes Based Curriculum (DoE 2002: 3). As Oscar himself, his older siblings, as well as the older siblings of Denica and Cindy, have demonstrated (See 5.5.2) they are able to play a significant role in fostering (their own) literacy by being literacy mediators on behalf of their mothers. However, parents and family members can play a crucial role in fostering literacy in cases where children are unable to take charge of their literacy development. This is because children's literacy practices are shaped by literacy practices in their home environment. They learn the values and meanings of

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literacy from home environments where reading and writing form part of multiple daily practices (Pitt 2000: 118). The value the three children attach to literacy activities (such as homework) depends on the value parents and family members attribute to such literacy activities. Cindy's case illustrates that inquiring about homework is insufficient for effective fostering of literacy. Instead, by actually checking whether the children completed their homework, parents and family members signal the importance of homework. Both Oscar's mother and Denica's mother emphasize the value of literacy activities (in this case homework) by going through their children's books regularly and by commenting on their neatness. In this regard, Denica also benefits from regular homework support given by her mother. Of the three children, Cindy is most in need of homework support. However, receiving homework support once a week is clearly inadequate for effective learning and literacy development.

5.7 Blending strategies learnt at school

It is significant that the children's mothers or family members act as literacy mediators by playing a significant role in their literacy development. Although they do so in varying ways, these literacy mediators are role models who foster the children's literacy by encouraging them to learn and read, by assisting them with their reading and writing activities and by blending strategies learnt at school. The role literacy mediators play in these children's lives signals the importance of adults or older siblings encouraging and stimulating the children's literacy development. This coaching given by literacy mediators ties in with the emergent literacy perspective, which assumes that reading and writing begins when young children become aware that written language makes sense. This awareness develops as a result of a number of factors, which include being encouraged and extended in their attempts at making language work for them (Bloch and Prinsloo 1998: 470).

5.8 Story Telling

As none of the three mothers read or tell stories to their children, the three children miss out on an opportunity to benefit from this oral tradition. Story telling or reading is a valuable literacy resource as oral language is an important component of written

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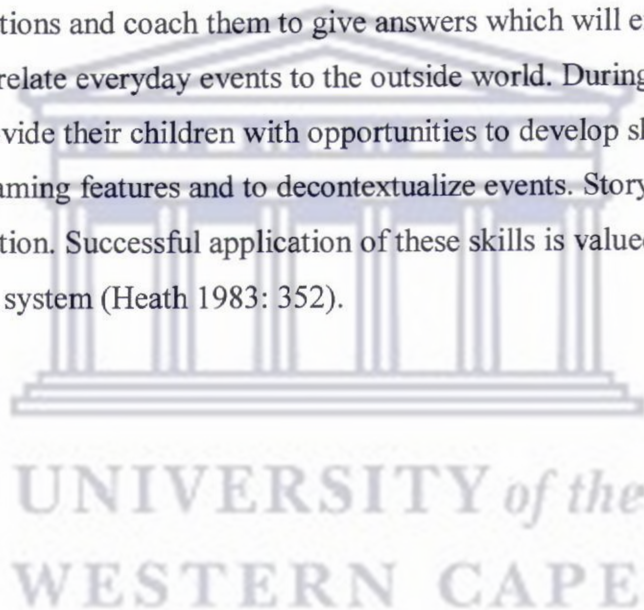
language (Bloch 1997: 38). Of the three children, Cindy is the only one who tells stories. This happens on weekends when she tells stories in Afrikaans to her two cousins, aged six and twelve years old. Although story reading alone is not a universal remedy for all literacy problems (Gregory & Williams 2000: 51), it plays an important role in literacy development. Through story reading a person is given a feel for the rhythm of language by hearing an oral rendition of its written form (Edelsky 1996: 36). Listening to stories positively impacts on literacy development because children read more when they listen to and discuss stories (Krashen 1993: 39).

Children in middle-class homes are exposed to stories, which enable them and their parents to manipulate environments imaginatively. In story-telling or reading, parents ask their children questions and coach them to give answers which will enable them to draw conclusions and relate everyday events to the outside world. During story telling or reading, parents provide their children with opportunities to develop skills like labeling, predicting, naming features and to decontextualize events. Story telling stimulates the imagination. Successful application of these skills is valued and required by the school system (Heath 1983: 352).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Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

In this chapter, I discuss to what extent the data confirms or disproves the aim of my research. I also state the limitations of my research. This is followed by recommendations and proposals for further study.

This study, which is an example of three ethnographic type case studies, has certain limitations. As case studies are not easily generalizable, I am quite cautious to make general claims about the relationship between the school's language of learning and teaching (LoLT) versus the home language. Therefore, any claims I make in this regard are limited to the three Afrikaans-speaking children in my research.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the aim of my research was to answer the following research questions:

Main Research Question

What is the relationship between the home language and literacy backgrounds of the three Afrikaans-speaking learners and their proficiency in English?

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Secondary Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between learners' access to English reading books and their proficiency in English?
- Is there a relationship between literacy practices at home and learners' proficiency in English?

My research objectives enabled me to answer these research questions. As discussed in Chapter 4, this included building up a profile of language use of the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers by investigating the following:

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- The social context and home language profile of the three children and their mothers.
- The language proficiency of the three children and their mothers.
- The literacy practices of the three children and their mothers.

The social context of the three Afrikaans-speaking children and their mothers highlighted important factors contributing to the children's English literacy development[35]. These factors include the socio-economic background of the three children and their mothers, their linguistic environment at home and their language proficiency. The necessity to have their own space to do homework or reading activities was also established. Family income also determines whether the mothers of the three children are able to buy reading materials or writing resources. However, although the data has shown that socio-economic factors contribute to the three children's literacy development, I cannot conclude that it is a determining factor in their literacy development.

The mismatch between the school's LoLT and the home language of the three children and their mothers is significant. The linguistic environment of the three children and their mothers, which is fairly homogenous in terms of home language use and the mothers' lack of communicative competence in English, implies that the school's LoLT, is thus orally and in written form, only minimally supported and reinforced at home. On the other hand, the three mothers are in a better position to assist their children with Afrikaans homework as they have communicative competence in their home language, as well as a linguistic repertoire that includes the standard variety of their home language, and the non-standard variety. Unlike the case with English, they are thus able to support and reinforce their children's literacy development in their home language. That, however, did not form part of my focus in this study.

The language proficiency in English of the three children signalled whether they were adequately equipped to learn through a language other than their home language. The three children's low oracy skills (understanding and speaking) and literacy skills

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[35] *(See Table 4,* Demographic data *and Table 5,* Pattern of Employment *in Chapter 5).*

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(reading and writing)[36] in English were significant in terms of their ability to meet the learning outcomes for English as first additional language as set out in the revised curriculum. Outcomes Based Education is learner-based and learner-paced and Assessment Standards can be integrated within grades and across grades.[37] This would imply that these three children could develop academically, at their own pace. However, the revised curriculum (DoE 2002: 47) states that, by the time they reach the Intermediate Phase, children should have developed confidence and some fluency in communicating in their additional language. In the Foundation Phase, children should have become confident readers in their home and additional language/s. They should have been exposed to a wide range of children's texts, which will provide them with a foundation to become confident writers. However, the low English oracy and literacy skills of the three children imply that they did not have this foundation to proceed with learning outcomes for grades 4-6.

By making use of cues such as gestures and body language in face-to-face interactions, the three children have demonstrated that they are able to communicate meaningfully in their first additional language, English. However, this way of communication known as playground language is not sufficient for meaningful use in academic contexts such as the classroom as it normally does not require the language associated with higher-order thinking skills.

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The three children's lack of English proficiency resonates in similar situations where learners who are not adequately prepared to learn through the medium of English, are forced to do so.[38] The reported literacy practices of the three children and their mothers shed light on how persons with limited proficiency in English cope in a multilingual community such as this. In this regard, the importance of literacy mediators was established. By engaging with literacy tasks on behalf of others, a network of people including the three children, their mothers, older siblings and other family members or friends play a significant role in the transmission of literacy skills.

[36] Cindy was the only one who reported having no literacy skills in English.
[37] Assessment Standards are used to measure the learning outcomes to be achieved for the learning areas of each grade. (DoE 2002: 2)
[38] See discussion of findings in Macdonald's (1990) Threshold Project, Chapter 1, 1.1.2.

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Although the data suggests that adequate and effective homework support contributes to the three children's literacy development in English, it also suggests that we may be too conventional in how we see the role of parents and family members in fostering literacy. Children like Oscar who displays a high degree of independence concerning whether he prefers homework support or not are able to take charge of their own literacy development. Being an independent learner is significant as this is the kind of learner envisaged by an Outcomes Based Curriculum.[39]

However, parents and family members can play a crucial role in fostering literacy in cases where children are unable to take charge of their literacy development. This is because children's literacy practices are shaped by their home environment. The value the three children attach to literacy activities (such as homework) depends on the value parents and family members attribute to such activities. For dependent learners like Denica and Cindy, the frequency and type of homework support is crucial. Parents or family members can create a supportive literacy environment at home by being actively involved in the education of their children. This involvement is also known as family literacy or parental involvement (NCCRD 2000: 30).

None of the three mothers constantly model reading and writing behaviours for their children because most of the reading and writing activities they engage in take place infrequently. As we have seen, all three mothers frequently participate in one or two types of reading or writing activity, but not more. Such an example is Mrs O. who participates in confirmational reading (reading the Bible) on a daily basis; Mrs D. and Mrs M. participate in news-related reading (reading the news) on a daily or weekly basis respectively. Since children learn the values and meanings of literacy from home environments where reading and writing form part of multiple daily practices (Pitt 2000: 18), these three children do not have an opportunity to do so.

The findings pertaining to Oscar's literacy practices at home signal the importance of story telling or reading. Of the three children, Oscar is the only one who reads regularly. The benefits Oscar attained through reading were noticeable in the imaginative and enjoyable story he wrote about three siblings having an encounter

[39] See the Revised National Curriculum Statement (DoE 2002: 3).

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with a witch. The importance of story reading in literacy development was also noticeable in a comparison of the short composition by the three children in the English literacy task[40]. Oscar's compositions displayed a wider vocabulary than the other two children as well as an ability to reflect upon and manipulate the structural features of language. This ability, which is a key factor in the development of reading in young children, is known as metalinguistic awareness (Baker 1993: 122-123). Oscar's example stresses Krashen's (1993: 72) view that reading and writing are interrelated. Although reading and writing are separate skills, they develop together. By not reading constantly, Denica and Cindy miss out on the benefits associated with reading, which include being given a feel for the rhythm of language by hearing an oral rendition of its written form (Edelsky 1996: 36).

The quantity and the level of the reading material found in the homes of the three children are significant in terms of their English and Afrikaans literacy development. The degree of complexity of English and Afrikaans storybooks (read by Oscar) and school readers read by himself and Denica are not age or grade-appropriate. The recommended texts for children in grade 6 include stories, fables, songs, children's poems, jokes and riddles, instructions and reports (DoE 2002: 51). Free voluntary reading means reading because you want to and also putting down a book you don't like and choosing another one instead (Krashen 1993: 72). Denica and Oscar's choice of reading material reflects on the significance of free voluntary reading, i.e. reading out of choice. As school readers are compulsory reading material they do not form part of the voluntary reading done by the three children. Oscar and Denica engage in free voluntary reading by reading storybooks and children's stories in a family magazine out of choice.

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The small number of children's reading materials and the absence of referencing literature (such as encyclopaedias, dictionaries and atlases) and the paucity of English and Afrikaans reading material in the three children's homes, indicate that none of these children have a stimulating literacy environment at home. The absence of children's reading materials reflects on the vast difference between the rich literacy

[40] See Chapter 5, 5.4.3.

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environments generally found in middle class households compared to economically disadvantaged homes.

For the three children in my study, the absence of literacy events in the home by their mothers (such as letter writing, making diary entries, writing recipes, etc.) prevents them from making significant inferences regarding these kinds of texts. These inferences include being aware of the social relationships involved in writing letters to their relatives. They also include demonstrating an awareness of the technical aspects of letter writing e.g. content, form and appropriate language (Bloch 1997).

The three children's literacy practices are socially situated and influenced by broader social relations. The literacy events they engage in signal what is meaningful and enjoyable to them. As religion plays a central role in Oscar and Denica's lives, their literacy events include activities related to religion (See Table 14, Literacy Events in the home). Cindy also participates in a literacy event as she copies the lyrics of popular songs. As these literacy events are not regular, repeated activities, the three children miss out on gaining experience which, in turn, will enable them to develop their own writing. (Kenner 2000: 139). This is because written language is only acquired through actual use (Edelsky 1996: 55).

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The findings provide an insightful view of the difference between school literacy practices and home literacy practices. Children, who are considered to have very little proficiency in English, are able to display evidence of alternative literacy practices such as role-play. Although Cindy shows potential for literacy in her role-play activities, these alternative literacy practices remain unused, as the school does not value them. The school does not tap into the knowledge and experiences children bring from home. However, the revised curriculum issued to all schools and educational institutions in 2002, allows for the home literacy practices of the three children (DoE 2002: 13-53). The Assessment Standards and recommended texts for grade R-6 permit the kinds of literacy activities, which include alternative literacy practices such as action rhymes, games, riddles and jokes. The development outcomes envisage learners who are able to reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively (DoE 2002: 1). In addition, when learners have to learn through an additional language, the revised curriculum encourages teachers like myself to make

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provision for special assistance and supplementary learning of the additional language, until the learner is able to learn effectively in the language of learning and teaching. The revised curriculum is wide open and inclusive of home literacy practices, as long as learners are encouraged towards achieving the various learning outcomes pertaining to an additive approach to multilingualism. With the revised curriculum in hand, we as teachers are challenged to incorporate school literacy practices and home literacy practices successfully. In doing so, we will also make literacy learning an enjoyable experience for children like Cindy.

The findings indicate that there is a relationship between learners' proficiency in English and their home language/s and literacy backgrounds. This relationship is positive and implies that learners who read more (e.g. Oscar) will do better in school than those learners who read less (e.g. Denica and Cindy). Learners who receive homework support will also do better (e.g. Denica and to a lesser degree also Oscar) than those learners who never or seldom receive homework support (e.g. Cindy). The findings also signal the significance of two aspects pertaining to the development of the children's English proficiency. These aspects are the following:

(i) The difference between the school language (LoLT) and home language of the three children.

(ii) The difference between the school literacy practices versus the home (or alternative) literacy practices.

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Both of these two aspects play an important role in the English literacy development of the three children. The difference between the school literacy practices versus the home (or alternative) literacy practices is evident in what the school generally regards as literacy. These findings corroborate those in the NCCRD Report (2000) by indicating that learning in an additional language as a factor for academic success co-exists with a variety of other factors such as homework support and importantly, socio-economic background. In addition to linguistic factors such as children's and parents' language proficiency, social factors also influence educational achievement (See NEPI 1992: 32).

The findings mainly indicate that both these two aspects; the difference between the school's LoLT and home language of the three children, as well as the difference between their school literacy practices and home literacy practices impact on their

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literacy development in English. Unfortunately, I am unable to say which one of these two aspects weighs more than the other, as I did not set out to prove this.

6.2 Recommendations

Although this mini-thesis focused on three ethnographic type case studies, the findings are particularly relevant in school contexts. My recommendations are the following:

(i) The South African School's Act (1996) gave School Governing Bodies the mandate to determine the language policy of their schools. This right to decide upon and change the school's language policy was reinforced in the LiEP (1997). Therefore, School Governing Bodies should take cognisance of research pertaining to language issues in school contexts. By using relevant research as a yardstick to measure to what extent the current language policies at their schools are workable or not, School Governing Bodies are within their rights to modify or change the language policies of their schools, if necessary.

(ii) Teachers are challenged to interpret the revised curriculum boldly so as to incorporate home literacy practices into school literacy practices successfully. This will also show how committed they are to make literacy learning an enjoyable experience for all children.

(iii) Although the new Western Cape language policy for primary schools (LPPS) has not yet been accepted as policy, stakeholders in education who are interested in how children learn language/s and learn through language/s, should prepare themselves to draw on its sound pedagogical advantages. Mother tongue-based bilingual education promotes learning through the home language, learning an additional language and choosing the third official language of the province as a second additional language. It would be a good idea if adults and especially teachers could set the example by learning a second additional language. By doing so, this would be a useful first step in developing coping strategies needed in linguistically diverse classrooms.

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Recommendations for further study

As this mini-thesis focussed on a very small sample of three Afrikaans-speaking children, there is space for further research. A comparative study of a sample of Xhosa-speaking children at the school would produce interesting data. Other research gaps that need to be filled include the homework support children receive in their home language/s and the teaching methods of teachers.

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APPENDIX A

LANGUAGE LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION
(LLC) ENGLISH

NAME: ______________________ GRADE: ________

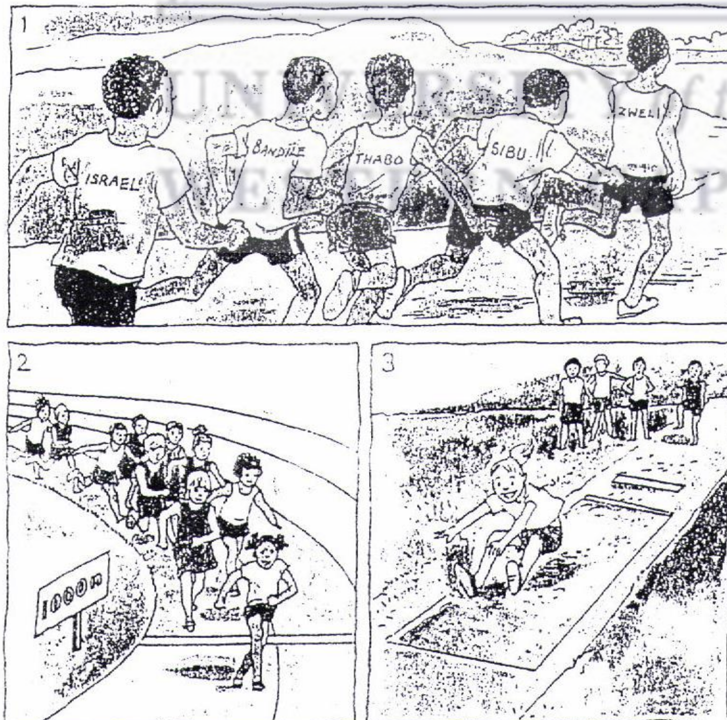
Instructions

1. Write your **name** and **surname** on the worksheet.
2. **Read** the story and **look** at the pictures carefully.
3. Answer **all** the questions.

Khalipa Primary's sports day

The teachers and parents decided to have a sports day on Wednesday, 7 November 2001. The children were very excited. Every afternoon they trained very hard. Some of the children were in the cross-country race and some were in the 100-metre sprint. The athletes also took part in the high jump and long jump.

A. This is the cross-country race. Can you match the names of some of the events with the pictures?



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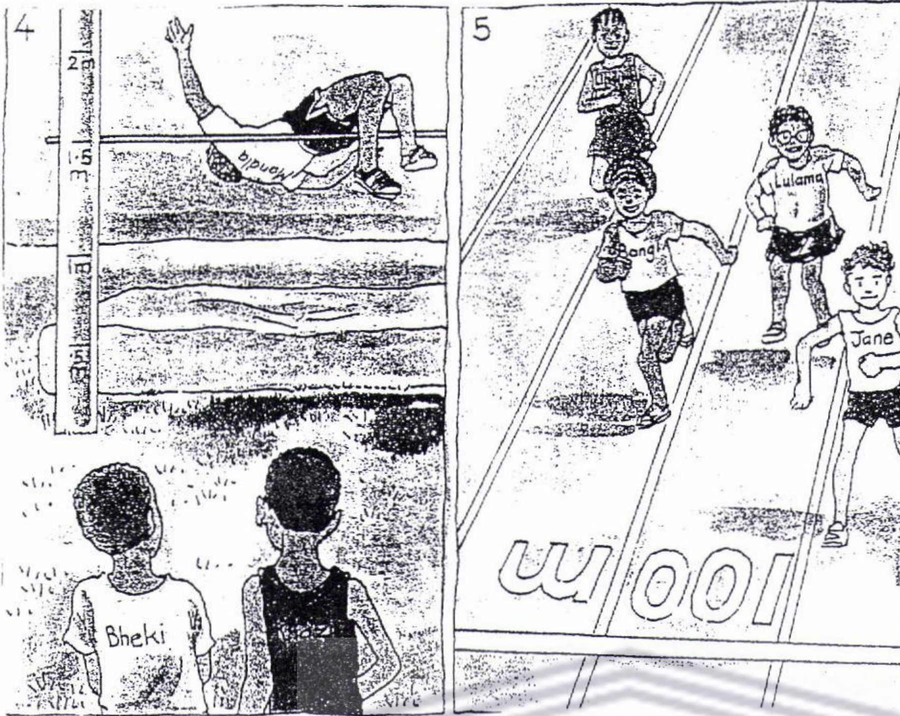

B. **Answer these questions about some of the pictures:**

Cross-country race

1. Who is the fastest runner? ____________________

2. Who is faster than Thabo? ____________________

3. Who is slower than Thabo? ____________________

4. Who is the slowest? ____________________

100-metre sprint

5. If Jane falls, who will win the race? ______________

6. If Lulama gets tired and runs more slowly, who will beat her?_____

7. If Bongi gets a sore leg, who will run past her? ______________

High jump

8. How high has Mandla jumped? ________________

9. How high must Bheki jump if he wants to beat Mandla? _________

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10. If Khazi jumps 1,4 metres, will he beat Mandla? ____________

C. **Answer these questions in full sentences.**

11. Why do you think the children practised so hard?

____

12. On which day was the sports day?

____

13. How did the children feel about the sports day?

____

D. **Underline the correct** answer.

E.g. The pupils of Khalipa Primary practised for a concert. **(True/False)**

14. Pupils who take part in sports are called athletes. **(True/False)**

15. The athletes must train very hard if they want to win. **(True/False)**

16. It is a good idea to eat a lot of sweets and ice cream so that you can run faster. **(True/False)**

E. **Answer one of the following** questions.

Do you like sports? Write **two paragraphs** about your **favourite sport**. Each paragraph should have **3** to **4 sentences**.

Or

Who is your favourite sports star? Write **two paragraphs** about your **favourite sports star**. Each paragraph should have **3** to **4 sentences.**

____

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APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY ON LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

---

1. Particulars of respondent

Name: ______________ Surname: __________________ (Optional)

Age: ______________ Grade: ____________________

Gender:

Male-Boy	Female-Girl

2. Home Language Profile

2.1 **What language(s) do people speak in your home?**

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

2.2 **How well do you understand this language?**

	Understand very well	Understand a little	Do not understand
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

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2.3 **How well do you speak this language?**

	Speak very well	Speak a little	Do not speak at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

2.4 **How well do you read this language?**

	Read very well	Read a little	Do not read at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

2.5 **How well do you write this language?**

	Write very well	Write a little	Cannot write at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

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2.6 **What language do you speak with the following people?**

	Xhosa				English				Afrikaans				Other (Specify)			
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Mother																
Father																
Brother(s)																
Sister(s)																
Grandparents																
Best friend																

2.7 What language do you speak at the shops?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
Always				
Often				
Sometimes				
Never				

2.8 What language do you speak in church or in mosque?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Arabic	Other (Specify)
Always					
Often					
Sometimes					
Never					

2.9 What language do you speak best?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

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2.10 What language do you like to speak most?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

2.11 Do you have any books or magazines at home?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
Books				
Magazines				
Comics				
Newspapers				

2.12 How many books or magazines do you have at home?

	Xhosa			English			Afrikaans		
	Many (more than 20)	A few (less than 10)	None (0)	Many (more than 20)	A few (less than 10)	None (0)	Many (more than 20)	A few (less than 10)	None (0)
Books									
Magazines									
Comics									
Newspapers									

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2.13 Do you read any books, magazines, comics or newspapers?

	Yes	No
Books		
Magazines		
Comics		
Newspapers		

2.14 Where do you read these books, magazines, comics or newspapers?

	At home	At the library	Somewhere else (Specify)
Books			
Magazines			
Comics			
Newspapers			

2.15 What is the name of your favourite book, story or comic?

Book	
Story	
Comic	

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2.16 Do your family members read stories to you?

Yes	No

2.17 How often do they read to you?

Always	
Often	
Seldom	
Never	

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2.18 **Who reads books or stories to you?**

	Parent(s)	Grandparent(s)	Older brothers or sisters	Other family members (Specify)
Always				
Often				
Seldom				
Never				

2.19 Do you write letters to the following people?

	Family members	Friends	Penfriends
Yes			
No			

2.20 **How often do you write to them?**

	Family members	Friends	Penfriends
Often (Once or twice a month)			
Seldom (Once or twice a year)			
Never			

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2.21 **Do you have a computer at home?**

Yes	No

2.22 What do you use the computer for?

Play games	Use e-mail	Read what is on the internet	Other (Specify)

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3. School Language Profile

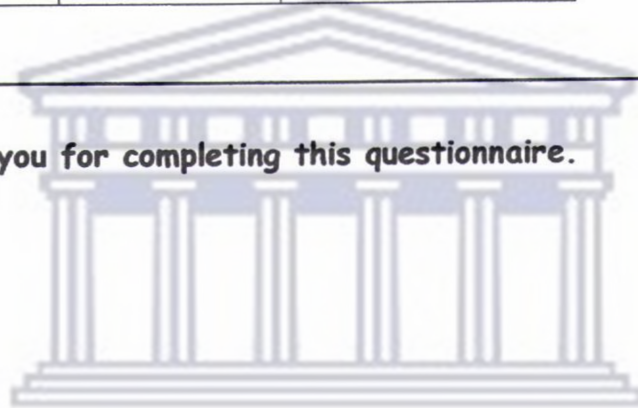
3.1 **What language(s) do you learn at school?**

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other Specify

3.2 What language(s) do you enjoy learning at school?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other Specify

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.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QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY ON LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

---

1. Particulars of respondent

Name: ______________ Surname: __________________ (Optional)

Age: ______________

Gender:

Male	Female

2. Home Language Profile

2.1 What language (s) do people speak in your home?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

2.2 How well do you understand these languages?

	Understand very well	Understand a little	Do not understand
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

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2.3 How well do you **speak** these languages?

	Speak very well	Speak a little	Do not speak at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

2.4 How well do you **read** these languages?

	Read very well	Read a little	Do not read at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

2.5 How well do you **write** these languages?

	Write very well	Write a little	Cannot write at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

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2.6 What language do you speak with the following people?

	Xhosa				English				Afrikaans				Other (Specify)			
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
Mother																
Father																
Brother(s)																
Sister(s)																
Grand-parent(s)																
Best friend (s)																

2.7 What language do you speak at the shops?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other Specify
Always				
Often				
Sometimes				
Never				

2.8 What language do you speak in church or in mosque?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Arabic	Other Specify
Always					
Often					
Sometimes					
Never					

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2.9 What language do you speak best?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other Specify

2.10 What language do you like to speak most?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other(Specify)

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2.11 Do you have any books or magazines at home?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other(Specify)
Books				
Magazines				
Comics				
Newspapers				

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2.12 How many books or magazines do you have at home?

	Xhosa			English			Afrikaans			Other (Specify)		
	Many (More than 20)	A few (Less than 10)	None (o)	Many (More than 20)	A few (Less than 10)	None (0)	Many (More than 20)	A few (Less than 10)	None (0)	Many (More than 20)	A few (Less than 10)	None (0)
Books												
Magazines												
Comics												
Newspapers												

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2.13 Do you read any books, magazines, comics or newspapers?

	Yes	No
Books		
Magazines		
Comics		
Newspapers		

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2.14 Where do you read these books, magazines, comics, or newspapers?

	At home	At the library	Somewhere else (Specify)
Books			
Magazines			
Comics			
Newspapers			

2.15 What is the name of your favourite book, story or comic?

Book	
Story	
Comic	

2.16 Do you read stories to your family members?

Yes	No

2.17 How often do you read to them?

Always	
Often	
Seldom	
Never	

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2.18 Do you write letters to the following people?

	Family members	Friends/Penfriends	Other people (Specify)
Yes			
No			

2.19 How often do you write to them?

	Family members	Friends/ Penfriends	Other people (Specify)
Often (Once or twice a month)			
Seldom (Once or twice a year)			
Never			

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2.20 Do you have a computer at home?

Yes	No

2.21 What do you use the computer for?

Play games	Use e-mail to write letters	Read what is on the internet	Other (Specify)

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3. Other Language Practices

3.1 Do you use your literacy to do the following:

	Yes	No
Writing shopping lists		
Writing notes		
Filling in documents or application forms		
Other (Specify)		

3.2 How often do you do this?

	Always	Often	Seldom	Never
Writing shopping lists				
Writing notes				
Filling in documents or application forms				
Other (Specify)				

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY ON LITERACY PRACTICES OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DOMAIN

---

1. Particulars of respondent

Name: ____________________ **Surname:** ____________________**(Optional)**

Age: ______________ **Grade:** ____________

Gender:

Male-Boy	Female-Girl

2. What is(are) your home language(s)?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other(Specify)

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3. What other language(s) do you speak in your home?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other(Specify)

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4. **Do you read books, newspapers or newspapers?**

	Yes	No
School Readers		
Books		
Magazines		
Newspapers		

5. **What kinds of things do you read?**

	Yes	No
School Readers		
Story books		
Magazines		
Newspapers		

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6. **In what language(s) are these books, magazines or newspapers?**

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other(Specify)
School Readers				
Books				
Magazines				
Newspapers				

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7. **Where do you read these books, magazines or newspapers?**

	At school	At home	At the library	Somewhere else(Specify)
School Readers				
Story books				
Magazines				
Newspapers				

8. **How often do you read these books, magazines or newspapers?**

	School Readers	Story books	Magazines	Newspapers
Always(every day)				
Often(twice or thrice a week)				
Seldom(once a week)				
Never				

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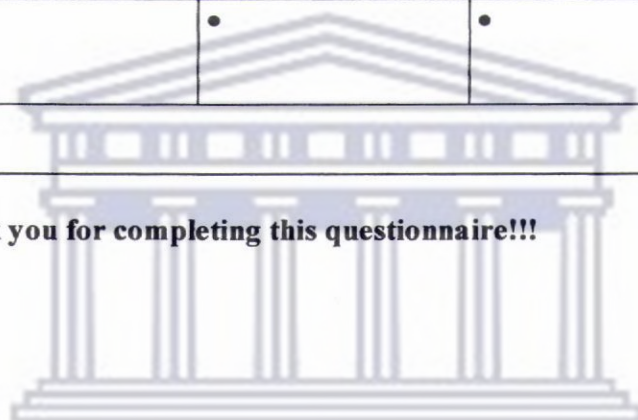
9. **Name two or three of these titles that you have read.**

	Titles		
School Readers	•	•	•
Books	•	•	•
Magazines	•	•	•
Newspapers	•	•	•

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!!!



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APPENDIX D

VRAELYS

LEES EN SKRYF GEWOONTES

1.Besonderhede van respondent

1.1 Naam: _____________ Van: _________________

2. Mags-betrekkinge

2.1 Hoe gereeld hou u kind se skool vergaderings (ouer-aande) met ouers?

Elke Maand	Elke Kwartaal	Ander (Spesifiseer)

2.2 Woon u hierdie skool vergaderings (ouer-aande) by?

Ja	Nee

2.3 Hoe gereeld woon u hierdie vergaderings (ouer-aande) by?

Ek woon elke vergadering (ouer-aand) by	
So gereeld as wat ek kan	
Ek woon nie vergaderings (ouer-aande) by nie	
Ander (Spesifiseer	

2.4 Woon albei ouers vergaderings (ouer-aande) by?

Ja	Nee

2.5 Om watter redes woon u nie vergaderings (ouer-aande) by nie?

Ek stel nie belang nie	Weens werk verpligtinge	Weens kerk verpligtinge	Weens Kommunikasie probleme	Ander (Spesifiseer)

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2.6 Hoe lank duur hierdie vergaderings (ouer-aande)?

Een Uur	Twee Uur	Ander (Spesifiseer)

2.7 Verduidelik die formaat van hierdie vergaderings (ouer-aande).

Al die ouers vergader in die skoolsaal	Elke klasonderwyser hou een-tot-een onderhoude met ouers	Klasonderwyser spreek ouers in ń groep toe	Ander (Spesifiseer)

2.8 Watter ta(a)le word gebesig tydens hierdie vergaderings (ouer-aande)?

Slegs Engels	Slegs Xhosa	Slegs Afrikaans	Engels en Xhosa	Engels en Afrikaans	Ander (Spesifiseer

2.9 Word daar van tolke gebruik gemaak?

Ja	Nee

2.10 Verduidelik hoe daar getolk word.

Vanaf Engels na Xhosa	Vanaf Engels na Afrikaans	Vanaf Engels na Xhosa en Afrikaans	Ander (Spesifiseer)

2.11 Ondervind u enige kommunikasie probleme?

Ja	Nee

2.12 Verduidelik wat u bedoel met kommunikasie probleme.

Ek verstaan nie die spreker(s) nie	Ek verstaan nie die onderwyser(s) nie	Ek verstaan nie die tolk(e) nie	Ek verstaan nie die ouer(s) nie	Ander (Spesifiseer)

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2.13 Vind u dit moontlik om u kind se vordering met sy/haar onderwysers te bespreek?

Ja	Nee

2.14 Verstrek redes vir u antwoord.

Ek verstaan nie die onderwyser(s) nie	Die onderwyser(s) verstaan my nie	Ek het nie genoeg selfvertroue om die onderwyser(s) te nader nie	Ander (Spesifiseer)

2.15 Is u kind se onderwyser(s) in staat om ń volledige verslag van sy/haar akademiese vordering te gee?

Ja	Nee

2.16 Verstrek redes vir u antwoord.

Ek verstaan nie die onderwyser(s) nie	Die onderwyser(s) verstaan my nie	Ander (Spesifiseer)

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3. Hoe die skool geletterdheid en leer ondersteun

3.1 Het u al advies/wenke van u kind se skool ontvang i.v.m. hoe u tuis sy/haar lees en skryf kan ondersteun of bevorder?

Ja	Nee

3.2 Beskryf die advies/wenke wat u ontvang het.

Die onderwyser(s) het my skool toe geroep om persoonlik aan my te veduidelik wat om te doen	Die onderwyser(s) het ń boodskap huis toe gestuur	Die onderwyser(s) het per brief/nota verduidelik	Ander (Spesifiseer)

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3.3 Indien enige, verduidelik watter advies/wenke u ontvang het aangaande u kind se lees.

Voldoende Advies/wenke	Onvoldoende Advies/wenke	Ander (Spesifiseer)

3.4 Indien enige, verduidelik watter advies/wenke u ontvang het aangaande u kind se skryfwerk.

Voldoende Advies/wenke	Voldoende Advies/wenke	Ander (Spesifiseer)

3.5 Sou u enige (nog meer) advies/wenke wou ontvang i.v.m. hoe u u kind se lees en skryfwerk kan ondersteun?

Ja	Nee

3.6 Is dit vir u moontlik om u kind se onderwyser(s) te raadpleeg vir advies en ondersteuning?

Ja	Nee

3.7 Verstrek redes vir u antwoord.

Ek verstaan nie die onderwyser(s) nie	Die onderwyser(s) verstaan my nie	Ander (Spesifiseer)

3.8 Wanneer u u kind help met sy/haar lees en skryfwerk, maak u gebruik van u eie ervaring van hoe ń mens lees en skryf?

Ja	Nee

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3.9 Indien ja, verduidelik in watter mate u gebruik maak van u eie ervaring van lees.

Ek probeer om dieselfde metode(s) te gebruik wat my onderwyser(s) gebruik het	Ek probeer om leesboeke met kleurvolle prente te gebruik	Ander (Spesifiseer)

3.10 Indien ja, verduidelik in watter mate u gebruik maak van u eie ervaring van skryf.

Ek probeer om dieselfde metode(s) te gebruik wat my onderwyser(s) gebruik het	Ander (Spesifiseer

3.11 Moedig u u kind aan om ń verband te tref tussen dit wat sy/hy lees en sy/haar eie ervaring en opinies?

Ja	Nee

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3.12 Or watter manier moedig u u kind aan om ń verband te tref tussen dit wat sy/hy lees en sy/haar eie ervaring en opinies?

Ek moedig hom/haar aan om te dink aan n soortgelyke ondervinding wat met hom/haar gebeur het	Ek moedig hom/haar aan om te dink aan n soortgelyke ondervinding wat in ons gemeenskap plaasgevind het	Ek probeer hom/haar aanmoedig om sy/haar vorige kennis te gebruik	Ander (Spesifiseer)

3.13 Maak u gebruik van u kind se vaardigheid in Afrikaans om sy/haar begrip van n leesstuk/storie in Engels te toets?

Ja	Nee

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3.14 Verduidelik hoe u te werk gaan.

Ek vra hom/haar om die Engelse woord in Afrikaans te verduidelik	Ek vra hom/haar om die Engelse leesstuk/storie in Afrikaans te vertel	Ander (Spesifiseer)

4. Hoe ouers geletterdheid in Engels ondersteun

4.1 Voorsien u enige hulpmiddels soos skryfbehoeftes sodat u kind sy/haar lees en skryfwerk kan oefen?

Ja	Nee

4.2 Watter hulpmiddels voorsien u?

Boeke of skoon papier	Penne en/of potlode	Inkleur potlode en/of vetkryt	Khoki's

4.3 Watter Engelse leesstof stuur u kind se onderwyser(s) huis toe sodat hy/sy tuis kan lees?

Engelse handboeke	Engelse leesboeke	Engelse werkopdragte	Ander (Spesifiseer)

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4.4 Hoe sou u hierdie Engelse leesstof (handboeke, leesboeke, werkopdragte, ens.) beoordeel?

Hulpmiddels	Valuasie	
Engelse handboeke	Te maklik	
	Te moeilik	
	Uitdagend	
	Ander (Spesifiseer)	
Engelse leesboeke	Te maklik	
	Te moeilik	
	Uitdagend	
	Ander (Spesifiseer)	
Engelse werkopdragte	Te maklik	
	Te moeilik	
	Uitdagend	
	Ander (Spesifiseer)	
Ander (Spesifiseer)	Te maklik	
	Te moeilik	
	Uitdagend	
	Ander (Spesifiseer)	

Baie dankie dat u hierdie vraelys voltooi het!

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Appendix E

QUESTIONNAIRE

LITERACY PRACTICES AT HOME (Care-givers)

1.Particulars of respondent

1.1 Name: ____________ Surname: ________________ (Optional)

1.2 Age: ____________

1.3 Gender:

Male	Female

2. Demographic Data

2.1 Indicate your level of education (Optional):

	Primary school	Secondary school	Tertiary Education (Technikon or University)	Other (Specify)
Grade/Level				

2.2 Indicate your occupation and the nature of your employment.

Occupation	Permanent Worker	Contract Worker	Volunteer

2.3 Indicate the reasons why you left school (Optional):

Personal responsibilities	Lack of money	Other (Specify)

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2.4 Indicate how many hours per day you spend at work:

0-4 hours	4-8 hours	8-12 hours	Other (Specify)

2.5 How many people stay in your home?

0-3	4-7	7-10	Other (Specify)

3. Home Language Profile

3.1 What language(s) do people speak in your home?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

3.2 How well do you understand these languages?

	Understand very well	Understand a little	Do not understand
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

3.3 How well do you speak these languages?

	Speak very well	Speak a little	Do not speak at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

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3.4 How well do you read these languages?

	Read very well	Read a little	Do not read at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

3.5 How well do you write these languages?

	Write very well	Write a little	Cannot write at all
Xhosa			
English			
Afrikaans			
Other (Specify)			

4. Childhood Literacy Practices

4.1 How did you experience learning and reading at school and at home?

	Learning				Reading			
	Enjoyed it a lot	Enjoyed it a little bit	Did not enjoy	Other (Specify)	Enjoyed it a lot	Enjoyed it a little bit	Did not enjoy	Other (Specify)
At school								
At home								

4.2 Which literacy practices shaped your learning?

	School Literacy Practices	Home Literacy Practices	Other (Specify)
Yes			
No			

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4.3 Indicate whether any of these persons had a positive influence on your learning and reading:

	Parent(s)	Older siblings)	Teacher(s)	Other family members (Specify)
Yes				
No				

4.4 In what way did they have a positive influence on your learning and reading?

Parent(s)	
Older siblings)	
Teacher(s)	
Other family members (Specify)	

4.5 As a child, did you enjoy reading?

Yes	
No	

4.6 What kinds of reading material did you enjoy reading?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
Books				
Magazines				
Comics				
Newspapers				

4.8 Where did you read these books, magazines, comics or newspapers?

	At home	At school	At the library	Somewhere else (Specify)
Books				
Magazines				
Comics				
Newspapers				

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4.9 What was the name of your favourite book, story or comic?

Book	
Magazine	
Comic	

4.10 How many of these reading materials did you have at home?

	Xhosa			**English**			**Afrikaans**		
	Many (more than 20)	**A few (less than 10)**	**None (0)**	**Many (more than 20)**	**A few (less than 10)**	**None (0)**	**Many (more than 20)**	**A few (less than 10)**	**None (0)**
Books									
Magazines									
Comics									
Newspapers									

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4.11 Teaching children to read is the responsibility of:

Parents	**Teachers**	**Parents and Teacher(s)**	**Someone else (Specify)**

4.12 Learning to read English is:

A serious activity	**A relaxed and fun-filled activity**	**Something else (Specify)**

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4.13 How did you experience learning to read at school?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
A serious activity				
A relaxed and fun-filled activity				
Something else (Specify)				

4.14 How did you experience reading at home?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
A serious activity				
A relaxed and fun-filled activity				
Something else (Specify)				

5. Literacy practices at home

5.1 Do you read stories to your family members?

Yes	
No	

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5.2 When do you read stories to them?

Always (five or four times a week)	
Often (three or two times a week)	
Seldom (once a week)	
Never	

5.3 In what language(s) are these stories?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

5.4 Do you tell stories to your family members?

Yes	
No	

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5.5 When do you tell stories to them?

Always (five or four times a week)	
Often (three or two times a week)	
Seldom (once a week)	
Never	

5.6 In what language(s) are these stories?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

5.7 Do you assist your child with his/her homework?

Yes	
No	

5.8 When do you assist your child with his/her homework?

Always (five or four times a week)	
Often (three or two times a week)	
Seldom (once a week)	
Never	

5.9 How do you assist your child with his/her homework?

Explain concepts or difficult words	Give answers	Help to collect pictures or information	Check if homework is done	Something else (Specify)

5.10 What other reading or writing activities do you share with your child/family members?

Reading activities	Writing activities

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5.11 When do you do these reading and/or writing activities?

	Reading activities	Writing activities
Always (five or four times a week)		
Often (three or two times a week)		
Seldom (once a week)		
Never		

5.12 Do any family members play a major part in fostering your child's interest in books and or reading?

Yes	No

5.13 What are their roles?

	Buy him/her books	Accompany him/her to the library	Act as a role model	Teach him/her to read	Other (Specify)
Yes					
No					

5.14 How do you view learning to read?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
Very important				
Not very important				
Something else (Specify)				

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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Appendix F

QUESTIONNAIRE

LITERACY PRACTICES AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL (Learners)

1. Particulars of respondent

1.1 Name: ____________ Surname: _______________ (Optional)

1.2 Age: ____________ Grade: __________

1.3 Gender:

Male	Female

2. Demographic Data

2.1 Indicate your position in your family:

Oldest Child	
Youngest Child	
Only Child	
Other (Specify)	

3. Childhood Literacy Practices

3.1 How do you experience learning and reading at school and at home?

	Learning				Reading			
	Enjoy it a lot	Enjoy it a little bit	Do not enjoy	Other (Specify)	Enjoy it a lot	Enjoy it a little bit	Do not enjoy	Other (Specify)
At school								
At home								

3.2 Which literacy practices shape your learning?

	School Literacy Practices	Home Literacy Practices	Other (Specify)
Yes			
No			

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3.3 Indicate whether any one of these persons have a positive influence on your learning and reading:

	Parent(s)	Older sibling(s)	Teacher(s)	Other family members (Specify)
Yes				
No				

3.4 In what way do they have a positive influence on your learning and reading?

Parent(s)	
Older sibling(s)	
Teacher(s)	
Other family members (Specify)	

3.5 Do you enjoy reading?

Yes	
No	

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3.6 What kinds of reading material do you enjoy reading?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
Books				
Magazines				
Comics				
Newspapers				

3.7 Where do you read these books, magazines, comics or newspapers?

	At home	At school	At the library	Somewhere else (Specify)
Books				
Magazines				
Comics				
Newspapers				

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3.8 What is the name of your favourite book, story or comic?

Book	
Magazine	
Comic	

3.9 How many books or magazines do you have at home?

	Xhosa			English			Afrikaans		
	Many (more than 20)	A few (less than 10)	None (0)	Many (more than 20)	A few (less than 10)	None (0)	Many (more than 20)	A few (less than 10)	None (0)
Books									
Magazines									
Comics									
Newspapers									

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3.10 Teaching children to read is the responsibility of:

Parents	Teachers	Parents and Teacher(s)	Someone else (Specify)

3.11 Learning to read English is:

A serious activity	A relaxed and fun-filled activity	Something else (Specify)

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3.12 How do you experience learning to read at school?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
A serious activity				
A relaxed and fun-filled activity				
Something else (Specify)				

3.13 How do you experience reading at home?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
A serious activity				
A relaxed and fun-filled activity				
Something else (Specify)				

3.14 Do you have your own books or do you share books at home?

	Yes	No
Own books		
Share books with brother(s) or sister(s)		
Share books with friend(s)		

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4. Literacy practices at home

4.1 Do you read stories to your family members?

Yes	
No	

4.2 When do you read stories to them?

Always (five or four times a week)	
Often (three or two times a week)	
Seldom (once a week)	
Never	

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4.3 In what language(s) are these stories?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

4.4 Do you tell stories to your family members?

Yes	
No	

4.5 When do you tell stories to them?

Always (five or four times a week)	
Often (three or two times a week)	
Seldom (once a week)	
Never	

4.6 In what language(s) are these stories?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

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4.7 Do your family members read stories to you?

Yes	
No	

4.8 When do they read stories to you?

Always (five or four times a week)	
Often (three or two times a week)	
Seldom (once a week)	
Never	

4.9 In what language(s) are these stories?

Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)

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4.10 Do your family members assist you with your homework?

Yes	
No	

4.11 When do they assist you with your homework?

Always (five or four times a week)	
Often (three or two times a week)	
Seldom (once a week)	
Never	

4.12 How do they assist you with your homework?

Explain concepts or difficult words	Give answers	Help to collect pictures or information	Check if homework is done	Something else (Specify)

4.13 What other reading or writing activities do you share with your family members?

Reading activities	Writing activities

4.14 When do you do these reading and/or writing activities?

	Reading activities	Writing activities
Always (five or four times a week)		
Often (three or two times a week)		
Seldom (once a week)		
Never		

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4.15 Do you do these reading and writing activities on your own or in a group?

	On my own				In a group (two or more people)			
	Always (five or four times a week)	Often (three or two times a week)	Seldom (once a week)	Never	Always (five or four times a week)	Often (three or two times a week)	Seldom (once a week)	Never
Reading activities								
Writing activities								

4.16 Do any one of your family members play a major part in fostering your interest in books and or reading?

Yes	No

4.17 What are their roles?

	Buy me books	Accompany me to the library	Act as a role model	Teach me to read	Other (Specify)
Yes					
No					

4.18 How do you view learning to read?

	Xhosa	English	Afrikaans	Other (Specify)
Very important				
Not very important				
Something else (Specify)				

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

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