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PETT

**A WHOLE LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME WITH ENGLISH SECOND
LANGUAGE PUPILS**

by

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MINI-DISSERTATION

**submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree**

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FOREWORD

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ABSTRACT

As the South African education system is moving towards complete reorganisation and fundamental restructuring, teachers have been forced to take a look at the language being used in their now multilingual classrooms and also at their own teaching of language, as opposed to the teaching of school-based literature. Some teachers see this as a challenge, and with the attention now being paid in the school curriculum to the communicative use of English, are attempting to change their beliefs and conceptions about instruction, language and learning. For many teachers of English second language pupils, the answers lie in the whole language philosophy, as it stands for justice, democracy, and empowerment and against injustice and a stratified society.

However, the whole language movement grew from an original focus on the reading, writing and learning processes of native speakers of English, and is only beginning to affect second language learners. The focus of this study is therefore on the implementation of whole language with English second language pupils, with the aim of improving the instruction and education of these learners as well as enhancing the support systems and training for whole language teachers. The whole language philosophy is a different way of thinking about teaching and learning, and thus teachers need to be continually encouraged to examine their own assumptions about learning and teaching.

The theory framework for this study includes readings in the origins of whole language, the whole language belief system, English second language learning and connections between whole language and English second language pedagogy. The theoretical framework is constructed with the aim of supporting the construct and approaching the research question from different angles.

The nature of the research question presupposes a monographic study as research format, which in turn directs the research to observations, an individual interview and document analysis. The discussion of the monographic study takes place against the background of the qualitative research paradigm. The teacher and Grade One English second language pupils of a Language Assistant Programme, characterised by whole language principles, are the target group of this study.

The findings of the inquiry indicate that the whole language philosophy can be applied to English second language learners, but needs to be complemented with an understanding of second language acquisition and English second language teaching methods. It was also found that teachers need continual support in transforming the whole language philosophy into practice and in examining their own beliefs and assumptions about learning and instruction.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXTUALISATION AND ORIENTATION OF RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

To contextualise and introduce the focus of this study, this chapter comprises a discussion on the theoretical background of the field of inquiry as well as the physical and social environment of the participants. It subsequently includes a formulation of the research question from which the aim of the study is derived and explicated. In view of this, the research strategies and the design used to conduct the study are explained. This chapter is concluded with an examination of the structure and course of the study as well as a review of the researcher's presuppositions and assumptions.

1.2 THE CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The context of the study comprises both a theoretical and physical component. The theoretical component is discussed first, and is followed by the physical component which refers to the physical setting of the problem.

1.2.1 The Theoretical Background



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" The development of policy is a learning process. The Minister of Education's policies will evolve, and they will be open to correction, not through trial and error, but on the basis of a variety of academic, professional and consultative sources of critique and advice ... Particular attention will be paid to the performance of the education and training system in the improvement of quality, equity, productivity (effectiveness) and efficiency" (White Paper on Education and Training, 1995:14).

In recent years curriculum planning has been dominated by industrial systems models which tend to fractionate the curriculum into separate, highly structured bits and pieces to be taught and evaluated separately (Goodman, 1987:2; Gursky, 1992:3). In these narrow curricula, language and thinking have been separated from the subject matter content. Language has been treated as an object of instruction, and not as the basic medium of learning. Thinking has been neglected altogether since it cannot be seen or evaluated directly. At the same time the subsystems of language are often the focus of useless, time-wasting and confusing instruction. Speaking, listening, reading, and writing are often taught as if they were separable pieces of language, each composed of separable smaller units (King & Goodman, 1990:222). We have had, in fact, a part-language curriculum.

Whole language is one of the many attempts in recent history to alter education. The term "whole language" seems to have originally grown from a concern for keeping language whole during instruction, from the desire

to avoid fragmenting language into bits and pieces for isolated drill (Weaver, 1992:4; King & Goodman, 1990:222; Freeman & Freeman, 1992:5). It reflected the understanding that the same kinds of response and encouragement that nurtured children's development of spoken language, could stimulate their development as readers and writers, using whole texts with natural language patterns rather than basals, the stilted and unnatural language characteristic of beginning reading texts (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989:134; Goodman, 1986:19). Gradually, whole language has grown into a philosophy not only of literacy development, but of learning in general. The principles of whole language affect the way we view language; language learners and learning; curriculum, including instruction, materials and evaluation; and ourselves as people who work and learn with children.

A whole language framework has been developing over the last twenty years. During this time, research in language and language learning (especially early written language learning) has strengthened the theoretical foundations of whole language (Edelsky, Altverger & Flores, 1991:19). While most of the current research on the effectiveness of whole language has focused on the primary grades, researchers are beginning to document the efficacy of this philosophy and approach throughout the educational system, and even with adult learners (Weaver, 1990:124).

Of particular interest to educational psychologists are English second language users. As the populations of these learners increase, our schools are presented with challenges of how best to help them. As is so often the case with English first language instruction, the instruction that many bilingual learners have received in schools has been for the most part fragmented and disempowering (Crawford, 1993:57). Teachers and administrators want to do what is best for all children, but frequently they are unprepared for students who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and who do not speak English. Most of the teachers in schools which have recently become multilingual have been trained to teach English to pupils who speak English as their first language, and have had no training in teaching English as a second language (Barkhuizen, 1993:78). As a result of the lack of this training, this is a disconcerting time for many teachers in South Africa. There is confusion, a sense of panic and certainly a fair amount of stress.

With the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in place, change agents in the language development field would be well advised to synchronise their efforts with the aims and objectives of reconstruction and nation-building. The RDP and ANC policy documents not only voice the language needs of people at grassroots level, but provide a framework for addressing language development problems. In moving towards the goal of multilingualism the ANC document (1994:62) emphasises the importance of building on the linguistic strengths of learners and teachers, harnessing the rich multilingual reality of South Africa for effective education, and for effective participation in social, political and economic development. It further recognises that since language is essential to thinking and learning, learners must be able to learn

in the language or languages which best suit this purpose. For the same reason, all teachers should regard themselves as teachers of language, and be progressively helped to become more effective in playing this role.

In keeping with the continuous emphasis placed on emergent literacy, the document further proposes that in Early Childhood Educare, children must be enabled to explore their world fully through languages familiar to them. The linguistic resources of all children must be valued and used to assist the development of language and cognitive processes (ANC Discussion Document, 1994:64). Multilingual awareness should be actively promoted. A prerequisite of success for this set of policies involves improving the methods and quality of flexible multilingual learning and teaching. Language pedagogy will need substantial revision in the light of the new goals. This will result in a serious task for universities, colleges of education, distance education institutions and various specialists working closely with teachers and coordinating their PRESET and INSET services (ANC Discussion Document, 1994:64).

With the changes in the demographics of schools, instructional practices are needed that demonstrate awareness of and appreciation for diversity and that encourage learning for all pupils. The particular kinds of challenges facing educational psychologists thus come from various societal, economical and political sources, that are embodied particularly in recent legislation. To respond positively to new and changing demands, the educational psychologist needs to interact at the consultative level with teachers and parents, to help them make their work with children at school and at home more meaningful and productive. Since teachers or parents may not have access to educationally relevant research, the consultant can help bridge the gap by collaborating with them to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems (Heron & Harris, 1993:33). There therefore exists a need for educational psychologists to assist teachers by not only making the latest research more easily available for them, but also by supporting them in their own research and development of teaching practices for multilingual classes that are appropriate, meaningful, practical and easily transferable to their own particular teaching contexts.

Ultimately, the changes that are to be brought about in the language policy by both government officials and educators form a component of the total challenge that we face at the dawning of a democratic society "... to create an education and training system that will ensure that the human resources and potential in our society are developed to the full. It is the challenge posed by the vision of the Freedom Charter: 'to open the doors of learning and culture to all'"(ANC Discussion Document, 1994:2). Appropriate education and training can empower people to participate effectively in all the processes of democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression, and community life, and can help citizens to build a nation free of race, gender and every other form of discrimination.

1.2.2 The Physical Context

"No learner should be refused admission to any educational institution in the early years of schooling on the grounds that he or she is not proficient in the language or languages of learning of that institution. In such cases the institution should ensure that the student has access to language support services to develop the necessary proficiency" (ANC Discussion Document, 1994:64-65).

In keeping with the above specification and suggestion, the Grade One teachers of an inner city school, situated in Johannesburg, identified the need to establish a Language Assistant Project to support English second language Grade One pupils develop the necessary proficiency in English - the language to which the school community subscribes.

Ten black Grade Ones were selected to participate in the Language Assistant Programme. The children were born in South Africa and have English as a second or third language. The school has many children who come from the surrounding townships as well as from the inner-city suburbs. The children participating in the programme all have Zulu, Xhosa or Sotho as their first language. The socio-economic status of the families represented by the children vary. However, in general, many of them come to school from low socio-economic backgrounds, often from single-parent or large extended families in small, densely populated housing units. Their parents have often had little or no successful school experience. Parental involvement is presently a problem and the parents' active involvement in the learning process is deficient. Due to the children's minimal exposure to correct English and its use in the pre-school years, these children fail to communicate and express themselves adequately, often becoming withdrawn and silent. Very often they no longer feel empowered as language users, as they have to face the task of acquiring another language for pedagogic survival.

The project aims at helping these children to close the language gap in their first year of school. The main aim of the project is to assist children, who are English second or third language users, to acquire the skills of reading and writing and thereby encourage literacy. In order to achieve this, the teachers decided on a whole language approach. A further aim laid down by the teachers is to teach children to become familiar with and comprehend the English language to the best of their ability. A final aim is to help parents become involved and participate in the learning process. To achieve this, means and methods for encouraging parental participation need to be designed, adapted and tried, so as to suit the unique and special needs of the parents in this specific school community.

The project runs twice a week, for varying times, over a period of one year. During the lessons in the week an educator is involved in implementing whole language principles and assisting the children in becoming engaged in a variety of language experiences. The teacher possesses a recognised teaching degree and was introduced to whole language during her training. She has been involved in the teaching profession for two

years - specifically in teaching English in multilingual settings. The pupils' progress is assessed informally and a report is compiled at the end of every term which is shared with the parents.

In qualitative research, research is conducted in natural settings both to give depth to the research observations and also to increase the depth of their understanding. For this reason it is important to understand the background and circumstances of, or context of, the research population. This research is contextualised in the established Language Assistant Programme at I.H. Harris Primary School. The focus of this study is on the **implementation of whole language with English second language pupils** to help determine further aims and objectives for successful intervention with English second language pupils and effective training of teachers.

1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

As is evident in 1.2, there exists an explicit need for alternative methods of second language instruction, as well as for language support services for the increasing numbers of English second language South African children entering schools in which English is both the language to which the school community subscribes and the wider language of communication. A clear requirement that comes to the fore is that these language users are placed within supportive environments that not only include giving the learner the power to use language, but that take into account a.) the nature of language b.) the nature of learning, and c.) the prevailing role of culture.

The research of this study is a systematic investigation of the patterns and processes of the implementation of whole language with English second language pupils, as well as the whole language teacher's belief system. Thus the teacher's conceptions of whole language, learning and teaching will be explored on the one hand and the connections between whole language and English second language pedagogy will be investigated on the other.

In light of the above explanation and theoretical and physical context, the research questions of this investigation are as follows:

- * What is a whole language teacher's belief system and conception of learning and teaching?
- * What are the implications of recent research on whole language and integrated approaches to learning for the instruction of English second language learners?
- * How is whole language implemented in a class with English second language pupils?
- * What is the relationship between the teacher's theoretical knowledge of whole language and the practical implementation of its philosophy?
- * What are a teacher's needs for further training in whole language and English second language pedagogy?

The possibility of further questions and perspectives arising during the course of the study is not excluded.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of this study is thus to describe the programme in action as a monographic or case study focusing on the implementation of whole language with English second language learners, with the view to improving the instruction and education of these learners, as well as enhancing the training and support systems for whole language teachers. A better understanding of the concerns of practitioners as they make their transition to whole language will surely help ease the transition and ultimately strengthen the whole language movement.

With regard to theory, the investigation aims at laying down an extensive theoretical body of knowledge with readings in the origins of whole language, the whole language philosophy, English second language pedagogy and the connections between whole language and English second language instruction. This theory framework not only enhances the validity of the inquiry, but will provide a starting point for the interpretation of data collected during the analysis phase of the inquiry.

Subsequently, the field of investigation will be conducted with the aim of collecting, analysing, displaying, and interpreting data to arise at findings that will clarify the use of whole language in English second language learning and instruction. The proposed research contribution is to provide an example of a whole language teacher's belief system and the implementation of whole language with English second language learners. The study further aims to investigate, describe, and explain these processes with a view to improving comprehension of the concept of whole language and its nature, and the practical application of its principles. The study is, ultimately, also aimed at identifying aspects for improved teacher training and in-service support. The rationale for such a study emanates out of the need that exists amongst pupils and teachers for recognition of the characteristics of the language learner and for proper and meaningful instruction.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

"A methodology is a general approach to studying a research topic. It establishes how one will go about studying any phenomenon ... Like theories, methodologies cannot be true or false, only more or less useful" (Silverman, 1993:2).

This research project takes the form of a **qualitative monographic study** and can be described as **descriptive, contextual, exploratory and qualitative**. It focuses on a qualitatively based research design within the interpretative paradigm (see Chapter Four for a more detailed discussion of the research design). Descriptive qualitative research implies not only a thick, accurate description of the phenomena, but also interpretation. The methods of inquiry will be predominantly qualitative and data processing will also be employed.

Within this paradigm interpretation ensues from the theoretical framework, which in this study comprises theory on whole language, English second language pedagogy, and connections between whole language and English second language instruction. It is supported with the monographic or case study as format of qualitative research. This monographic study focuses on a "bounded system" which consists of the teacher and the group of English second language pupils who are participating in the Language Assistant Programme at I.H. Harris Primary School.

Further interpretation is derived out of the empirical investigation itself, during which data is collected from a variety of sources and analysed to arrive at justified and well-founded conclusions. Oral, iconic and bodily-kinaesthetic data is obtained by means of observations of classroom sessions which are video recorded. Other methods of data collection include an individual interview and a document which is in the form of a journal that is kept by the teacher.

The methods of data analysis used in this study are based on Miles and Huberman's (1994:10) general view of qualitative data analysis. They define analysis as consisting of three concurrent flows of activity: **data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification**. During the study, as data collection proceeds, data reductions are made in the form of transcriptions, summaries, coding and clustering. The data displays used in this study consist of dendrograms and matrixes that permit conclusion drawing and enhance comprehension.

Miles and Huberman (1994:11) note that the researcher looks for regularities, patterns, explanations, causal flows and propositions. The aim of data analysis is therefore to draw conclusions from the consolidated data. The different conceptions, patterns and categories that emerge will be interpreted with the ultimate aim of understanding the connections between whole language and English second language teaching and the practical implementation of a whole language philosophy. The interpretation of the research findings takes place within a thick theoretical foundation, and also additional theory if required.

1.6 TERMINOLOGY

To understand and obtain clarity of the meanings and definitions of the concepts and terms as they are used in the context of this study, it is necessary to clarify a few relevant concepts that are present in the formulation of the research topic.

1.6.1 Whole language

There exists no simple explanation or definition of whole language as it is subject to so many interpretations.

Proponents of whole language themselves observe that it is in constant evolution and implementation, and that it is amenable to a whole range of different renderings. However, whole language advocates point out that whole language must not be defined too narrowly. It is not simply a teaching technique, a method, or a strategy. It is not a set of prepackaged materials, a set of practices for teaching literature, or simply the study of literature. Whole language is some of all of these, but it is much more. Within the context of this study, whole language then, is not defined as an instructional prescription, but rather a belief system that guides instructional decision making. As a philosophy, whole language is a theory of knowledge as well as a theory of language, learning and teaching. It is the teacher's stated beliefs, the character of classroom interaction, and the teacher's and pupils' underlying intentions that make a classroom whole language, and not simply the behaviours or actions.

1.6.2 Teachers' beliefs and conceptions

A teacher's philosophical base includes and supports owned practices, active theories, and examined beliefs. An examined belief system is set in theory and practice. Watson (1994:606) asserts that, "We are our beliefs." These beliefs direct everything that happens in and out of the classrooms, and as a heuristic and driving force must be articulated and held up for ourselves and others to see. To ensure the continual evolvement of a philosophical base, our beliefs and the credibility of our convictions need to be constantly examined. Only blind beliefs resist examination. Overall, teachers' beliefs and conceptions are the concepts of teachers that accurately reflect their world and their understanding of a concept.

1.6.3 English second language

English Second Language (ESL) refers to the English language when it is not the mother tongue (or native language) of the speaker. Even when English is the second, third, or fourth language acquired by the learner, it is referred to as ESL if it is not the learner's mother tongue. Generally, a language taught to be used as a medium of instruction, or as a *lingua franca* (a common language) among speakers of widely diverse languages can be regarded as a second language.

1.6.4 Language Assistant Programme

The Language Assistant Programme was established by a group of Grade One teachers in an inner city school. Its purpose is to assist Grade One pupils who have English as a second, third, or fourth language, to bridge the language gap in their first year of school and improve their language, reading and general academic skills. The lessons which take place twice a week are aimed at supplementing that which is being dealt with in the class, and are therefore planned in conjunction with the class teacher.

A whole language philosophy guides their decision making and instructional practices.

1.7 THE STRUCTURE AND SEQUENCE OF THE STUDY

The following is a short summary of the stages of the inquiry as they are set out in the research report.

In **Chapter One** an explanation of the background, context, research problem and aim and rationale is presented, as well as the research methodology and the researcher's assumptions and presuppositions.

In **Chapter Two** the background and development of whole language is examined. The nature of whole language and the whole language teacher's belief system is also considered.

In **Chapter Three** the connections between whole language and English second language pedagogy are explored. Relevant aspects of English second language learning and teaching are reviewed.

In **Chapter Four** the research design and the research methods are explicated. The raw and processed data is also presented.

In **Chapter Five** the processed data is described and interpreted against the theoretical background. The validity of the study is also discussed and recommendations are made.

1.8 THE RESEARCHER'S PRESUPPOSITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

In this study the researcher is viewed as the primary tool of investigation. The research thus reflects the values, beliefs, and perspectives of the researcher. Miles and Huberman (1994:8) maintain that, "Interpretivists of all types also insist that researchers are no more "detached" from their objects of study than are their informants. Researchers... have their own understandings, their own convictions, their own conceptual orientations; they, too, are members of a particular culture at a specific historical moment." It is therefore necessary that the researcher makes mention of any presuppositions and assumptions so as to further ensure the reliability of the research and to reduce researcher bias. The following statements present the researcher's educational paradigm and views regarding learning and learners:

- * All learning is the result of an interaction between what the learner brings to the instructional negotiation and what events transpire there. Therefore every learner's beginning situation is different and includes not only content, but also values, feelings and past history. For this reason the researcher views the individual within his totality who needs to be approached holistically during instruction.

Learning also proceeds when the learner actively constructs meaning from not only his cognitive existence but also from his emotional and physical being in the world.

- * Individuals learn as they construct their own knowledge and meaning from experience. Therefore learners must be active in the learning process. The learner, rather than the particular materials or intervention techniques is the most critical variable.
- * Learning is not usually accomplished by acquiring bits of knowledge to be added together. Therefore language is best learned when its holistic nature is represented. Fragmentation of language in reading, writing, speaking and spelling results in almost impossible tasks for learners.
- * Teachers are learners too and are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. As life long learners, teachers need to be constantly engaged in a clarification of beliefs. They need to act from their own professional knowledge base and they need support in using the power that they assume in an intelligent, professional manner.
- * Children who are learning English as another language are not language disordered or limited and deficient in any way. They come to school with rich cultural experiences and linguistic knowledge. They have been successful language learners and communicators in their homes and communities.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the context and rationale of the study ultimately aimed at improved teaching practice with English second language pupils and meaningful teacher education. The research problem was presented from which the aims of the study were formulated and stated. Subsequently, an orientation to the research methodology was provided, which focused briefly on the methods of data collection, data analysis and conclusion drawing. To conclude the chapter, a conceptual explication of terms was given to rule out ambiguity, and the researcher's personal epistemology and ontology regarding learning and learners was presented. This assists in establishing the researcher and the research process as valid components of the inquiry.

In Chapter Two the background, development and nature of whole language is discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND, DEVELOPMENT AND NATURE OF WHOLE LANGUAGE

"At any time in the past, people have held a view of the way the universe works which was for them ... definitive, whether it was based on myths or research. And at any time, that view they held was sooner or later altered by changes in the body of knowledge" (J.Burke, 1985: *The Day The Universe Changed* p.9, as cited by Newman, 1991:70).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It was indicated in the first chapter that teachers of English second language pupils, within schools in which English is the medium of instruction, are searching for ways to ensure that the doors of learning and culture are opened to all. The challenge for the Primary school teacher, especially the First Grade teacher, is to ensure that within the bilingual classroom, each voice is developed and heard. For many, the answers are being searched for in whole language. It is popular because it supports the development of voice by students who have been silenced by the system before. This chapter's aim is to describe the essence of the whole language movement, its origins, its basis, and its features. The chapter commences with an exploration of the philosophical roots of whole language, which in turn leads to an investigation of the definition of whole language. The focus then falls onto the whole language teacher's belief system and underlying principles of the whole language approach. The chapter is concluded with an illumination of the paradigm shift that whole language teachers need to make.

2.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

"Whole language" is a relatively new term in the literature on reading and writing instruction. However, the actual origins of the phrase are uncertain. As Y.M. Goodman (1989:115) points out, the early users of the term were not consciously naming a new belief system or movement. They were talking about some new ideas concerning language, teaching and learning and what these meant in terms of implementation, and they needed new language to express their new meanings. Theoretical ideas and the research supporting those ideas developed over time. The influences from which whole language emerges are varied and there is no one definable starting point.

Pieronek (1994:246) observes that whole language appears to have surfaced in response to a number of reasons such as:


- a. an alternative to the basal reader approach that has been most classroom's primary reading material
- b. a response to the reading-writing connection
- c. emphasis on learning as a social process

- d. importance of integrating the four language processes
- e. failure of past programmes to achieve high levels of literacy
- f. the learner is central to the learning process

Similarly, McKenna, Robinson and Miller (1990:3) suggest that the emergence of whole language took place as a reaction to what was perceived as "the senseless aspects of traditional instruction". It is most likely that the popular use of the term *whole language* came from teachers who were becoming aware of the knowledge explosion surrounding oral and written language development and the reading and writing processes. K. Goodman (1992b:188) asserts that whole language, the term and the educational philosophy, did not spring from the heads of a few university professors. It was developed instead by professional educators, mostly classroom teachers, who have taken the best of the knowledge available to them and built a practical philosophy that informs their decisions and soundly supports their innovative teaching. Teachers needed a term to differentiate their developing educational philosophy, programs and practice from the skill-drill, text-test model that was the staple diet in many of the schools.

The origins of the evolving research basis for whole language is the focus of the following discussion.

2.3 THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF WHOLE LANGUAGE

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" The history of a movement is dynamic and is best understood not only by examining the academic roots of its major ideas but also by examining the histories of the individuals who are involved in the development of the movement."

(Y. Goodman, 1989:123)

Whole language is a grass-roots movement among teachers that is based on research (Goodman, 1989b:207; Watson, 1994:601). To make practical decisions and to plan innovations, whole language teachers have a philosophy of education with a strong base in theory and research. Whole language advocates find research support for the whole language point of view in linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociology, anthropology, child development, sociolinguistics, philosophy, curriculum theory, literacy theory, learning theory, and humanism. It traces its foundations back to such educational stalwarts as John Amos Comenius (1887), John Dewey (1916), Piaget (1958), Vygotsky (1962,1978), Holdaway (1979,1984), Halliday (1975), and to practitioners in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and England. A number of individuals from different educational specialities contributed ideas, that when combined with the ideas of others, evolved into the whole language approach.

Whole language builds solidly on Dewey's epistemology, his philosophical theories of how knowledge develops, how we learn by doing what is functional and relevant. It also expands on the psychological research and theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. Whole language incorporates the concepts of language as social semiotic

and language learning as "learning how to mean" from the theory and research of Halliday (1975). It builds on and contributes to the research on reading and writing from print awareness, miscue analysis, process writing, schema theory, discourse analysis, literacy criticism and artificial intelligence. This research base is unified with the strong humanistic traditions of holistic movements in education that go back at least as far as Comenius. It recombines the scientific and humanistic traditions in education (K.S. Goodman, 1989b:207; Y.M. Goodman, 1989:114/117). Goodman (1989b:216) observes that "no movement in education has ever been so comprehensively based on scientific theory." Whole language is unique, then, not just because of what it advocates for education (its stance) but because of the underlying beliefs and the current historical context that, together, give the stance its meaning (Edelsky, Altwerger & Flores, 1991:8).

The history of whole language shows that many groups and individuals have made continuous attempts to consider issues such as curriculum, individual differences, social interaction, collaboration, language learning, the relation between teaching, learning, and evaluation, and their influences on the lives of teachers and students. It is foundational knowledge that must be integrated to produce practical applications in classrooms. It is thus evident that whole language is a "professional theory, an explicit theory in practice" (Edelsky, *et al.* 1991:7). As Jerome Harste asserts (1989, as quoted by Weaver, 1990:7), whole language is "practical theory". That is, it is neither theory divorced from practice nor practice that is unmindful of its own theory. Research and theory have stimulated practice, which in turn has refined theory.

Consequently, it is not possible to label as whole language a theoretical statement related to no actual educational practice. Nor is it possible to characterise a classroom as whole language simply by checking off a list of supposedly whole language activities. It is the teacher's stated beliefs, the character of classroom interaction, and the teacher's and students' underlying intentions, the deliberately theory-driven practice - that make a classroom whole language, and not simply the behaviours. In learning the importance of continually grounding her practice in a theoretical framework, S.M. Church (1994:364) writes "I have shifted my attention from learning how to "do" whole language, to learning how to reflect on what I am doing in light of what I understand and believe."

Because of the common research base, whole language educators hold many key beliefs in common. On the other hand, each practitioner has developed his or her own perspective on what whole language is and means. This is partly as a result of each educator's own unique and personal entrance into the whole language philosophy (Watson, 1994:604). What whole language teachers have in common is a theoretical underpinning about literacy learning and instruction, and a commitment to a continued exploration of theory and practice. The differences in whole language classrooms come about because teachers are not relying on gurus and experts to tell them what to do. They make their own decisions and build their own implementations based on their own understandings (Goodman, 1989b:208).

Considering that implementation of the philosophy depends upon the teacher's understanding of it, as well as upon his or her ability and willingness to depart from traditional methods, in one sense there are as many definitions of whole language as there are whole language practitioners. Before further outlining the principles and theoretical underpinnings of whole language, it is necessary to examine the definitions of whole language in order to talk more clearly of its theory and practice.

2.4 DEFINITION OF WHOLE LANGUAGE

"Any research designed to examine whole language must start by considering what whole language is, the goals of whole language teachers, and how whole language can be studied without destroying or distorting it in the research design" (Goodman, 1989b:208).

As the preceding discussion suggests, whole language is "clearly a lot of things to a lot of people; it's not a dogma to be narrowly practiced" (Goodman, 1986:5). Teachers have arrived at whole language by way of their own unique paths. Because of this their definitions reflect their personal and professional growth, and their definitions vary (Watson, 1989:131; Weaver, 1990:4 & 8). Watson (1989:131) suggests that "most whole language advocates reject a dictionary-type definition that can be looked up and memorised", because a teacher's definition may be personal and unique. Whole language is in constant evolution and implementation and is amenable to a whole range of different renderings.

It should not be surprising then, that there is still no generally accepted definition of whole language. Definitions are vague and elusive; there is no simple explanation of whole language (Farris & Kaczmariski, 1988:77). Newman (1985:1) acknowledges, "I find myself in the uncomfortable position of being unable to tell you succinctly what 'whole language' is." Unfortunately, it is precisely because whole language is subject to so many interpretations that it is difficult to identify what is generic to whole language, and whose brand of whole language is most veridical. It makes whole language as McKenna, Robinson and Miller (1990:4) indicate, "a slippery quarry, something hard to catch and measure."

All this is not to say that whole language, or some major dimension of it, cannot be defined. It can be. It has been. Watson (1989:130, see also Sumara and Walker, 1991:276) advocates that whole language must be defined, not only for those outside the movement, but for whole language educators as well. No matter how much intellectual energy and practical experience go into the formation of a whole-language curriculum, if educators cannot talk clearly and openly about whole language in terms of its theory and its practice, some critics will be quick to diminish or discredit it entirely. In a proposed research agenda for the nineties, to assist whole language educators gain further acceptance of their views, McKenna, *et al.* (1990:5) recommends that "the concept of whole language must be defined in terms sufficiently rigorous to categorise programs and practices." Defining whole language helps teachers become mindful of three important dimensions of the whole

language perspective: first, of the research in literacy and learning; second, of the pedagogical theory that emerges from that research; and finally, of the practice that is consistent with the theory. It is not enough to define whole language; educators must make sure that what occurs in classrooms is supported by and consistent with their definition (Watson, 1989:131).

Table 2.1 provides a sample of quotes related to general definitions from the sources reviewed in this study. These definitions may lack sameness, but they never go outside the boundaries of an acceptable definition. The definitions are diverse because the personal and professional histories of the authors are different (Watson, 1989:132). However, within this variety of definitions there are a few common topics.

The framework of whole language tends to be quite abstract, dealing primarily with attitudes and beliefs. As can be seen, proponents view whole language as a comprehensive philosophy, theory, perspective, and/or set of beliefs or intentions. Rather than a prescribed set of teaching strategies or methods, whole language appears to establish a set of instructional principles which its proponents would like to see guide the practitioner during teaching. Newman and Church (1990:24) emphasise this point, "Whole language is practical theory. It argues for theoretically-based instructional practice." This definition is broader than the limited perspective held by many individuals that whole language is merely an approach to teach reading and writing. This and other misconceptions and overgeneralisations about whole language have resulted in teachers "doing" whole language activities without fully understanding the philosophical origin of the activity or the educational environment in which the activity should take place. Whole language, then, is not an instructional prescription. Hence it makes little sense to say "I'm doing whole language", "I use a whole language approach", or "I teach whole language." Few understand that whole language is a different way of thinking about teaching and learning and not a set of correct practices (Church, 1994:363/364). A person can teach from an interpretative (or whole language) perspective, basing decisions on some fundamental insights about learning and how people learn, but the actual instructional methodology employed is not whole language - the person's beliefs are (Newman, 1991:74).

Whole language demands that teachers' beliefs and attitudes be examined as much as, if not more than, their classroom practices. G.R. Hanson (1989:263) believes that this need for evaluation and reflection on the underlying belief structures and attitudes we have about ourselves, our students, and even the world around us, is what empowers teachers and students. Searching inevitably sets us free, for we can no longer be victims of unexamined beliefs and assumptions. Teachers who examine their attitudes and beliefs can develop more appropriate attitudes enabling themselves and becoming better enablers of students (Hanson, 1989:265).

AUTHOR	QUOTATION
L. Ridley (1990:640,642)	"... whole language is a system based upon an entire theoretical framework of how language is developed." "I saw whole language as a teaching philosophy, not just a set of classroom activities."
S.J. Rich (1985:717,719)	" Whole language in its essence goes beyond the simple delineation of a series of teaching strategies to describe a shift in the way in which teachers think about and practice their art. In essence the term "whole language" outlines the beginning stage of a paradigm shift." "The answer to the question "What is whole language?" is that it is an attitude of mind which provides a shape for the classroom."
M.A. Clarke (1987: 385-386)	""Whole language" is a term which is used to refer to reading and writing instruction which utilises complete texts in communicative situations, as contrasted with focused skills practice or the use of "phonics" or isolated language drill. A philosophy rather than a methodology, whole language does not prescribe activities so much as recommend them..."
B. Johnson & E. Stone(1991: 102)	" Whole language is a theory about teaching and learning in an environment that truly respects the individual learner and expects active participation by both the teacher and the students."
J. Newman (1985:1) (1991:74)	" ... a shorthand way of referring to a set of beliefs about curriculum, not just language arts curriculum, but about everything that goes on in classrooms. Whole language is not an instructional approach, it is a philosophical stance" "Whole language refers to this entire constellation of beliefs about learning and the social context of language."
B. Altwerger, C. Edelsky, B. Flores (1987:145)	"First and foremost: Whole language is not practice. It is a set of beliefs, a perspective. It must become practice but it is not the practice itself." "Whole language is first of all a lens for viewing, a framework that insists that belief shapes practice."
D.J. Watson (1989:129/133)	"Whole language"-two words that have become a label for an exciting grass-roots teacher movement that is changing curricula around the world. "...whole language is not a program, package, set of materials, method, practice, or technique; rather, it is a perspective on language and learning that leads to the acceptance of certain strategies, methods, materials, and techniques..."
K.S. Goodman (1992b:198) (1989a:69)	"Whole language is an inclusive, coherent, scientific pedagogy for a truly democratic society." "... whole language is much more than an alternative to basals. It is not a reading methodology at all; it is a philosophy of curriculum, of learning, of teaching, and of language."
S.M. Church (1994:366)	"Whole language is a dynamic, evolving grass-roots movement. For that reason there is considerable variability among views of whole language held by its advocates and among whole language classrooms." "Whole language encompasses much more than how to teach children to read and write; it involves how we all - students, teachers, administrators, parents-live and work in schools. It is not just about literacy learning, but about all learning."

Table 2.1: Quotations related to general definitions of whole language.

A second general view is that whole language is an exciting "grass-roots" teacher and curriculum reform movement (Watson, 1989:129; Pearson, 1989:235; Goodman, 1989b:208), which starts change in the classroom and moves out from there (Goodman, 1991, as cited by Clarke & Commins, 1993:82). This theme is marked

by the argument that teachers should be highly knowledgeable professionals: "It (whole language) redefines the teacher as a professional decision maker, the curriculum leader in the classroom" (Goodman, 1989a:69). To Z.Lovitt (1990:43) one of the strengths of the whole language approach is the impact its philosophy has on teacher professionalism, which in turn advances student development. Threaded throughout the literature is the suggestion that whole language teachers are a group of dedicated and effective teachers who seek professional emancipation and to share with the students the control in the classroom. Whole language therefore, is often referred to as a political activity (Church, 1994:366; Rich, 1985:722; Pearson, 1989:235) as embracing whole language means dealing with issues of power and control within the classroom, within the institution, and in the wider community.

A final common topic in general descriptions of whole language concerns the comprehensiveness of whole language. Rich (1985:717) points out that, "unfortunately, much of what is called whole language is simply a generic offering of some specific teaching/ learning strategies which are delivered according to a "whole language formula". Such an approach denies the best of whole language." Advocates stress that whole language is not a supplemental, enrichment, or compensatory programme. As Newman and Church (1990:26) write, "Whole language isn't an add-on. It's not a frill. We can't just do a little bit of whole language and leave everything else untouched. It's a radically different way of perceiving the relationships between knowledge and knower, between compliance and responsibility, between learner and teacher, between teacher and administration, between home and school." Framed in this way, it is clear that whole language is not merely a shift in our language arts theories and practices (Field & Jardine, 1994:259), but is a comprehensive philosophical position.

Whole language then does not specify a particular instruction form. A review of the professional literature on the definition of whole language, reveals that whole language is much more than a way of teaching reading and writing. It has its own view of epistemology - "how we come to know what we know" (Pearson, 1989:232). It is the premise of this study that whole language is indeed a philosophy or professional theory that weaves together a theoretical view about learners and learning, teachers and teaching, language, and curriculum into a particular stance on education. The term designates a new and different perception of the universe. Newman (1991:74) claims that whole language involves a shift in our philosophy in its deepest sense - a profound shift in how we live in the world. In a discussion on the ecological and spiritual consequences of whole language, Field and Jardine (1994:259) maintain that whole language "is caught up in a nest of profound political, ethical, spiritual, and ecological reorientations of our lives." Therefore, inherent in a whole language theoretical perspective, is the recognition that our perception of the universe is continually changing. Within this view of the universe the teacher becomes a participating learner in the learning context. Subsequently, many whole language teachers "have grown to realise that their definition of whole language is in process, that tomorrow it will be sharpened and refined" (Watson, 1989:131).

Though indeed there is no one true definition of whole language, there are many principles that together form a core of beliefs characterising the essence of a whole language philosophy. The discussion which follows considers a few of the basic principles that underlie whole language theory and practice and guide instructional decision making.

2.5 THE WHOLE LANGUAGE TEACHER'S BELIEF SYSTEM

The critical element, what makes the strategies in the whole language classroom whole language like, are the distinctive beliefs and intentions of the whole language teacher (Dudley-Marling, 1995a:110). In the absence of a coherent theory of language and learning, there is a serious risk that inconsistencies and contradictions in children's literacy experiences will appear (Pace, 1991, referred to by Dudley-Marling, 1995a:110; Church, 1994:364). There is concern among whole language educators, that because of these inconsistencies and contradictions, whole language instruction is being increasingly misunderstood, misapplied, and unjustly maligned (Weaver, 1990:1).

Based upon a solid body of research in fields such as language acquisition and emergent literacy, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, schema theory and literary theory, ethnography, anthropology, philosophy, and education, as well as from careful observation of learners in real life, whole language has grown into a philosophy not only of literacy development, but of learning in general (Weaver, 1994:332; Harste, 1989:246). It has a strong theory of learning, a theory of language, a basic view of teaching and the role of teachers, and a language centered view of curriculum. Whole language then may also be characterised as theory in practice, or simply as a belief system that is open to new insights and therefore continually evolving.

The whole language belief system cannot be described in a few sentences or paragraphs as there may be no limit to the number of beliefs, and so specific parts of that belief system will be singled out for more attention. Whole language educators consider these principles not only as operating assumptions, but also as working hypotheses, that are subject to refinement and modification on the basis of further observation and research (Harste 1989, as cited by Weaver, 1991:29).

2.5.1 Learning and the Learner

Whole language educators reject behaviourism as a model for significant human learning and are more inclined to be guided by a holistic-constructivistic theory of learning (Weaver, 1994:334; Dechant, 1993:16). They focus on the relevancy of learning, the background and experience of the learner, the purposes of learning, and on intrinsic rewards rather than hierarchies of skills, external rewards, and learning by imitation.

Whole language incorporates a humanistic view of the learner into its constructivistic theory of learning. The focus of the whole language curriculum is not on the content of what is being studied but on the learner (Y. Goodman, 1989:114). It views learning as learner-centered (Dechant, 1993:12; Chen, 1994:5), contextualised and holistic; it emphasises independence and self-directedness in learning (Dechant, 1993:12). Basic to the whole language theory is the concept that children are intrinsically motivated to learn, to make sense of the world (Farris, et al. 1988:78). Learning is said to occur when learners are actively involved, have a real, genuine purpose, and share in decision-making. Learners are actively constructing meaning all the time and not just passively absorbing information.

Weaver (1990:9/10) refers to this active concept of learning as a transactional model and contrasts it with the transmission model of education, which has as its basis, the behaviourist model of learning. In short, whole language teaching both reflects and requires a shift from a transmission concept of learning to a transactional concept (Weaver, 1994:341). However, Dechant (1993:23) asserts that "learning theories are not either - or positions", and that although whole language's primary orientation is toward holistic constructivism, neither of the two main types of theory explains all learning or behaviour. Whole language advocates are often perceived as assuming an all-or-nothing stance, and according to Spiegel (1992:38) this could result in some literacy educators rejecting whole language in its entirety. Reid (1993:16) proposes that "we must incorporate what is valuable in our historical tradition into the evolution of a new and expanded approach to learning and teaching." The issues then, are not about whether instruction in word attack skills should be provided, but are instead about the contextualisation (rather than isolation), and therefore the meaningfulness, of the instruction and the stimulation of learners' "need to know" (Reid, 1993:15). Teaching, therefore, becomes a process of engaging learners in meaningful, interesting and productive activities.

When learning is perceived as functional to and purposeful for the learner, it is more likely to endure. Weaver (1994:334) states that the most significant learning derives from whatever arouses the interest, meets the needs and furthers the purposes of the learner in the present. Learning is motivated by what learners attend to, what they want, what they are interested in, and what they feel will enhance their self-esteem and personal worth (Watson, 1989:133; Dechant, 1993:17). Oldfather (1993:678) maintains that in an enquiry of student motivation, students said that having choice was one of the main reasons they felt so motivated to learn. She further stresses, that ultimately, issues of student motivation have to do with empowerment. To D.J. Watson (1989:133) empowerment means allowing learners to "initiate learning, generate curriculum, direct their own behaviour, and evaluate their own efforts." Empowerment means listening to the voices of children and giving children responsibility for their own learning, so that they can become more personally invested and connected to their learning activities.

Pupil empowerment is a logical outgrowth of the whole language movement. Literacy empowers learners in

significant ways. It changes one's social standing and alters one's position in the world. It assures that one has a voice and will be heard (Harste, 1989:244). However, according to Harman and Edelsky (1989:393-396) the effect that the whole language approach has on individuals is not always that liberating. They are of the opinion that precisely because its primary principles are that learners are actively constructing meaning all the time, and that learning takes place in an authentic and purposeful environment, whole language is more liable to alienate learners from their communities. Thus all changes have repercussions that need to be respected, and ways to use them need to be searched for. However, the liberation of learners from their active struggle with the issues of literacy, community, identity, and social change is most likely to come from the power of the critical thinking and democracy learned and practiced in whole language settings.

The empowered learner in the whole language classroom is also one who takes risks, experiments, and makes his own errors and miscues. Whole language teachers believe that errors often indicate that valuable steps in learning are being made and are important to the growth process (Fountas & Hannigan, 1989:137; Dechant, 1993:19). Watson (1989:137) notes that "language users can learn as much from getting language wrong (producing a nonstandard form) as they can from getting it right, and maybe more." Piaget (1967) noted that errors can be viewed as hypotheses that are crucial to children's learning (Dudley-Marling, 1995a:113). The role of education, therefore, should not be to give children the "right" answers, but rather to provide them with the resources that enable them to evaluate and revise their hypotheses (Edelsky, *et al.* 1991:26). Whole language teachers support this process by considering risk taking within a supportive environment; one that is characterised by trust and respect, and is free from the fear of being criticised, penalised or declared wrong (McCaslin, 1989:226; Weaver, 1994:334; Dudley-Marling, 1995a:113). This does not imply that students' errors are ignored, but rather perceived as opportunities for diagnosis, for developing insight into how the learner reasons and subsequently used to plan further lessons. Each child's organisation of the world at a particular moment is reflected in the errors the child makes (Trika Smith-Burke, Deegan & Jaggar, 1991:61).

A whole language perspective insists that learning is as much a collaborative social process as it is an individual one (Newman, 1991:74; Watson, 1989:135). While accepting the importance of learning through individual interactions with the environment (Piaget, 1967), whole language advocates lean heavily on Vygotsky's ideas about the social nature of learning. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development emphasises the importance of collaborations (between students and teachers and between peers) through which students can transcend their own individual limitations (Edelsky, *et al.* 1991:23). According to whole language advocates, knowledge is created through social interaction (Harste, 1989:247). Similarly, Leinhardt (1992:23) notes that "knowledge is distributed among members of a group, and this distributed knowledge is greater than the knowledge possessed by any single member." Therefore whole language teachers seek to create a community of learners in a supportive environment in which students learn with and from each other. Individual learning is promoted by social collaboration: by opportunities to work with others, to brainstorm,

to try out ideas and get feedback, and to obtain assistance (Weaver, 1994:334). Noting the effect of social interaction on individual learners, Weaver (1991:31) asserts that "... cooperation and discussion do more to stimulate individual achievement than competition and isolated effort." In short, learning is facilitated by and within a community of learners.

What emerges from the above principles of learning is that whole language is based on respect for the learner: respect for each learner's ability to make meaning from his/her experiences, respect for each learner's need and right to make choices and to take responsibility for his/her own learning; respect for the learner's strengths and learning strategies; and respect for the complexity of each learner as a human being. Such principles therefore produce new roles for teachers and learners and a new view of how learning and teaching are related.

2.5.2 A View of Language

The term "whole language" calls attention to the critical role of language in the whole language movement, and in learning of any kind. A whole language framework has been developing over the last twenty years. During this time research in language and language learning has strengthened the theoretical foundations of whole language (Edelsky, *et al.* 1991:18). As previously mentioned, earlier definitions of whole language reflect this emphasis on language and language learning and whole language was often defined primarily in linguistic terms (Watson, 1989:132; see also M.A. Clarke's (1987) definition in table 2.1).

Such definitions emphasise the need to know what current research has demonstrated about many aspects of language learning, in order to build curricula which can support children's language development. Knowledge of the acquisition of oral and written language provides support and direction for the whole language movement. Whole language advocates operate from an examined theory of how language, thought, and knowledge develop holistically and in support of each other (Goodman, 1989b:210). Goodman (1989b:210) refers to whole language as a "dual curriculum" as every activity, experience, or unit is an opportunity for both linguistic and cognitive development. Each serves the other and both have to be planned and monitored for either to be successful.

In a whole language perspective, it is not just oral language that counts as language. Whole language advocates point out that writing and reading are no less language than is speaking, and conclude that what is true about oral language acquisition is also true for written language acquisition (Edelsky, *et al.* 1991:9; Dechant, 1993:15; Fountas & Hannigan, 1989:134). All language learners, whether they are learning a second language or a written language, or babies learning to talk, learn by really using language, not by going through exercises or artificial language-like exercises (Edelsky, *et al.* 1991:16). Language is for making meanings, for accomplishing purposes. According to Goodman (1986:10), "Language is learned best when the focus is not

on the language but on the meaning being communicated. Pupils should learn through language while they learn language." Central to D. Ogle's (1990:48) understanding of whole language is its premise that, "learning begins with a desire to know, with inquiring minds - both students' and teachers'." Therefore, in whole language classrooms, learners are encouraged to explore each of the language arts in meaningful, purposeful and functional ways. Focusing on the ecologies of whole language, Jardine (1994:513) maintains that "whole language wishes to turn our attention to how it is that we already live in language."

Central to whole language theory, then, is the notion that learning should go from whole to part (and back to whole) as spoken language is learned. Whole language teachers note that language is indivisible, and that when it is divided it is no longer language (Dechant, 1993:15; Goodman & King, 1990:222). According to Jardine (1994:513) whole language tells us that "...the vibrancy and life of language is found in its living interdependencies, not in its lifeless fragments." It follows then that language is learned and should be taught with all its systems intact. Whole language activities are those which support learners in their use of all aspects of language; "students learn about reading and writing while listening; they learn about writing from reading and gain insights about reading from writing" (Newman, 1991:72). Within these activities once students experience the whole, they are able to deal more closely with analysis of the parts that comprise it. The emphasis in whole language is that pupils come to see skills and strategies as part of a context that makes sense; why a skill is important and where it fits in the total scheme (Dechant, 1993:46).

According to Goodman (1986:27) whole language is not only indivisible and integrative, but also inclusive. It does not exclude some languages, some dialects, or some registers because their speakers lack status in a particular society. All varieties of language are appropriate and useful for the social and cultural groups within which they are constructed (Trika Smith-Burke, et al. 1991:61). Thus teachers in whole language classrooms value differences among learners as they come to school, respecting them and empowering them to use their own specific language, so that they can best interact and share with others (Chen, 1994:8). The learner's culture, language and experiences in and out of school, are valued and recognised as essential for further learning (Goodman & King, 1990:223).

Therefore, in whole language settings the social nature of language learning is nurtured. According to Goodman (1986:26) language is both personal and social, it is "driven from inside by the need to communicate and shaped from the outside toward the norms of the society." It allows each of us to give expression to our experience and thus to share it (Harste, 1989:245). Children in the whole language classroom are exposed to natural and pleasant ways to communicate ideas within a social environment. They are encouraged to talk about their experience, to listen to their fellow class-mates, to put their thoughts in print, and to read what they have written (Dechant, 1993:14). Whole language engages children in interaction with others, creates purpose, and provides immediate feedback.

The whole language classroom is clearly language friendly. The whole language curriculum is integrated, holistic, and naturalistic, and recognises an essential of language learning: "people learn to talk by talking, comprehend oral language by listening, write by writing, and read by reading. And they learn to think by thinking" (Goodman, *et al.* 1987:7). However, for as long as whole language advocates continue with research, whole language theory will continue to change. More recently, Leland and Harste (1994:337) in an inquiry into multiple ways of knowing, state that "knowing and learning are not merely language processes, nor are they merely cognitive processes". They suggest that a good language arts programme is one that expands the communication potential of all learners by allowing the use of other ways of knowing and sign systems, such as art, music, mathematics, and drama, for making meaning. Such a curriculum is more democratic because it allows children, whose dominant ways of knowing are something other than language, a way to gain voice and to write their own identities. Schools will silence fewer voices as well as better serve the heterogeneous and increasing multicultural populations (Leland & Harste, 1994:339-342). A multiple-ways-of-knowing curriculum builds on the whole language base and extends it.

2.5.3 The Nature and Development of the Curriculum

"We should teach what children need to know, both content and process, in a manner that mirrors life - interwoven, interrelated, and compacted" (Lovitt, 1989:44).

Although there is no whole language curricula as such (Goodman, 1989b:223), several implications for curriculum follow from the aforementioned principles of learning and language.

Since learning proceeds best when learners engage in functional and meaningful literacy and learning experiences, whole language teachers therefore engage students in reading and writing, speaking and listening, for a variety of **authentic purposes** (Weaver, 1991:22). According to C. Weaver (1994:335), such authentic literacy and learning experiences include "the myriad kinds of reading, discussion, experimentation, and research that children and adults voluntarily engage in, outside of school." The great authenticity of life outside the school, the experiences and knowledge gained there, provide powerful and immediate motivation for learning (Watson, 1989:136). Therefore, the curriculum should not consist of worksheets on which students mark vowels or correct errors in grammar or spelling, but rather involve pupils in writing grocery lists and menus, or discussing the different books that have been read in a "book club". In such functional activities, students develop an understanding of the potential of language (Fountas, *et al.* 1989:135).

The goal in whole language curricula seems to be to eliminate the gap between school literacy tasks and real-world literacy tasks (Pearson, 1989:234). Similarly, whole language advocates the use of materials that are natural, real, predictable, and interesting. It has a predilection for trade books, quality literature, and the reading of whole stories, but is generally in favour of any reading material that is real. Such material includes

rhymes, riddles, jokes, poems, chants, songs, plays, newspapers, magazines, and any other authentic and appropriate text (Dechant, 1993:89). They are authentic because they offer a variety of situational contexts.

Whole language advocates have a special fondness for the word "authentic", but in the absence of a comprehensive definition, implementation of the authenticity criterion is often problematic for teachers and theorists. They need to develop and make sense for themselves their roles within the ideology of whole language (Sumara & Walker, 1991:278). Sumara and Walker (1991:283) found that in the whole language classrooms they observed, this sense of the need for authentic engagements was always situated within an understanding of what is "real" for children who spend a large portion of their lives in school. For them, activities that are school-based have as much purpose and meaning as do the adults' kinds of communications that have become the model for this notion of authenticity. The notion of authenticity, therefore, cannot be understood unless it remains contextualised in specific classroom culture as defined and lived by student and teacher. Sumara and Walker (1991:283) also propose looking at the idea of authenticity "in the text of the teacher, rather than in the products that students might produce", as whole language teachers demonstrate this kind of authenticity when they reveal themselves as learners, modelling what they learned, how they learned, and what they did with learning.

Recalling that authenticity is measured in relation to real reading and writing in the real world, Edelsky and Draper (1989, as referred to by Pearson, 1989:238), note that reading and writing in schools are often nothing but simulations of that reality. There therefore appears to be a need for a more precise, professional language in the whole language community (Sumara & Walker, 1991:276).

Since language is learned best and easiest when it is whole and in natural context, then **integration** is a key principle for language development and learning through language. Whole language seeks to preserve the wholeness of, or integrity of, literacy events (Pearson, 1989:233). Children will therefore read whole texts rather than the contextless bits and pieces of language that characterise worksheets and workbooks. Direct and indirect instruction of the parts of language occurs in the context of the whole, and in the context of the students' need (Weaver, 1994:335).

Whole language advocates also believe that the language arts (speaking, listening, writing, and reading) are closely related and should be taught in an integrated fashion. All are regarded as supportive facets of the same underlying cognitive and linguistic phenomenon, and exist in such a way that each supports and derives meaning from the others. Growth in any one of the functions supports growth in the others (Pearson, 1989:233).

Whole language curriculum is further integrated in the sense that the literacy curriculum is not viewed as

separate from social studies, science, literature, art, music, or mathematics curricula. Whole language philosophy underlies the entire curriculum (Newman & Church, 1990:21). Altwerger, *et al.* (1987:146) assert that, "Because language is considered a tool for making sense of something else, the "something elses"(science, social studies topics) have prominence." Language affords the learner the opportunity to study the world, as well as to study the content areas. The content areas provide the context for much of the talk, reading, and writing that occurs in class (Dechant, 1993:21).

Since **choice** is an important factor in facilitating learning, the curriculum is in many respects negotiated among the teacher and the students. Teachers from a whole language perspective are curriculum leaders and "classroom enquirers" and their goal is to learn about language and teaching using students as their "curricular informants" (Harste, 1989:247). Who students are, what they know, and what they want to know becomes curriculum (Goodman & King, 1990:223). In whole language classes, students are at the heart of curriculum planning; "nothing is set into classroom motion until it is validated by learners' interests and motivated by their needs" (Watson, 1989:133). In keeping with this notion, whole language teachers approach curriculum on a "planning to plan" basis (Watson, 1989:133). Students who feel a sense of "ownership" (Goodman, 1986:31; Newman, 1985:3) in what they do in classrooms, will therefore be empowered, or given a sense of autonomy.

Whole language curriculum focuses on empowering people, and considerations about how this is best accomplished quickly become politically and socially oriented. In the literature, whole language is therefore often referred to as a "political activity" as it deals with issues of control and refers to power arrangements (Edelsky, 1992:325; Rich, 1985:72; Pearson, 1989:235; Shannon, 1993:86; Wiseman, 1993:168). Whole language aims to return power to where it belongs - to the children and teacher in the classroom who must live with the curriculum and give it life (Rich, 1985:722; Pearson, 1989:235). The environment, therefore, as described by Y. Goodman (1989:114) and Harman and Edelsky (1989:397) is a "democratic one" in which the teacher and the learners collaboratively set agreed-upon goals. Thus whole language also redefines the relationship between teacher and learner as "one of supporting development rather than controlling it" (Goodman, 1989a:69). Whole language educators realise that, for teachers to improve learning experiences for students, teachers must believe that they and the students have the responsibility and power to make decisions, and they need to be knowledgeable to do so.

As teachers begin to utilise a more collaborative style of teaching, they very often struggle with their new roles as teachers, questioning when and how to share authority and power with their students (Garan, 1994:192; Pappas, Oyler, Barry & Rassel, 1993:297). Educators are facing decisions about what Sumara (1991, referred to by Garan, 1994:192) has described as the "continual tension between the control of authority... needed to retain effectiveness as a teacher...", and the need for students to assume responsibility for their own learning. In the understandably enthusiastic rush to open up and liberate and democratise, whole language can easily

be confused with a "linguistic free-for-all" (Field & Jardine, 1994:260).

According to Field and Jardine (1994:260), the balance and care required to prevent such a slide into a linguistic free-for-all, is often what is missing from the whole language teacher's work as a curriculum theorist. Rich (1985:723) warns that whole language beliefs about curriculum should not be taken to believe that the "whole language teacher believes in total freedom", rather "the whole language teacher establishes a delicate balance between freedom and control." According to Watson (1989:136), teachers help students make good choices by offering them good and appropriate invitations. Short and Kauffman (1994:10) emphasise the importance of learners reflecting and looking back over what has occurred, to organise ideas for future use. They state that when students are involved in making choices about their learning, but not in reflecting on that learning, they often make choices which are not productive. It appears that in each whole language classroom there needs to exist a set of values that define a way of being and acting that is largely determined and put into place by each teacher. Teacher control need not prevent choice, but rather facilitate controlled choices that enhance learning and language development. In sharing power and control - in taking on a collaborative style of teaching - teachers are in "search of a best fit" (Pappas, et al. 1993:301).

Curriculum is negotiated by teachers and students and begins in the life experiences of the language learner. All curricula are therefore unique and are realised in each educational setting as the community, students, teachers, and administrators make it their own. A whole language curriculum is flexible and dynamic and focuses on teaching and learning as a continuous process in which the teacher and student take risks with new ideas in the classroom.

2.5.4 The Role of the Teacher

"(Teaching)... is not a quest with a pot of gold, a right way of doing things, at the end but a journey that never ends...We need to abandon perfection and substitute learning as the goal of teaching" (Manning, 1993 as quoted by Settle, 1994:8).

Whole language principles of learning, characteristics of curriculum, and teacher roles, all draw heavily from research into the acquisition of language and literacy and how such learning is facilitated. A whole language teacher is therefore defined by his or her underlying philosophy about teaching and learning, not by a common set of instructional principles (Dudley-Marling, 1995a:114). Drawing constantly on a practical philosophy that informs their decisions and soundly supports their innovative teaching, whole language teachers know what they're doing. They also know **why** they're doing what they do (Goodman, 1992b:189).

By producing a perspective of how learning and teaching are related, whole language also produces new and different roles for learners and teachers.

The teacher is, first of all, a role model (Weaver, 1994:336; Froese, 1991:10). In order to foster students' development of literacy and learning, teachers must demonstrate that they themselves are passionate readers, writers, and learners. Whole language teachers believe that they are "living demonstrations of learning and how to learn" (Reutzel & Hollingsworth, 1988:410). According to Sumara and Walker (1991:279), teachers also need to model and demonstrate the many expectations and desirable ways of acting and behaving in a classroom, that would permit whole language principles to flourish. Teachers also need to demonstrate what it means to be risk takers and decision makers.

In whole language, the teacher is also a collaborator, mediator, and facilitator, who serves a facilitating role rather than a direct teaching role (Pearson, 1989:237; Goodman, 1989b:209). According to Newman (1991:72) the teacher's role is best seen as "leading from behind." The teacher supports learning, and arranges conditions so that learning can occur, but does not control learning. The teacher serves as a guide who seeks student input and interaction rather than dictate or direct outcomes (Farris, *et al.* 1988:78; Gursky, 1992:8). Teachers are aware that what they are teaching is not always what students learn. There is no one-to-one correspondence between what is taught and what is learned. Teaching and learning are not isomorphic (Y. Goodman, 1989:114). Y. Goodman (1989:114) notes that, "... learners ultimately are in control of what they learn regardless of what is being taught." Rejecting the view that teachers are merely authoritarian transmitters of knowledge to a passive learner and understanding the individual nature of learning, the whole language teacher guides, supports, monitors, encourages, and facilitates learning, but does not govern it (Goodman, 1986:29; Altwerger, *et al.* 1987:154).

Teachers organise a rich, literate environment that invites learners to take part in the social community of the classroom, taking into consideration all that they know about learners (Y. Goodman, 1989:114). The whole language teacher starts where the learner is and extends and builds from there. He/She recognises the social differences of children and values, and strives to understand the ethnic, cultural, and belief systems of the social group to which a child belongs. The teacher respects the value system, the interests, needs, expectations, language, and, indeed, the academic potential of the individual (Dechant, 1993:13). The teacher further treats each student as capable and developing, has faith in their improvability, and offers invitations and challenges to growth (Weaver, 1994:342).

Valuing the differences among learners, whole language teachers view the goals of education as "expansion on the learner's strengths and maximum growth, not conformity and uniformity" (Goodman, 1989b:209). Whole language is concerned with nurturing children's self-concept. Sumara and Walker (1991:281) suggest that much of the success of whole language is the result of creating a predictable environment - an environment that is safe, comfortable, and accepting.

Whole language classrooms are communities of learners. Teachers and students are inquirers and learners together. Learning becomes the universal curriculum for both teachers and students (Harste, 1989:247; Goodman, 1989b:209; Dudley-Marling, 1995a:114; Rich, 1985:721). Teachers learn with and from their pupils. To allow learners to direct teachers, teachers must be prepared to learn from them. Teachers need to become "kid-watchers", and enlightened observers of pupils (Watson, 1989:133). Teachers engage in learning, when coupled with careful observation of their pupils, they examine their beliefs and question their assumptions.

As learners, teachers need to be given the same consideration as other learners. Teachers must be free to take risks and learn from their experience. They must be free to draw on their background knowledge and experience to support their students' learning. Teachers also need opportunities to reflect on and discuss their experiences with colleagues (Newman, 1991:74; Dudley-Marling, 1995a:115). As L. Bird (1989:17) notes, "Teaching is an art, a creative process of continual revision."

C. Dudley-Marling (1995b:252) maintains that teachers who are learners always have a degree of uncertainty about what they are doing. However, he also proposes that uncertainty need not be a threat to a teacher's professional identity, but rather an occasion for reflection and growth. Uncertainty is what keeps the inquiry process going and becomes the place for seeing beyond what one thinks one knows. The reflection that Dudley-Marling (1995b:256) talks about is a "systematic, theoretically informed, deliberate reflection that acknowledges uncertainty, seeks improvement, but does not expect to attain the truth once and for all."

Reflection, then, may not make a teacher any more certain, but allows teachers to become "life-long learners" (Short & Kaufmann, 1994:14). It helps teachers as learners to create new understandings and seek out new questions as well as provide more effective learning opportunities for students. Reflecting on teaching can even give "a much more complicated notion of teaching and learning to teach" (Dudley-Marling, 1995b:256). Garan (1994:193) emphasises the parallels between a teacher's constant state of transition and the growth and focus of the whole language movement itself:

"The individual teacher and the whole language movement are in a constant state of evolution as collective experiences and perceptions are reexamined, synthesised and translated into classroom practice."

A teacher is not something one has become, but something one is, and "with the aid of deliberate, theoretically informed reflection - always in the process of becoming" (Dudley-Marling, 1995b:257).

This act of reflection is central to revealing a sense of power as learners to both teachers and students alike. Through reflection, teachers gain control of their own learning, and are then no longer dependent on the next "expert" or "fad" (Short & Kauffman, 1994:14). Whole language involves teachers who are classroom researchers. They are constantly collecting a wide range of data from their classrooms to make their decisions and examine and develop their operational theory (Goodman, 1989b:209). The whole language teacher

demonstrates that the answers to the theory-to-practice question do not reside in a text, programme, or teachers' manual but within the self (Rich, 1985:719). Goodman (1989b:209) observes that the whole language teacher's expectations include the authority and power to plan, to organise, and to choose resources.

Whole language philosophy is concerned with the empowerment of all learners including the teacher (Thomas & Rhinehart, 1994:73). It gives to teachers the power to make decisions and provides them with the knowledge necessary to do so. Whole language teachers read broadly and deeply because they understand they have undertaken the responsibility for translating theory and research into practice. They have made a commitment to professional development in a variety of ways. These teacher researchers share the insights they gain from their classrooms through writing and making presentations and otherwise taking control of their own learning processes (Wiseman, 1993:170). All of these activities lead to reflective practice and discovery that there is no elusive right way of doing whole language (Newman & Church, 1990:25).

2.6 A PARADIGM SHIFT

The principles of whole language should make it clear that no one can become a whole language teacher simply by using sets of materials labelled "whole language", or by experimenting with different activities without also developing new ways of viewing students as learners and new ways of transacting with them. In order to act on the basis of principles and beliefs such as these, teachers must make a "paradigm shift" - they must move from the philosophy of education that underlies traditional teaching to the radically different belief system that underlies whole language. Thus a whole language teacher might be defined as someone who believes that humans fundamentally construct their own knowledge, and who works to increasingly activate that belief in the classroom (Weaver, 1994:341).

A paradigm shift of this magnitude is no easy feat. Research conducted by Walmsley and Adams (1993:272) with practicing whole language teachers, reveals that many teachers simply are unable or unwilling to make the transition from traditional to whole language instruction, especially without support. What emerges from these teachers' stories about their experiences are several concerns that relate to the amount of work involved in whole language instruction; relations with other faculty members, administrators and parents; organisation of instruction and translating philosophy into practice; defining what whole language is; evaluating student progress in a whole language classroom; and where respondents see themselves and the whole language movement in the next few years (Walmsley & Adams, 1993:273). The demanding nature of making the transition to whole language, is often underestimated by whole language advocates. It is clear from the accounts of teachers that it takes not only time, but also intensive support to bring about these changes. Educational change is a lengthy, complex process. Teachers need time and assistance in growing into whole language, and they need administrators who can recognise common patterns of growth and who will honour

their own unique growth process.

A basic principle of successful whole language teachers is that they are not and will never be finished products - that this journey toward becoming expert holistic literacy teachers is a process, like all learning, which needs continual support and encouragement. However, because whole language is not a method but a philosophy of learning and teaching, the paradigm shift must occur if teachers' practices are increasingly to reflect a whole language philosophy.

2.7 CONCLUSION

It has been shown that whole language is an attempt to tell new stories about education and what education can be. As the preceding discussion suggests, a whole language, whole literacy perspective is broadly concerned with whole learning and the whole lives of children and teachers. It should not be surprising, then, that from one perspective, a whole language philosophy is in effect a particular manifestation of a much broader conception of learning. It is concerned with the empowerment of all learners, including the teacher. However, neither theory nor curriculum ever sleeps. Despite the instructional progress brought on by whole language, it will, at its best, continue to be an open invitation to inquiry into the nature of language, learning, and how these processes are best supported using children and educators as informants for purposes of improving education in our society. The future demands that we never cease to question or learn about the role of thinking and literacy in our society.

CHAPTER THREE

WHOLE LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING FOR ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

"As we educate students for the 21st century, we must learn to draw selectively and effectively on *pluribus* and *unum*, on diversity and unity, as a basis for creating a better nation" (Cortes, 1994:35).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the statement was made that whole language values the learner, celebrates differing backgrounds, experiences and languages, and therefore has a great deal to offer literacy education in culturally and ethnically diverse classrooms. This chapter aims to investigate English second language instruction from a whole language perspective. The focus first falls on the changing nature of the composition of pupils in the South African classroom and the challenges it presents to teachers and teacher training. This in turn leads to an inquiry into the aims of the present English second language syllabus. Whole language principles are then discussed as they relate to English second language pedagogical principles. This chapter ultimately aims to establish the existence of a relationship between whole language and English second language teaching.

3.2 RESPONSES TO CLASSROOM DIVERSITY

Language policy in education in South Africa has become a highly emotive and politicised issue (Lockett, 1993:40). According to Greyling and Bothma (1995:122), the central problem in education in South Africa today is that only 9% of the population has English as a home language, yet the majority of pupils are exposed to English as the medium of instruction from Standard Three onwards. Weidemann (1993:1, referred to by Greyling, *et al.* 1995) states that a black child entering Standard Three "possesses a vocabulary of only 10% of the words required for being educated through the medium of English, and becomes one of the more than 50 000 pupils who annually leave school after Std 3." Such convincing evidence emphasises, not only the poor standards of teaching of English as a second language in the various South African education departments, but the effects of linguistic repression which characterised the language policy in the apartheid system (Lockett, 1993:39). Lockett (1993:44) therefore proposes that within the South African context, "the goal of facilitating greater social justice and equity via language demands the advocacy of multilingualism and the view that all South African languages are potential national resources as opposed to "national problems".

Promoting multilingualism and removing all forms of linguistic discrimination appear to be the aims of the new language policy recently proposed by Education Minister, Professor Sibusiso Bengu (The Star 1995: Wednesday, 15 November). A key feature of the policy is that no language would be introduced at the expense

of another: "Learners' home languages, as well as the additional languages they wish to acquire, will all form part of a dual process of self-affirmation and cognitive development" (The Star 1995: Wednesday, 15 November). Schools will be encouraged to offer at least two languages of instruction which will both be given equal emphasis (Mabote, 1995: Sunday Times, 19 November). This is known as additive or balanced bilingualism, by which is meant "the gaining of competence in a second language while the first language is maintained" (Lockett, 1993:46), and is a radical departure from the restrictive models of the past.

The implementation of the principle that no child may be denied access to an educational institution on the grounds of "race" or language, facilitated changes in the composition of South African classrooms. During this transitional period, in which it is likely that English will play the role of "linking language" (Lockett, 1993: 50), the numbers of children from different cultural and linguistic groups entering schools in which English is the medium of instruction, is large and growing steadily. The result of these changes is that classrooms now serve an ethnically diverse population of students and have become multilingual. The nature of the multilingual classes may differ, but what they have in common is that students who speak different languages as mother-tongue are now sitting in the same classroom, working within the same curriculum and using the same medium of instruction (Barkhuizen, 1993:77).

When attending a school in which English is the medium of instruction, children not only need to learn conversational English to function in society, but they also need to gain the language proficiency required to acquire cognitive and academic skills in their subject and content area classrooms. It is critical that they use language to manage their social interactions and to articulate their emotions. Ultimately, they must use language to take control of their lives and learning (Early, 1990:567). It is therefore necessary to adopt a very pragmatic and instrumental approach to English.

However, research studies by Collier (1987) and Cummins (1981) suggest that very different time periods are required for students to attain peer-appropriate levels in conversational skills in English as compared to academic skills. Conversational skills often approach nativelike levels within about two years of exposure to English, whereas it takes five to seven years for students to develop academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1994:39). Hsu (1994:3) proposes that it is therefore not difficult to find out why dropouts and school failures are frequently reported among second language learners. They have already experienced frustration in school before they develop the academic language to succeed academically.

Acquiring a language for the purpose of succeeding in school is an extremely complex process. Since it is now very likely that all teachers will work with language-different children sometime in their career, teachers should be knowledgeable about patterns of language and social development among ESL students, and also be capable of implementing pedagogical strategies in the mainstream classroom that are effective for both ESL

and native-English speaking students. However, research conducted by G. Barkhuizen (1993:78-83) reveals that the formation of English multilingual settings in South Africa, has resulted in teachers having to go through a learning experience, as many have had no training in teaching English as a second language. They feel ill-equipped to deal with the problems of second language speakers and are unsure about their present teaching practices. They need information that will help them cope in their English multilingual settings.

Without a knowledge base in the education of ESL students and a coherent set of assumptions about how learning and teaching proceed, educators, policy-makers and the general public could view linguistic and cultural diversity as a problem. Y.S. Freeman, Y.M. Goodman (1993:163) and J. Cummins (1994:37) emphasise the disabling effects of such a misconception on students' learning. They propose that diversity needs to be promoted as a strength or resource to help everyone in the school community, including the teacher, to expand on their personal experiences with language and culture (see also Handscombe, 1994:343). Cultural and linguistic variation does not mean a cultural and linguistic deficit, as the label LEP- limited English proficient often suggests, and unequivocally does not imply social or intellectual inferiority (Freeman & Goodman, 1993:166; Handscombe, 1994:343). Such labels project an attitude that these students are "limited" and have a deficit. Hence the misconceptions among teachers that teaching English second language is remedial work (Barkhuizen, 1993:81) and that these children warrant placement in special education classes (Cummins, 1994:36).

In addition to misconceptions such as these that systematically limit the possibilities for students to develop both personally and academically, Cummins (1994:34) asserts that the disabling process is further entrenched by educators who define their roles in a narrow mechanistic way as transmitting a body of knowledge and skills to students. Because there is little faith that the learner can learn, the assumption is that small parts will be easier to learn. Failure on the part of educators to focus classroom interactions on the construction of student experience, compounds the effects of the discriminatory structures within which the education of ESL students unfold.

From the data previously sketched, it appears that school systems and teachers are struggling to adapt to this changing multilingual/ multicultural reality. Teachers require a knowledge base of relevant theory, research and practical experience from which they can construct a set of operating principles to guide their actions in the classroom (Johnson, 1994:184). They need to be convinced that all children are capable of learning and to recognise that teachers, too, can continue to learn from their students throughout their teaching career.

Y. Freeman and D. Freeman (1994:560) suggest that whole language teachers are meeting this challenge of diversity because they understand students and they understand basic principles of literacy learning. They benefit from an understanding of the theories and supporting research in second language acquisition, methods

of teaching a second language, and bilingual education as well as the related social, political, and cultural issues involved in teaching ESL students. Such teachers draw upon the rich cultural diversity of their students, support their students' first languages, and help all their students living in a multicultural society. Likewise, Lamb (1990:5) argues that through the use of whole language techniques, an ESL teacher can incorporate holistic language situations into the ESL classroom and advance the pupils' acquisition of a second language.

3.3 INTERIM CORE SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE

Since the outlook on second language acquisition and teaching has changed, new aims or new perspectives on aims have been formulated. Teaching pedagogy and pedagogical principles needs to be brought into line with existing knowledge and research findings, as well as tied to the wider processes of political and social transformation. An English syllabus, then, is the "realization of certain theories about and empirical studies of learning, language and language acquisition which have led to the formulation of different methods and approaches" (Kilfoil & Van der Walt, 1995:218).

The most important concept which characterises the aims of the recently introduced Interim core syllabus for English second language, is the emphasis on the role currently played by English in South Africa. Besides ensuring wider social, educational and employment opportunities, the Department of Education perceives English as having an important role to play in the development of a democratic and non-discriminatory nation, in which all people are guaranteed the right to basic education and equal access to all educational institutions, as well as cultural freedom and diversity. Hence the teaching and learning of the language should contribute towards enabling pupils to use it for effective communication in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. Pupils' progressive mastery of English should, therefore, facilitate their using it for practical, as well as, social, personal, and educational purposes (Interim core syllabus, 1995: i-iii). The present syllabus therefore focuses on the motivation to learn English in such a way that it does not work to the detriment of the development of the learners' home language(s). Pupils' proficiency in their home language(s) is acknowledged and teachers are encouraged to draw on this resource.

The syllabus is therefore concerned with English as a means of communication in a multilingual society. It has moved away from the rigid, structurally organised and sequentially graded format of the 1978 syllabus and marks a major departure from the thinking informing the 1978 syllabus, which prohibited code-switching and ignored the importance of the home language(s). The present syllabus is a more pragmatic, flexible outline, consistent with such learner-centred methodologies as embodied in the communicative approach on which it is based. According to Kilfoil, *et al.* (1995:18), the term "communicative" indicates that this approach aims at getting learners ready for the world outside the classroom. It acknowledges the fact that the teaching of a second language serves a specific purpose in the community, and that the school should prepare learners for

this.

The following features of communicative language teaching are offered as a general guide (Interim core syllabus, 1995:3-4):

- a. The communication of meaning is central. A desire to use the language is the major incentive for learning its structures and vocabulary. Teachers should therefore attempt to create situations where the pupils will be motivated to communicate with one another, with the teacher, and ultimately with the wider community.
- b. Language should always be seen in relation to context, that is, to purpose, audience, and circumstance. Language teaching should, therefore, not focus on the drilling of discrete items.
- c. Classroom activities should be learner-centred, interactive and meaningful to the pupils. This is best achieved through group and pair work.
- d. The teacher's role is to organise and facilitate communication between pupils or between pupils and materials.
- e. Teachers should attempt to create a climate within which pupils can use English with interest, purpose and enjoyment. Every effort should be made to create a nurturing, stress-free environment. Stress, ridicule and embarrassment are known to inhibit learning.
- f. Teachers need to encourage pupils to experiment with English, correcting them only when their choice, or use of language, is inappropriate.
- g. Teachers should, at all times, be aware of and respond to pupils' individual needs, abilities and interests. Teachers must plan activities that engage pupils fully in their own learning.
- h. Teachers should use the opportunities which come their way to foster their pupils' awareness of the many kinds of language and ways of using them. This includes awareness across languages, as well as within a language.

This inquiry into the syllabus for English second language shows a gradual evolution. Teachers of English second language learners are encouraged to adopt practices more consistent with whole language. More authentic and meaningful reading and writing activities are encouraged, as well as respect for the child's first language and its associated culture as a resource for learning. A very pragmatic and instrumental approach to English is adopted. The following section will therefore investigate more specifically the connections between whole language and English second language teaching.

3.4 WHOLE LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE CONNECTIONS

All teachers make educational decisions based on the beliefs they have about teaching and learning. As indicated earlier, because many educators have little information about how to work with second language

students, instruction in their classes has been based on a set of commonsense assumptions. Freeman and Freeman (1992:7; 1993b:4) believe these assumptions serve to limit the potential of second language learners. To help define whole language, particularly for bilingual students, they contrast each of the commonsense assumptions with a whole language principle which expands the potential for educational success. These principles are presented in a comparison chart below (Table 3.1).

<u>COMMONSENSE ASSUMPTIONS</u>	<u>WHOLE LANGUAGE PRINCIPLES</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning proceeds from part to whole. 2. Lessons should be teacher centered because learning is the transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the student. 3. Lessons should prepare students to function in society after schooling. 4. Learning takes place as individuals practice skills and form habits. 5. In a second language, oral language acquisition precedes the development of literacy. 6. Learning should take place in English to facilitate the acquisition of English. 7. The learning potential of bilingual students is limited. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning proceeds from whole to part. 2. Lessons should be learner centered because learning is the active construction of knowledge by the student. 3. Lessons should have meaning and purpose for students now. 4. Learning takes place as groups engage in meaningful social interaction. 5. In a second language, oral and written language are acquired simultaneously. 6. Learning should take place in the first language to build concepts and facilitate the acquisition of English. 7. Learning potential is expanded through faith in the learner.

Table 3.1: Comparison of whole language principles and commonsense assumptions
(Freeman & Freeman, 1992:7)

These seven principles will now be examined and shown how each one applies to second language learners.

3.4.1 Learning goes from whole to part

There is considerable evidence that what is known about language and literacy acquisition and development in native languages, applies to literacy acquisition and development in second languages (Fitzgerald, 1993:638; Hudelson, 1994:151; Rigg & Allen, 1989:xi). Sound practices for literacy teaching and learning in native languages, are also sound practices for ESL students. Since children learn their first language not by practicing structured drills, trying to get a sentence right, or communing with a book, but by using language as a means

to communicate with real people and in real situations, the same applies for students who are learning a second language (Ernst & Richard, 1995:326; Early, 1990:568; Rigg, *et al.* 1989:xi).

Research on successful second-language learners' devices for learning English, suggests that teachers who primarily promote attention to "big things" in initial reading and writing, are more likely to effectively help their students (Fitzgerald, 1993:645). Successful students of English as a second language start by focusing on holistic features of language - features which revolve around communicative functions and intentions. Therefore teachers who help ESL learners get the big things first while reading and writing, will "... highlight getting and giving main ideas or gists; making important inferences; seeing and making structures for texts; and developing metacognitive strategies such as rereading to search for needed information" (Fitzgerald, 1993:645). Typical schoolroom fragmentation of language, such as word lists or spelling patterns, destroys this wholeness, resulting in exercises about language, but not in language use or in language development (Rigg & Enright, 1986:5). Freeman and Freeman (1992:35) assert that teachers who attempt to make learning easier by breaking it into parts, actually make it harder by reducing the available context cues. Language embedded in context is less cognitively demanding than context-reduced language (Cummins, 1994:43). Language develops as it is used in authentic contexts for real purposes.

Freeman and Freeman (1992:24) have described two kinds of contextual support found in authentic language use, which teachers can provide to make English instruction comprehensible: extralinguistic and linguistic. Students still developing English proficiency, understand messages in English more easily if these messages are embedded in a rich extralinguistic context. Whole language teachers know that the greater the contextual support provided by objects and actions, the lower the necessity for second language students to rely solely on their new language itself. Further extralinguistic cues include gestures, as well as intonation cues. Reading illustrated Big Books and engaging students in role plays, also provide contextual support, because communication is not solely dependent on the words that are spoken.

Whole language teachers realise that language itself offers a range of clues to meaning. The more cohesive and coherent the language is, the easier it is to understand (Freeman & Freeman, 1994:575; 1992:25). Unadapted stories are usually easier to understand than simplified texts because the natural language provides rich clues to meaning that simplified text lacks. Stories are easier to comprehend if they follow a familiar pattern (Lapp & Flood, 1994:263). Probably the best source of contextual support for second language learners, is the use of students' first languages. Students in bilingual classes receiving support in their native language, develop both academic concepts and English language proficiency (Freeman & Freeman, 1993a:554).

Whole language teaching tends to provide comprehensible input for all students naturally. When learners are engaged in theme cycles, answering their own questions, reading and writing about topics of interest, and

drawing and dramatising what they are learning, the language is rich in context. These context-embedded activities differ sharply from the context-reduced texts and practices that characterise traditional instruction.

3.4.2 Lessons should be learner centered

With second language learners, the temptation to have a teacher centered classroom arises because the perception is that the teacher has the English proficiency the students need. Therefore all knowledge must come from the teacher. However, as indicated previously, it is important to remember that second language learners are not deficient just because they do not speak English. ESL students do not come to the task of learning English as blank slates.

Cummins (1994:40), in the following ESL pedagogical principle, emphasises the value of the rich and varied backgrounds of experience pupils bring to the classroom: "The educational and personal experiences students bring to schools constitute the foundation for all their future learning; schools should therefore attempt to amplify rather than replace these experiences." In language learning, students should be encouraged to use their previous experiences with oral and written language, to develop their second language and to promote their growth to literacy (Early, 1990:568). Whole language teachers find ways to use their students' knowledge, including their first language and culture, even when the students do not speak English. Only when teachers know a good deal about their students can they create truly learner-centered lessons (Freeman & Freeman, 1989:179).

Enright and McCloskey (1988:10) suggest that "as teachers we only fool ourselves if we think we can teach language skills or literacy without integrating students' own ideas, purposes and dreams into the teaching programme." If the ideas, purposes and dreams of ESL students are denied expression in the classroom, those students are unlikely to feel a sense of belonging or community within the school environment. Opportunities for students to develop a positive self-concept require their participation in the structure and content of classroom life (Altwerger & Ivener, 1994:76). Choice is vital in a whole language class, because without the ability to select activities, materials and conversational partners, students cannot use language for their own purposes (Rigg, 1991:74). These purposes must be related to the students' own interests. Kucer (1995:29), in his research into how to help ESL and bilingual children develop useful reading and writing strategies, emphasises the importance of interest and the issue of "desire" in providing the critical link among cognition, motivation, and engagement.

Learner centered means building the curriculum in the class with and for the students. A major aspect of the whole language view is respect for each student, with all that entails in terms of respect for the student's language, home and culture. When teachers centre their curriculum around their learners' experiences and

interests, they build students' self-esteem. They show that they value their students by including students' lives and questions in the shaping of curriculum. In a learner centered classroom, the potential of ESL learners is expanded.

3.4.3 Lessons should have meaning and purpose for the student now

All too often the curriculum in schools is centered on the future, rather than the present needs of the students. Students are told to learn because some day they will need to know what is presently being taught. This future orientation results in exercises being taken from someone else's experience and the language is controlled by the teacher or the text. Students are not given opportunities to invent or construct meaning (Freeman & Freeman, 1992:65).

Whole language teachers know that language that is rich in context and relevant, interesting, and meaningful is likely to be learned naturally. Learning a language means, among other things, "learning to use a language to socialise, to learn, to query, to make believe, and to wonder" (Rigg & Allen, 1989:x). In other words, learners develop second language fluency by using language authentically for purposeful tasks necessary in learning meaning-filled content (Lim & Watson, 1993:38). Students learning English as a second language gain substantially in classrooms where oral and written activities are regarded as integral to the process of negotiating knowledge, exchanging personal experiences and thoughts, and using language for authentic, meaning-making purposes (Ernst, *et al.* 1995:326; Lim, *et al.* 1993:385). By shifting the focus of instruction from direct teaching of language, to using classroom strategies in which language is naturally and functionally learned, teachers can help ESL pupils reach their potential English proficiency (Lim, *et al.* 1993:385).

As has been discussed previously, language learning is a process that takes time. Clearly, students' cognitive growth and their learning of subject matter content cannot be postponed until their English language skills are developed to the level of their classmates (Cummins, 1994:42). In recognition of this reality, educators have increasingly emphasised the importance of integrating language teaching with the teaching of academic content (Early, 1990:568; Met, 1994:159). Thus, effective instruction will simultaneously promote language, cognition and content mastery. Therefore every content lesson and every school activity is a language lesson, and all teachers must enable their students to make academic progress while they are learning a second language (Met, 1994:160; Handscombe, 1994:354).

Whole language advocates recognise that language cannot stand apart from content learning. Lim and Watson (1993:385) state, "When a content-rich curriculum is implemented within a whole language philosophy of learning and teaching, the classroom becomes an optimal environment for second language learners." Students who are involved in natural, authentic, and content-rich settings will develop the language and concepts of the

content while developing literacy and oracy skills.

Students who speak English as a second language acquire English as they engage in meaningful activities. If students are engaged in academic content, and if they see a purpose in studying content areas, they will develop the language they need to serve their purposes. Whole language teachers engage students in lessons that serve the students' present purposes, as well as involving them in the content they need for academic purposes (Freeman & Freeman, 1992:90).

3.4.4 Learning takes place in meaningful social interaction

Learning is embedded within natural social interactions aimed at sharing communication and negotiating meaning (Peregoy & Boyle, 1990:195). Whole language teachers make the input more comprehensible by involving students in social interaction. Second language teachers have also moved toward social interaction, particularly in classes where the goal is to develop students' communicative competence.

Enright and Mc Closkey (1985:433) point out how second language research has shifted its primary focus "from the syntactic dimensions of linguistic performance to the semantic and social/contextual dimensions of language comprehension and performance". They assert that the silent, straight-row classroom is the worst place for second language acquisition and suggest seven criteria, all consistent with whole language principles for organising instruction (1985:440-442):

1. Organise for collaboration
2. Organise for purpose
3. Organise for student interest
4. Organise for previous experience
5. Organise for holism
6. Organise for support
7. Organise for variety

Other second language educators also believe that social interaction is critical for effective language learning. Rigg (1991:77) maintains that language use is always in a social context, and this applies to both oral and written language as well as first and second language use. Rigg and Allen (1989:viii) comment, "learning a language means learning to do the things you want to do with people who speak that language". They strongly emphasise the importance of working with others to give purpose to learning language.

In a similar way, Cummins (1994:41) emphasises that "... access to interaction with users of English is a major causal variable underlying both the acquisition of English and students' sense of belonging to the mainstream

society, the entire school is therefore responsible for supporting the learning and interactional needs of students." These educators believe that other people form a crucial element of the context necessary for language development.

However, Freeman and Freeman (1994:577) argue that although the focus has shifted from grammar to communication, in many classes, real social interaction is still absent. It is important to clarify the difference between communicative activities and real social interaction in classrooms. When students practice verb forms, or ways to introduce one another, they are not engaging in authentic language use (Freeman & Freeman, 1994:577). Authentic communication provides a real social context for learning communicative functions of the new language (Genesee, 1994:9). Classes in which language is taught through content, involve students in real communication and social interaction because the focus is no longer on language forms or functions, but on using language to accomplish real purposes.

Both whole language and second language teachers organise their classrooms for social interaction because they recognise that all students can best develop linguistic and academic proficiency during authentic social interaction.

3.4.5 Lessons should include all four modes of language activities

Traditional approaches to teaching a second language follow a strict sequence: listen, speak, read, and write. Instruction is often based on the assumption that progress in reading and writing is directly dependent on progress in speaking and listening. Subsequently many materials and programmes for teaching ESL tend to be based on a view that minimises the interrelatedness of listening, speaking, reading and writing and they often focus on spoken proficiency in English (Fitzgerald, 1993:640; Perotta, 1994:237).

However, researchers looking at the development of literacy in second language children have shown that students benefit from being exposed to all four modes, listening, speaking, reading and writing, from the beginning. Research conducted by Hudelson (1984,1989) suggests that children who speak little or no English, can read print in the environment and can write English, using it for various purposes. Hudelson (1989:90) states that some second language learners can write and read more easily than their oral performance in English might indicate. Along those same lines Edelsky's (1989:174) research in bilingual classrooms indicates that written expression in English may precede formal reading instruction, and that bilingual learners use knowledge of their first language, and of the world, and actively apply their knowledge as they write.

The research suggests, then, that functional reading and writing, as well as speaking and listening, should be integral parts of all language classroom activities because all these processes interact with one another

(Perrotta, 1994:240; Freeman & Freeman, 1992:143). Writing, speaking, listening, and reading all nourish one another. The Interim Core Syllabus for English second language also highlights the importance of integrating these four skills in an integrated manner (Interim core syllabus, 1995:2): "Language learning is a complex process, usually involving the interplay of listening, speaking, reading and writing ... In communicative language teaching these four skills are integrated in purposeful activities."

Whole language teachers understand that it is unnatural to teach the four modes separately. When students are involved in meaningful, authentic activities, they naturally have opportunities to think, speak, listen, read and write. In short, providing comprehensible input, organising for social interaction, and facilitating the use of all modes of communication are all important in second language learning.

3.4.6 Learning should take place in the first language

The sixth principle of whole language stresses the importance of supporting students' primary languages and cultures to build concepts and facilitate the acquisition of English. When teachers support students' first language they build on their strengths and validate them as individuals. They teach the whole child. Freeman and Freeman (1993b:167) propose that using a student's first language is important for the following reasons:

1. Students build important background knowledge and concepts in their first language, and this helps them succeed academically later;
2. Language-minority students come to value their own language and culture; and
3. Second language students maintain important family ties and become valuable, bilingual members of the larger community.

Bilingual education is a political and emotional issue that is seldom evaluated from a pedagogical perspective as it should be. However, recent researched-based theory in second language acquisition has strongly supported bilingual education (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1989; Hudelson, 1987; Freeman & Freeman, 1992; Snow, 1990). There is considerable research to support that students who speak, read and write their first language well, succeed academically in English. Cummins (1994:50) argues that a concept learned in one language, transfers to a second language because there is a common underlying proficiency. When concepts are taught in the first language, second language learners are able to quickly grasp those ideas and the language associated with those ideas in English. Snow (1990:72) states that understanding why native language instruction promotes achievement in English involves abandoning traditional simplistic approaches of language proficiency, to recognise that many aspects of performance on language tasks draw upon skills that are not language-specific, skills that may be more efficiently acquired in one's first language.

By showing a respect for diverse cultures and by providing bilingual support, schools and teachers can help

students take pride in themselves and realise their potential. However, using the students' first language and being positive about their culture, do not automatically guarantee school achievement. Therefore, with reference to the continual debate on bilingual education and bilingual education programmes, Padilla (1990:16) proposes that policy issues for the future should not be about "the effectiveness of bilingual education," but about the development of effective instructional programmes for English second language learners. According to Freeman and Freeman (1992:191), effective education for second language students requires a curriculum that is consistent with the principles of whole language. Whole language principles, including the principle that supports development of the first language, offer a chance for bilingual learners to succeed academically and to become whole members of a complex, multicultural society.

Using the pupils' home language(s), and the concepts already developed in and through the home language(s) as a resource upon which new concepts and new language skills can be built, is a principle that is emphasised in the Interim core syllabus for English second language, and a key feature upon which the new language policy for South African education has been developed.

In many schools though, bilingual education is not feasible because a school may not have bilingual teachers, or because classes have students who speak a variety of primary languages. However, Freeman and Freeman (1993a:554) assert that even in these circumstances teachers can find ways to use their bilingual students' first languages and promote academic success. They offer the following five strategies for teachers to use to enhance the language and literacy development of bilingual students:

1. Ensure that environmental print reflects the students' first languages.
2. Supply the school and classroom libraries with books, magazines, and other resources in languages other than English.
3. Encourage bilingual students to publish books and share their stories in languages other than English.
4. Have bilingual students read and write with aides, parents, or other students who speak their first language.
5. Use videotapes produced professionally, or by the students, to support academic learning and raise self-esteem.

Whole language teachers find ways to incorporate the first languages and cultures of their second language students. This primary language support increases bilingual students' potential for success. They feel better about themselves because they know their teachers value their first language, and thus, value them.

3.4.7 Faith in the learner expands student potential

It is much too common for educators to believe that non-English speaking students are somehow not as intelligent as students who speak English idiomatically and without an accent. This lack of belief in the

learning potential of second language learners can have a tremendously negative effect and often keep students from developing a positive self-image. Freeman and Goodman (1993:165) maintain that the pessimistic beliefs expressed by many teachers about ESL students not only fail to take the students' needs and strengths into account, but are also at least partially responsible for the failure of second language learners in schools.

The alternative to seeing second language learners as a "problem", is understanding that diversity is an asset and that each student is a valuable, important, contributing member of every classroom community. Thus, one of the most critical elements for successful teaching with second language students is a teacher's faith in the students' ability to learn. When educators have faith in the learners they are working with, they are more likely to apply the other whole language principles with their students and thereby develop the full potential of every student (Freeman & Freeman, 1992:209). Having faith in learners so they can build faith in themselves, is not simply a passive process of holding the right thoughts or even of doing good things within a single classroom. Teachers need to involve students in rich learning environments and work to break down cultural barriers and build a true classroom community.

McCauley and McCauley (1992:527) emphasise the importance of "an environment of trust and mutual confidence wherein learners may interact without fear or threat of failure", for enhancing second language learning. Lapp and Flood (1994:261) state that creating this low-anxiety situation and trusting environment for learning, must be the overriding concern in classroom activities if acquisition is to be achieved. Additionally, this type of classroom environment encourages risk-taking, which is a necessary part of second language learning. The important role of affect in the second language classroom has been firmly established, and teachers are constantly on the lookout for activities that blend the cognitive with the affective.

The first six principles that whole language teachers follow would not work without this seventh principle. When educators value all second language students as learners, respect who they are as people, draw on their strengths, and involve them in meaningful language activities, educators revalue them and they in turn revalue themselves (Freeman & Goodman, 1993:180).

3.5 CONCLUSION

The perspective presented in this chapter on the connections between whole language and English second language teaching, reveals that an understanding of whole language beliefs and processes can inform English second language practitioners, particularly those engaged in multilingual classrooms. Second language learners are students with potential. Whole language practices support their learning. Effective language learning, either native or second language, depends not on the direct teaching of identified skills, but rather on a sound philosophy of learning and teaching, underlying a meaning-filled curriculum. However, whole language for

second language students is not enough without an understanding of second language acquisition, ESL methods, and bilingual education. Teachers as researchers need to develop more effective approaches to instruct second language pupils, by combining second language learning strategies with their own professional belief system and knowledge of language, learning, teaching and curriculum. Whole language teachers who understand what best supports the needs of their second language students, are truly able to teach the whole student.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE DESIGN AND PROCESS OF THE INQUIRY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter falls on the design and process of the investigation which has been determined by the nature of the research questions. The research format followed throughout the study is discussed in detail, with reference to methods for data collection, relevant data processing techniques and the route to be followed during the interpretation of the consolidated data. This chapter's aim is also to display and explain the data against its contextual background, as the raw data progressed from data collection to data analysis and consolidation to arrive at a statement of the findings.

4.2 THE DESIGN OF THE INQUIRY

The research design has its origins in the nature of the research problem which is investigated and reflects a series of major decisions made by the researcher in an attempt to ascertain the best approach to the research questions posed. Research design involves "... putting things together, bringing to consciousness - and to the notebook - as many aspects as possible of the research's planning and preparation for inquiry" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:55).

A research design, according to Merriam (1991:6) is "... similar to an architectural blueprint. It is a plan for assembling, organising and integrating information (data), and it results in a specific end product (research findings). The selection of a design is determined by how the problem is shaped, by the questions it raises, and by the type of end product desired." It is therefore vital that a researcher has as a basis a thorough knowledge of the methodological and analytical tools available, as well as an awareness of their uses and their limitations.

The research design of this study can be described as **descriptive, contextual, exploratory and qualitative.**

4.2.1 Descriptive

Since an aim of this research is an accurate and careful description of the application of whole language in a language assistant programme for English second language learners, the design of this research is strongly descriptive. Merriam (1991:7; see also LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:39) states that the aim of descriptive research is to "examine events or phenomena ... characterise something as it is ... There is no manipulation

of treatments or subjects; the researcher takes things as they are." Descriptive means that the end product is "a rich *thick description* of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 1991:11). By means of a thick description the researcher attempts to capture the meanings, actions and feelings that are present in an interactional experience. A thick description also contextualises these experiences.

4.2.2 Contextual

This study is contextually based in a group of ESL Grade One pupils, who are participating in a language assistant programme that is characterised by principles of whole language and ESL pedagogy. The emphasis is on a specific case, a focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context. The researcher's role is to gain a "holistic" overview of the context under study: its logic, its arrangements, and its activities (Miles & Huberman, 1994:6). Human behaviour and actions always occur "in specific situations within a social and historical context, which deeply influences how they are interpreted by both insiders and the researcher as outsider" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10).

4.2.3 Exploratory

The research design of this study is also exploratory in nature, as the purpose of the study is to investigate, and subsequently gain new insight and better understand the research phenomenon (the implementation of whole language with English second language pupils) (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:78). The exploratory nature of this study is emphasised by the fact that an aim of this inquiry is to describe the salient themes, patterns and categories in participants' meaning structures so as to identify and discover important variables and propositions for further inquiry. Exploratory research does not usually allow for the formulation of hypothesis prior to the investigation, but adopts a flexible approach and hypothesis develop as a result of research.

4.2.4 Qualitative

In this inquiry, the nature of the research domain and the research questions require a qualitative approach, employing predominantly qualitative methods. Researchers use qualitative methods to understand phenomena and situations as a whole. The task of qualitative research is to provide an interpretation or understanding of events (*Verstehen*) (Keeves, 1988:7). Miles and Huberman (1994:6) state that the qualitative researcher "attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors "from the inside," through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding (*Verstehen*), and of suspending or "bracketing" preconceptions about the topics under discussion." Qualitative research is concerned with the **meaning** of human behaviour and experience and the function of social action (how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences, how they structure their social worlds) (Silverman, 1993:24; Merriam,

1991:16). When whole language is implemented by a teacher, her instructional decisions and classroom actions reveal her **understanding** of the concept "whole language" and the **meaning** she attaches to it.

A further emphasis in qualitative research, is on the ways people in particular settings come to understand and take action in their **everyday, real life situations** (Silverman, 1993:25; Miles & Huberman, 1994:7). Marshall and Rossman (1989:11) assert that qualitative research "entails immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for study, values participants' perspectives on their worlds and seeks to discover those perspectives, ... is primarily descriptive and relies on people's words as the primary data." The whole language English second language classroom which is observed in this study, is reflective of the everyday classroom life of the teacher and her group of pupils.

A frequently noted attribute of qualitative data is their "**richness and holism**, with strong potential for revealing complexity" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10). To achieve holism, the qualitative approach to research design makes use of a **range of sources for data collection** (Silverman, 1993:25) to gather data on any number of aspects of the setting under study, in order to put together a complete picture of the social dynamics of a particular situation or programme. In this inquiry, the methods of data collection and analysis will focus mostly on iconic and verbal data. The methods of data collection chosen to answer each research question are microgenetic methods and were directly influenced by the nature of the research questions. They include video recorded whole language lessons, an individual interview and abstracts from the teacher's personal journal. Data are analysed in the original iconic or language format, within the total context, so as to provide "thick descriptions" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10) that are vivid, and situated within a real context.

In summary then, qualitative research can "provide a broader version of theory than simply a relationship between variables" (Silverman, 1993:27). While this study has a specific focus, the strategies employed by the researcher allow for the management of unplanned themes. By developing a focus for data collection, the research is not approached with narrow questions or hypotheses. This study is therefore also inductive in nature as well as at times being deductive. Hypothesis could be addressed in an interrelated, explanatory manner when one question's answers will explain the answers to other questions and thereby the research acquires a deductive character. Qualitative data is not only a good strategy for discovery and developing hypotheses, but also possesses a strong potential for testing hypotheses (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10).

The design of this study is schematically represented in figure 4.1

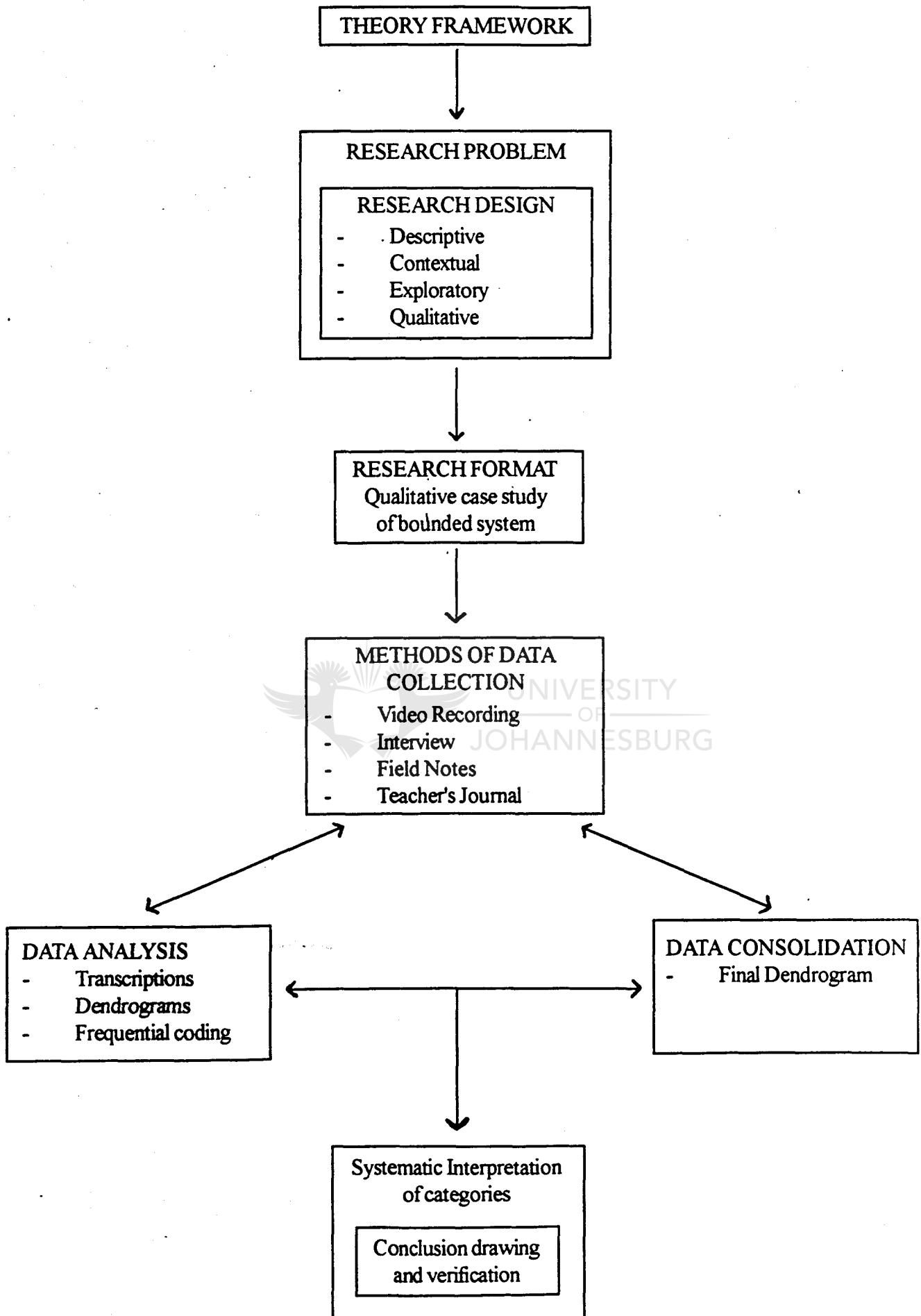


Figure 4.1: The Research Design of this Inquiry

4.3 RESEARCH FORMAT

"A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance or specific phenomenon such as a program, event, process or social group" (Merriam, 1991:9,21).

This study is a holistic in-depth investigation of a particular case, in a specific setting, and in a specific time period, and as a result is conducted in the single case study format. Johnson (1992:99) asserts that the case study is a very valuable approach to second language research. The close and holistic look at a case in the context of the bounded system chosen for study, can yield many rich insights about teaching and learning processes.

The case study approach has a strong qualitative focus, and according to Merriam (1991:16) are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources. In brief, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 1989:14) and places special emphasis on the participants' point of view which provides an understanding of their personal experiences (Hamel, Dufour & Fortin, 1993:17).

The purposes of a case study are defined by Becker (as quoted by Merriam, 1991:11) as twofold: "to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study" and "to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process." From the analysis and description of the case study, the researcher is better able to draw conclusions and make recommendations, with the aim of improving practice, especially when "verstehen" and "erklaren" are important aims of research.

A case study approach has been decided upon in this study because the researcher is interested in understanding the phenomenon (the application of whole language in an English second language classroom) in a holistic manner (Merriam, 1991:153). Merriam (1991:23) states that "Case study research in education seeks to understand specific issues and problems of practice." By means of this case study, the researcher aims at better understanding the process and dynamics of the practice (a teacher's understanding and application of whole language with English second language pupils) in order to improve the practice of teachers' professional development. The desired end product of this case study is a holistic, intensive understanding and description of a process and the meaning of it from the participant's frame of reference. The case study also has heuristic value, as it brings about the discovery of new meaning and understanding, and confirms and extends what is known.

4.3.1 Sample

Qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, situated in their context and studied in-depth (Miles & Huberman, 1994:27). A non-probable method of sampling, namely purposive or purposeful sampling, is used in this study. Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that "one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1991:48). The case selected therefore needs to match the criteria laid down by the researcher.

Purposive sampling is similar to what LeCompte and Preissle (1993:69) call "criterion-based selection", although they note that selection refers to a more general process of focusing and choosing what to study, while sampling is a more restricted and specialised form. Criterion-based selection requires that one establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation; one then searches for exemplars that match the specified array of characteristics.

The sample population of this study consists of the group of Grade One English second language pupils participating in the Language Assistant Programme at I.H. Harris Primary School. The Language Assistant Programme is characterised by whole language principles. This specific group can be viewed as a "bounded system" and has the advantage of being finite and discrete (Merriam, 1991:46; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:62).

4.3.2 Methods of Data Collection

The paradigm and the format of the study determine the nature of the data collection methods and the way in which these methods are implemented. The case study format facilitates the use of a variety of methods of data collection. Qualitative data collection is eclectic in nature, and uses rich and diverse data to answer questions about the complexity and variability of human life (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:158). Patton (1980, as quoted by Merriam, 1991:67/68) describes qualitative data as consisting of "detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviours; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records and case histories." Qualitative data is characterised by a substantial amount of verbal data (Merriam, 1991:67; Miles & Huberman, 1994:9). The words are based on *observation*, *interviews* and *documents*. The methods of data collection used in this study are specified in table 4.1.

The two main methods of data collection employed in this study, include **observation** (by means of video recordings of the whole language classroom) and the **individual interview** conducted with the teacher of the whole language English second language class. They are processed in detail in order to arrive at an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in context.

DATA SOURCE	DATA TYPE
Field notes	Written observation
Video recordings of whole language classroom	Transcriptions, iconic and verbal data
Individual interview	Transcription
Teacher's Journal	Diary

Table 4.1: Sources of data used in the study

The use of multiple methods of collecting data is in one form of what Denzin (1988) calls **triangulation**, that serves to enhance the validity of the inquiry.

4.3.2.1 Literature Review

Conducting a literature review is a vital component of the research process. It is the place where the researcher explains to the reader the theoretical underpinnings of the study (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:151). The literature review further assisted this study in the formulation of the problem, in the selection of methodology, and in the interpretation of research results. Merriam (1991:63) states: "The findings of a study are best interpreted in light of what was previously known about the topic." Linking specific findings to previous work, demonstrates to the reader just how this study contributes to the developing knowledge base of the field, and the qualitative researcher is, in this view, also "a constructivist social scientist who constructs new knowledge on the basis of existing (research) knowledge, or theory frameworks" (Henning, 1995:31).

The literature review in this study investigates the development and nature of whole language, as well as the connections between whole language and English second language teaching. A comprehensive theory framework accommodates empirical findings and enhances the validity of the study.

4.3.2.2 Observation

Observation as a method of data collection has been fundamental to much qualitative research. It has as its aim to "gather first-hand information about social processes in a 'naturally occurring' context" (Silverman, 1993:11). Through observation, the researcher learns about behaviours and the meanings attached to those behaviours. An assumption is made that behaviour is purposive and expressive of deeper values and beliefs (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:79).

Merriam (1991:87) refers to collecting data from observing phenomena of interest in natural situations, as

participant observation, as the researcher is not merely a passive observer (Yin, 1989:92). Fieldwork, or participant observation, involves "going to the site, program, institution, setting - the field - to observe the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 1991:102). The observer can take on a variety of roles within a case study situation. The relationship between Observer and Observed in this study is called **observer as participant** (Merriam, 1991:92). The researcher's observer activities are known to the group, but the researcher's participation in the group is secondary to the role of information gatherer. While this method facilitates access to a wide range of information, the level of the information revealed is controlled by the group members being investigated. Further on in the inquiry this role began to change to one of **participant as observer**, as the researcher served more as a consultant and tutor to the classroom teacher. This served to enhance the depth of information revealed to the researcher.

According to Johnson (1992:86), naturalistic observation is one of the most common and important methods of data collection in case studies, particularly where natural communication (oral or written interactions) among students and between students and teachers is the focus of the observation. **Video recordings**, which are supplemented with **field notes**, are the methods used to record observations in this study.

a. Video Recorded Whole Language Lessons

Video recordings provide the most comprehensive method of collecting observational data and, as such, were chosen as the main method of observational recording in this study. In contrast to live observational recordings, video recordings may repeatedly be analysed in a variety of ways. Although video recordings may be intrusive and tend to make people feel uncomfortable, they are useful in recording even the most minor details:

" Video technology allows researchers to capture the nature of the physical setting, the identity of participants in interactions, and many aspects of nonverbal communication such as gestures, bows, and eye-contact. Grouping patterns can be captured as well, particularly if the person recording is an informed member of the research team" (Johnson, 1992:86).

Video recordings extend the range and precision of the observations which can be made and are particularly valuable for discovery and validation. Video preserves activity and change in its original form and can be used in the future to take advantage of new methods of seeing, analysing, and understanding the process of change (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:86).

The problem of discomfort resulting from the presence of the video camera was partly overcome in this study, by informing the participants of the purpose of the recordings, as well as exposing them to regular recordings over an extended period of time (Leinhardt, 1988:494; Johnson, 1992:86). Finally, three tapings were made in order to minimise the effects of the taping process.

The data for this inquiry was collected in the latter half of 1994, after the Language Assistant Programme had already been in progress for five months. The video recordings of the English second language whole language class took place at I.H. Harris Primary school on the following dates: 26 May 1994; 16 June 1994; 23 June 1994. The duration of each video recording was approximately 90 minutes. The researcher was present during the video recordings to obtain first hand knowledge of the atmosphere in the class, as well as to supplement the video data with field notes.

The purpose of the video recordings is to observe and describe the teacher's implementation of whole language principles with English second language pupils. The teacher's understanding and knowledge of whole language becomes evident through the careful analysis of the important characteristics of the instructional process.

Information gained from this method of data collection is first to be transcribed, coded and analysed before rendering the material usable (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:228). Only one video recording is fully transcribed, while critical incidents from the other two videos are summarised.

b. Field Notes

LeCompte and Preissle (1993:224) describe field notes as "written accounts made on the spot or as soon as possible after their occurrence, that represent the interactions and activities of the researcher and the people studied." For field notes to be of value to the researcher, Merriam (1991:98) suggests that they include the following:

- * Verbal descriptions of the setting, the people, the activities (see Silverman, 1993:39).
- * Direct quotations or at least the substance of what people said.
- * Observer's comments - put in the margins or in the running narrative. Observer's comments can include the researcher's feelings, reactions, hunches, initial interpretations, and working hypotheses.

In this study, fieldnotes were made during contact with the participants and related to that which was observed. These descriptive field notes were extended after observations with reflections on methodology and the researcher's questions, feelings, initial interpretations and uncertainties. The field notes are a supportive source of data, and as such were not analysed in detail, but can be useful for later data interpretation.

4.3.2.3. Individual Interview

An interview with the teacher of the observed class is the second main method of data collection employed in this inquiry. In qualitative case studies, interviewing is considered a major source of qualitative data needed for understanding the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1991:86; Yin, 1989:88). Combined with observation,

interviews allow the researcher to check description against fact (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:82).

The interview is often described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:82; Merriam, 1991:72). According to Kvale (1983:174) the purpose of the qualitative research interview is "to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena." The aim of the interview in this study is to describe and understand the central themes the interviewee experiences and live towards in the classroom situation. Insight into the teacher's understanding and philosophy of learning, instruction, whole language, social interaction and second language acquisition was gained as she articulated her tacit knowledge. The individual interview served as a rich source of data, as it provided access to the teacher's **declarative or static knowledge** about facts and principles that apply within a certain domain (De Jong & Ferguson-Hessler, 1993:4). However, the mere learning of facts and principles does not guarantee the spontaneous use thereof in new situations, as transformation into **procedural knowledge** has not yet taken place. The purpose of the video recordings was to investigate the teacher's **procedural knowledge** related to implementing whole language with English second language pupils. Procedural knowledge contains actions or manipulations that are valid within a domain (De Jong, *et al.* 1993:4), and implies "knowing how" (how do I do it?) (Swart, 1994:278) which includes certain abilities, skills or strategies.

Therefore, in conjunction with other methods of data collection, the interview serves to verify, establish and expand upon the information obtained from the respondent(s) of the study (triangulation).

Johnson (1992:87) differentiates three forms of interviews according to their degree of structure: namely structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The type of interview used in this study was semi-structured as certain information was desired from the respondent (Merriam, 1991:74). These interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time (Appendix A). This format allows the researcher to respond to each situation as it arises, to the emerging world view of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 1991:74).

The interview questions of this study were structured according to Patton's (1990b, referred to by LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:171) typology of questions which categorises questions according to the kind of data they elicit. Patton (1990b) lists six kinds of questions that can be used:

1. **Experience and behaviour questions** that elicit what respondents do or have done.
2. **Opinion and value questions** that elicit how respondents think about their behaviours and experiences.
3. **Feeling questions** that elicit how respondents react emotionally or feel about their experiences and opinions.
4. **Knowledge questions** that elicit what respondents know about their world.
5. **Sensory questions** that elicit respondents' descriptions of what and how they see, hear, touch, taste and

smell in the world around them.

6. Background and demographic questions that elicit respondents' description of themselves.

This typology provides a method for matching the interview format closely with the data required by the research questions, as well as facilitates construction of a balanced interview (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:172). Questions asked in the interview were further ordered topically, with questions addressing the same topic or culminating in a major idea, grouped together as suggested by LeCompte and Preissle (1993:175). Questions were also arranged in terms of complexity, with simple questions leading to more complex ones.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the data obtained from the interview, the interview was conducted in the conversational style of everyday interaction. This mode communicates empathy, encouragement and understanding as well as allows respondents to feel that what they are saying is acceptable and significant. An everyday conversational style allows the researcher to respond neutrally, without risking the loss of rapport (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:179).

The interview in this inquiry was conducted with the teacher of the whole language class on Friday 30 September 1994 at the Institute for Child and Adult Guidance on the campus of the Rand Afrikaans University. With permission from the teacher, the interview was video- and audio-recorded and then later transcribed verbatim so as not to mask or distort the data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:181).

4.3.2.4 Teacher's journal

Personal documents such as a diary or journal refer to "individuals' written first-person accounts of the whole or part of their lives or their reflections on a specific event or topic" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, as referred to by Merriam, 1991:111) and thus are a reliable source of data concerning a person's attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world (Merriam, 1991:112).

To further investigate the teacher's understanding and implementation of whole language with English second language pupils, as well as her inner meaning of everyday events in the classroom, the teacher agreed to maintain a journal throughout the research period. This was to be a record of whatever she considered to be important in the classroom and of her reactions and reflections to such occurrences. The teacher wrote comments in her journal two or three times each week over the research period. Because this journal was written for the researcher, it must be assessed as a document of what the participant believed the researcher wanted. Nevertheless, it also reflects what the teacher considered to be important, her aims for various instructional activities, and her interpretations of interactions with, and among, the children. As a record of teacher concerns, perceptions and reflections, and other subjective material, the journal was triangulated with

other data - observations, video recordings, and interviews - to discover and validate the content of teacher meanings and views.

4.3.3 Data Processing

Data analysis is described as the "process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:112). It usually involves a continual process of looking for meaning, by sorting reiteratively through the data (Johnson, 1992:90). Qualitative data analysis "... is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:112) and according to Johnson (1992:90) should comply with the following criteria:

- * important issues, variables or themes should be identified.
- * discoveries ought to be made about how these variables, issues, or themes pattern and interrelate in the bounded system.
- * explanations need to be given about how these interrelationships influence the phenomena under study.
- * fresh new insights need to be advanced.

In the case of the case study approach, Johnson (1992:90) maintains that the general approach to data analysis "is to examine the data for meaningful themes, issues, or variables, to discover how these are patterned, and to attempt to explain these patterns."

In this study, the approach to data analysis which will be followed is based upon the suggestions of Miles and Huberman (1994). They define qualitative data analysis as a process consisting of three phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These three processes are in constant interaction and are interwoven before, during, and after data collection in parallel form. In this view, qualitative data analysis is "... a continuous iterative enterprise" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:12) of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and integrating the data, and data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research (Merriam, 1991:119). Data analysis occurs even before the data are actually collected, as the researcher decides which conceptual framework, which cases, which research questions, and which data collection approaches to choose.

The application of the three types of analysis activity to the verbal and iconic data obtained in this study, is the focus of the following discussion.

4.3.3.1 Verbal data

The raw data from the interview and the teacher's journal were **chronologically and contextually coded** and

clustered by means of the technique of **dendrograming**. Clustering is a tactic employed to try to "understand a phenomenon better by *grouping* and then *conceptualising* objects that have similar patterns or characteristics" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:249). Clustering thus refers to the inductive formation of categories and the repeated sorting of phenomena into these categories and may be seen as a process of moving to higher levels of abstraction (Miles & Huberman, 1994:250).

The content-analytic technique of dendrograming for representing clusters, is used in this study to facilitate movement to higher levels of abstraction (Miles & Huberman, 1994:250). Dendrograming is a technique that combines content analysis and the chronological reduction of data. Dendrograms are utilised because of the way in which chronology is maintained. The data are thus presented and analysed in its textual context.

This process of clustering and dendrograming was implemented in the following way:

- * The audio recorded data obtained from the interview was first transcribed verbatim, and a copy was made of the teacher's journal.
- * The data source was read through several times so that a holistic picture was formed.
- * The main idea/theme was written down.
- * Semantic units were identified and indicated on the data source and a separate list of major ideas that cut across much of the data was developed.
- * These semantic units were then grouped together in categories. Developing categories is a process of data reduction and involves looking for recurring regularities in the data (Merriam, 1991:133). The categories that one constructs should be "internally consistent but distinct from one another" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:116).
- * Operational definitions were written for the categories. Definitions were formed from the researcher's orientation and knowledge, as well as from the established theory framework.
- * Dendrograms of the main categories and semantic units were drawn to arrive at a deeper analysis of themes and meanings.

The above mentioned contextual and chronological clustering process will now be illustrated as it was applied to the data obtained from the individual interview and the teacher's journal

a: Individual Interview

An example of an extract from the transcription of the individual interview

I: What else do you understand about whole language, or what other principles are you incorporating, do you think, in the

programme at the moment?

R: ... I think the first thing is obviously that the base is a book. Each session we have a book or in fact two books, it depends, sometimes we even have more like at the moment ... and sharing the book with the children ... I don't think it's just really reading the story to them ... it's actually showing them, pointing to the words, showing them how a book works, em ..., and the discussion about the content of the book is not just only on that book, it can then be integrated into the whole theme of that day or that kind of thing you know ... I think it's a sharing experience more than a teaching experience.

An example of the chronological categorisation of the raw data in semantic units from the individual interview

SEMANTIC UNITS

CATEGORIES

The base is a book

] Whole language is based on books.

Whole language is sharing the book with children. It's not just reading the story to them. It's showing them, pointing to the words, showing them how a book works.

] Whole language involves reading as well as sharing a book and all its aspects with children.

Discussion about the content of the book is integrated into the theme of the day.

] Book is integrated into and part of a chosen theme.

The same procedure was followed throughout the interview, and 41 categories were identified. With the aid of dendrogramming, these categories were reduced to the following 11 categories. These categories are categorically laid out below.

1. Aim of instruction is communication for real everyday purposes

Aim of instruction is communication in English

Aim of instruction is not focused on specific structures of grammar

Lessons need to give pupils the skills that they can use out of the classroom in their everyday situation

2. Teacher is a role model and facilitator

Teacher is a role model and models use of language

Teacher is a facilitator

Children learn when the teacher is a model or demonstrator of language

3. Whole language is based on books and involves sharing them with children

Whole language is based on books

Whole language involves reading as well as sharing a book and all its aspects with children

Whole language is not a specific programme

Whole language taps the child's potential

Whole language is child based

4. Skills are taught within a meaningful context as the child needs them

- Skills are not isolated, but taught within a meaningful context
- Skills are taught as the need arises
- All activities in the lesson are based on the book
5. **Parents need to acquire knowledge to become involved in supporting their child's language development**
 - Support from home in child's language development is important
 - Lack of parental support and involvement is a problem
 - Parents do not know how best to facilitate language learning in their children
 6. **Authentic experiences are typically perceived as functional and purposeful by the learner**
 - Involving pupils in meaningful, fun activities facilitates spontaneous, natural use of language
 - Pupils need to have a meaningful purpose for communication to become actively involved
 - Role play encourages natural communication and social interaction
 - Lessons need to be of interest to the pupils and have motivational value
 - Lessons need to be appealing and fun
 7. **Focus of instruction is initially on developing oral language from which the other language skills develop**
 - Pupils first need vocabulary on which to base their language
 - All other language skills (reading & writing) are based on oral language competence
 8. **Weaker pupils experience problems and need more individual assistance**
 - Weaker pupils rely more on phonics to identify words
 - Weaker pupils need more individual attention and assistance
 - Weaker pupils struggle to take risks
 - Weaker pupils copy each other, rather than try on their own
 9. **Pupils enjoy and readily engage in reading real literature books**
 - Pupils enjoy reading from real literature books and become involved
 - Pupils attempt to read the book, even if the book is not at their reading level
 - Pupils need to find the books challenging, absorbing and interesting
 10. **The group or social setting does not readily facilitate learning**
 - Instruction takes place within a group or social setting
 - Problem with working in a group is that it is not individual enough
 - Pupils do not learn from each other in the group
 - Pupils copy each others ideas, which is not learning
 - Learning from each other in the group is slow to develop
 11. **The pupil's first language needs to be supported and incorporated into instruction**
 - Second or third language acquisition is based on one's first language abilities
 - Children who struggle in their home language need more help in learning a second or third language in a school setting
 - It is important for a teacher to know a black language to assist the pupils in class
 - Teachers can provide pupils with links by explaining terms and abstract concepts in the pupil's first language
 - Teachers can use either parents or assistants to help them with the pupils' first language

Outliers: The following outliers emerged from the data and as single items they are included as they may play a role in the discussion of the data in chapter five:

- * Reading is considered more a matter of constructing meaning than of identifying words
- * Repetition is important for ESL learners
- * Teacher uses "expansion" to extend language usage and enhance vocabulary
- * Curriculum is integrated around topics and themes, with emphasis on developing language and literacy skills

b. Teacher's journal

The focus of the teacher's journal was the teacher's reactions and reflections to instructional activities and observations and experiences she considered important. The same procedure of content analysis and chronological categorisation was followed as explicated in 4.3.3.1.

The categories that emerged from the raw data include the following:

1. Pupils engage spontaneously in oral discussion when it is meaningful and purposeful.
2. Basal readers do not challenge pupils.
3. Pupils enjoy whole books and real literature.
4. Pupils become actively involved in activities that are fun, functional and meaningful.
5. Pupils enjoy language games.
6. Pupils experience problems in working together in a group.
7. Pupils experience problems with acquiring specific skills related to reading and writing.
8. Pupils learn by active participation and enjoyment in lessons.
9. Repetition is important.
10. Role play encourages pupils to spontaneously use language.

With the aid of dendrograms these categories were further reduced to the following 5 categories:

- 1. When learning is perceived as functional to, and purposeful for the learner, it is more likely to endure.**
 Pupils engage spontaneously in oral discussion when it is meaningful and purposeful
 Pupils become actively involved in activities that are fun, functional and meaningful
 Pupils enjoy language games
 Pupils learn by active participation and enjoyment in lessons
 Role play encourages pupils to spontaneously use language
- 2. Pupils prefer reading real literature books**
 Basal readers do not challenge pupils
 Pupils enjoy whole books and real literature
- 3. Pupils experience problems in working together in a group**
 Pupils experience problems in working together in a group
- 4. Pupils experience problems with acquiring specific skills related to reading and writing**
 Pupils experience problems with acquiring specific skills related to reading and writing

5. Repetition is important

Repetition is important

Outliers: The following outliers emerged from the analysis of the teacher's journal. They are included as they may play a role in the discussion of the data in Chapter Five:

- * Pupils withdraw and give up when the task set is too difficult
- * Pupils copy one another when writing

4.3.3.2 Iconic data

The video taped recordings of the whole language classroom were processed and clustered in a similar manner as the transcribed text and written journal. The processing of the iconic data proceeded as follows:

- * The video taped recordings were watched several times in order to form a holistic picture.
- * The first video recording was decided as being representative of all the classroom recordings.
- * The recording was divided into episodes, and the contents of each episode shortly transcribed.
- * The main themes of each episode were noted, and categories from each episode were clustered together in a dendrogram.
- * The categories obtained from the dendrograms of each episode were clustered together in a final dendrogram.
- * The video recording was viewed again, and a frequential analysis of certain of the phenomena was conducted to enhance the description and provide a deeper analysis of themes and meanings.

The dendrogram in figure 4.2 displays the way in which the categories for Episode 4 were derived.

The **final categories** that emerged from the analysis of the video recording include the following:

1. Whole, real texts are used
2. Teacher asks different types of questions
3. Comprehension and understanding are monitored during reading
4. Input is made comprehensible by using extralinguistic cues
5. Pupils' previous experiences are included
6. Language and vocabulary is expanded and extended
7. Teacher models correct language usage and scaffolds

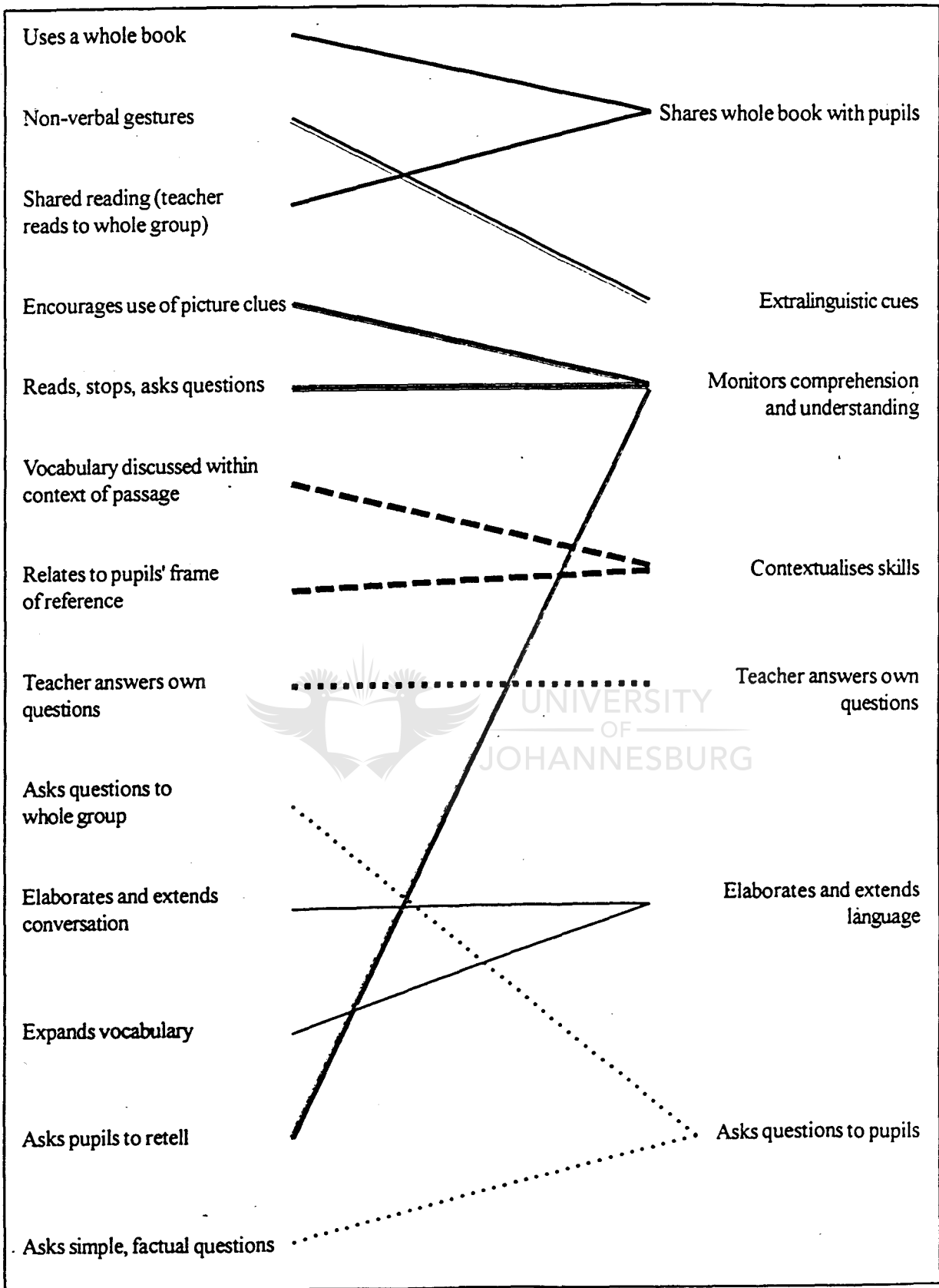


Figure 4.2: Dendrogram of Episode 4 of video recording

8. All language arts are incorporated
9. Uses teachable moments
10. Instruction moves from whole to part
11. No sharing between pupils or pupil interaction

Outliers: The following are the outliers that emerged from the analysis of the video:

- * Repetition
- * Teacher answers her own questions
- * Pupils are praised and encouraged when they supply a correct answer
- * Approximations and errors are accepted
- * Pupils and teacher engage in shared reading and reading together
- * Activities are decided on and directed by the teacher

The video was viewed again with the focus on the **role of the pupils** in the classroom. The following came to the fore:

- * Answer questions
Answer questions in unison
Give one word answers to questions
- * Focus attention on teacher
- * Listen and watch teacher
- * Read aloud with teacher in group
- * Perform activities on their own
No interaction between pupils



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The pupil's role was largely static and passive and not very active. Most of the activities were initiated and directed by the teacher while the pupils followed, obeyed instructions, and answered questions. Throughout all the episodes, interaction took place mainly between the teacher and the pupils and not between the pupils themselves. A frequential analysis of the teacher-class interaction in Episodes 3 and 4 is contained in table 4.2.

Teaching event	Total frequency	Classification of interaction
Interaction	63	Teacher-class 44
		Teacher-pupil 19
		Teacher-pupil-pair 0
		Pupil-pupil 0

Table 4.2: Frequential analysis of teacher-class interaction events within Episodes 3 & 4 of the video

A total of 63 teacher-class interactions were observed in a period of 17 minutes and 3 seconds which were more closely analysed. The majority of the interaction took place between the teacher and the entire class, with 44 of these occurrences being observed. Interaction between the teacher and individual children took place 19 times. Interaction between the teacher and a pupil-pair and interaction between the pupils themselves was not observed. The dominant interaction pattern between the teacher and the pupils, can be diagrammatically presented as follows:

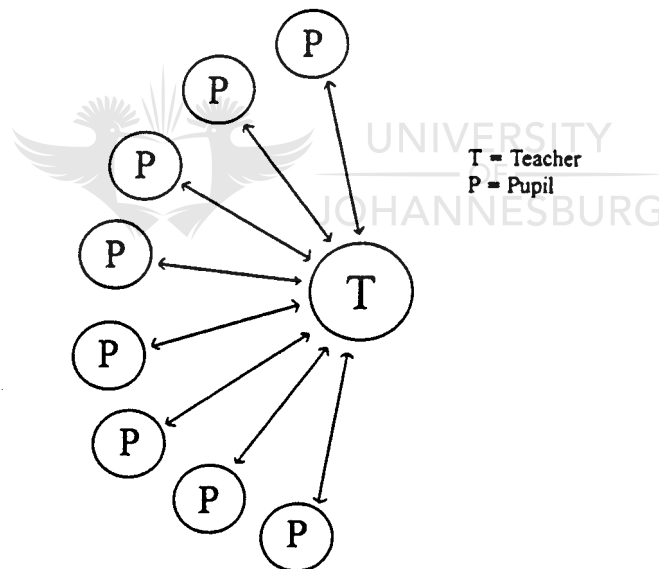


Figure 4.3: Interaction pattern between the teacher and the pupils

The lesson was observed to be characterised by a large degree of questioning. A frequential analysis of the verbal video data focused on the kind of teaching events that took place in the classroom highlighted the recurrence of questions asked by the teacher in each episode. In a period of 17 minutes and 3 seconds (Episodes 3 & 4) the teacher asked a total of 69 questions. A noticeable aspect of the questions asked, was that the questions were commonly addressed to the class in general and seldom to specific individuals.

An indepth analysis of the types of questions asked in Episodes 3 and 4 is summarised in table 4.3.

Teaching event	Total frequency	Classification of questions	
Questioning	69	Declarative knowledge level	60
		Insight level	9
		Analysis level	0
		Synthesis level	0

Table 4.3: Frequential analysis of questioning techniques in Episodes 3 & 4 of the video

Most of the questions asked were on the declarative knowledge level, demanding the literal recall of facts and usually simple one or two word answers, for example

What sounds does Casper hear? or

Who has heard a piano before?

Questions asked on the insight level included those which were more thought-provoking and encouraged the pupils to predict, for example

What sounds do you think Casper is going to hear? or

Why must the children move away from the car?

In a lesson in which the prominent teaching event was questioning, very little time was spent on explanation and instruction.

The video data that has been analysed for the purpose of this study, is available for control.

4.3.4 Data Consolidation

The large amount of data collected from the various data collection techniques (refer to paragraph 4.3.2) needs to be consolidated, in order to arrive at categories that describe a whole language English second language class. The 27 categories that were identified during the course of the data analysis, were finally clustered in order to condense the categories and to reveal the underlying final product patterns contained in the data. The dendrogram in figure 4.4 illustrates this clustering process. These final categories are representative of the general findings of the inquiry. An independent researcher was asked to draw categories from both the interview and the video recording, in order to verify the findings of the researcher.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The main tenets of the research design in which this inquiry was conducted, were discussed in this chapter, illuminating the format of the study, methods of data collection and data processing. Understanding the various components of research and their interrelated nature is vital to the conduction of valid research. Integrated within this theoretical framework, this chapter has aimed to display the raw data and to explicate the systematic process the data followed, from its initial collection, through its analysis, to the consolidation of the final empirical findings. In the final chapter these findings will be discussed and integrated with existing theory to arrive at the overall findings of this study.



FINAL CATEGORIES

Individual Interview

Aim of instruction is communication for real everyday purposes
 Teacher is a role model and facilitator
 Whole language is based on books and involves sharing them with children
 Skills are taught within a meaningful context
 Parents need to acquire knowledge to support their child's language development
 Authentic experiences are functional and purposeful
 Focus of instruction is on developing oral language
 Weaker pupils need more assistance
 Pupils enjoy reading real literature books
 Group does not facilitate learning
 Pupils' first language needs to be supported and incorporated into instruction

Teacher's Journal

Functional and purposeful learning is more likely to endure
 Pupils prefer reading real literature books
 Pupils experience problems in working together in a group
 Pupils experience problems with acquiring specific skills related to reading and writing
 Repetition is important

Video Recording

Whole, real texts are used
 Teacher asks different types of questions
 Comprehension & understanding are monitored during reading
 Extralinguistic cues are used
 Pupils' previous experiences are included
 Language and vocabulary is extended and expanded
 Teacher models correct language usage
 All language arts are incorporated
 Instruction moves from whole to part
 No sharing between pupils or pupil interaction

Emphasis on meaningful and functional language learning

Integration of the language arts

Problems experienced with weaker pupils

Whole Language is sharing real literature with pupils

Lack of pupil collaboration and meaningful social interaction

Teacher is a role model and facilitator

Instruction moves from whole to part

Figure 4.4: Dendrogram of Final Categories

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has attempted to answer research questions posed in the first chapter, with a view to drawing conclusions and offering suggestions for improving the instruction and education of English second language learners in the new South African education system, and for enhancing the training and support systems for whole language teachers. This chapter aims to present the meaning of the investigation's findings and its implications, as well as establish the validity and the reliability of the research. The consolidated analysis products of the data are interpreted against the background of the existing theoretical framework, as well as against new literature which is referred to as a result of the findings. This is followed by an integrated discussion of the conclusions drawn from an interpretation of the findings. Implications of these findings for practice, policy and future research are examined and the validity of the study is discussed. The study is concluded with a brief mention of the limitations of the inquiry and final comments.

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE MAIN CATEGORIES

The following is a discussion of the main empirical findings of this study. These findings are interpreted with the intention of establishing their credibility from a research point of view, as well as to incorporate relevant theory, both from the existing theoretical framework, and from theory included at this stage as a result of the findings.

The emergent categories can be validated against the theory of **whole language, English second language learning, and English second language teaching.**

The categories of data which are discussed, are the combined result of the teacher's articulation of conceptions and beliefs, as well as the practical application of the teacher's belief system and philosophy as expressed in the main data collection methods, namely the individual interview and the classroom video recording. Exploratory research is intended to pioneer "new" areas and usually leads to new insight and comprehension of the research domain.

5.2.1 Emphasis on meaningful and functional language learning

Whole language theory and practice are informed by a constructivist view, that defines learning as the

integration of new knowledge with old knowledge (Dudley-Marling, 1995a:110). Learning is seen as best facilitated when the learner is involved in experiences that are life-related and functional for the learner. According to Weaver (1991:30) such learning experiences encourage the learner to become psychologically committed to and actively engaged in learning. Thus teachers in a whole language context must be able to create the conditions that will allow children to use language for meaningful purposes.

The same applies for students who are learning a second language. As Ernst and Richard (1995:325) note, "children learn a second language not by practising drills, but by using it to communicate." Research continually shows that ESL students who are beginning to learn to read and write in English, as well as those who are more advanced, benefit from classrooms and curricula structured to focus on, and revolve around, the functions and purposes of reading and writing in everyday and academic situations (Fitzgerald, 1993:643).

The teacher in this inquiry regarded functional and purposeful communication for everyday purposes as one of the most important aims of instruction. She states that she is "... hoping to upgrade the English to a level of communication," and thus aims at providing them with "... more of a need for communication," and "... more skills that they can use out of the classroom." Her observations of the pupils' learning revealed to her how they would spontaneously and naturally use language when communicating for real purposes. She therefore supplied them with, what she believed to be, authentic and meaningful learning experiences to become actively involved in. However, for children to be constantly immersed in real learning, they must always have a personal involvement in what they choose to learn. Harste and Lowe (1991:78) define learning as a "self-generating process whereby the children seek to answer their own inquiry questions leading to further questions." Whole language teachers seek to support learning, not control it. The curriculum is something that can be negotiated in collaboration with pupils.

This teacher, while cognizant of the importance of involving second language pupils in whole, real and functional language activities, is experiencing what Sumara (1991, referred to by Garan, 1994:192) has described as the "continual tension between the control of authority ... needed to retain effectiveness as a teacher..." and the need for students to assume responsibility for their own learning. The main point that can be argued concerning this category is that translating philosophy into practice requires not only the theoretical knowledge of how learners learn and the nature of learning, but also practical knowledge on techniques of "how", or procedures to engage in to facilitate functional and purposeful learning. It is in the interplay of theory and practice which occurs in social learning events that new meaning develops (Harste & Lowe, 1991:81).

5.2.2 Integration of the language arts

Few individuals would dispute the view that reading, writing, listening, and speaking are interrelated, and that activities that tend to combine the four modes are more likely to positively enhance both literacy and orality development. This tenet has been supported in research with young children whose native language is English and with students who are learning English as a second language (Freeman & Freeman, 1992:159; Fitzgerald, 1993:644). Oral and written language can develop together and therefore it is not necessary to make literacy instruction contingent upon considerable listening/speaking proficiency.

Encouraging pupils to enter into communication using all four language modes from the beginning as they learn a new language, naturally engages them in meaningful and functional learning. The pupils in this study were observed in activities that integrated speaking, listening, reading, and writing. However, the teacher's philosophy reflected the notion that minimal listening and speaking capacities are prerequisites to learning to read and write and that oral language is the basis of all the other skills. She asserts that "... all the literacy skills that we are trying to move towards ... are really based on oral language." When she integrated writing activities into the programme during the middle of the year, she observed how making the pupils aware of the connections between oral and written language assisted them in improving their written communication skills. She comments, "... even if they don't know how to write something, then we talk about it first and we try and discuss it first, and it sort of clears it up for them in their mind about how to go about writing it." Similarly, she discovered with the pupils, the connections between writing and reading.

In this category, the investigation has once more displayed that whole language is an evolving philosophy and that definitions change as teachers learn more about their pupils, themselves and the nature of learning. It also emphasises the demands that whole language places on the teacher to be knowledgeable in all aspects of the learning process. The importance of capitalising on the interrelatedness of orality and literacy as well as immersing English second language pupils in literacy situations at the earliest possible time is also highlighted.

5.2.3 Problems experienced with weaker pupils

The teacher in this research sample was unsure about her intervention and instruction with the pupils who appeared to be experiencing problems in acquiring English as a second or third language. She was particularly concerned about their poor reading and writing development and was of the opinion that these pupils were not receiving sufficient individual attention within the group setting. She states, " I need to be more individualistic and that is a problem in a group setting, so ... I am not sure about what to do with the weaker ones in their writing ..." In her journal, she frequently notes the problems experienced by weaker pupils, for example. she writes: "Catherine was the only one who had trouble reading her shopping list - spells out j-a-m, but cannot

put it together." Her impression of the pupils' needs was that they required more direct instruction in the specific skills related to reading and writing and a more personal setting for increased individualisation.

According to Mather (1992:93), pupils with learning and language problems can acquire the necessary language skills in a whole language classroom, as long as appropriate, supplemental instruction is provided, a variety of instructional techniques are employed, and the intensity and duration of the services are based upon the individual's needs. While pupils with special learning needs require more support from teachers (Lerner, Cousin & Richek, 1992:228), an environment that accepts learners as they are, treats them as already competent and successful, and leads them to greater success by engaging them in authentic reading, writing, and learning, will clearly benefit learners with all different kinds of learning strategies (Weaver, 1994:496).

This category indicates the teacher's need for further knowledge and skills to attend to the English second language pupils who are experiencing problems within the mainstream. The teacher is aware that she is a facilitator of learning, guiding children to meet their potential. She knows that she is responsible for each learner to acquire literacy. To effectively function in this role, it appears that knowledge of English second language instruction, effective teaching techniques and developmentally appropriate strategies to maximise learning, are integral parts of her preparation.

5.2.4 Whole language is sharing real literature with pupils

The fourth category which was constructed from the analysed and consolidated data, was the fact that the teacher regarded whole language as sharing real literature and books with the pupils. She states that, "... the base is a book ... and sharing the book with the children." The literature books were carefully selected to fit into a particular theme around which each lesson was organised, and the books were regularly read to the pupils. The idea that whole language is reading real literature or big books, suggests that whole language is a particular approach to teaching language arts.

This teacher's conception and misunderstanding of whole language is evidence of the myths and misconceptions that presently surround whole language and cause confusion and anxiety among both educators and the public. Church (1994:364) states that few people understand that whole language is a different way of thinking about teaching and learning, rather than a set of correct practices. The myths of whole language are widespread (Newman & Church, 1990:20) and without a clear definition and understanding of its principles, whole language is "a slippery quarry, something hard to catch and measure" (McKenna, *et al.* 1990:4). The difficulty teachers have defining whole language, parallels the debate in the professional literature, in which whole language is variously defined (refer to Chapter Two, paragraph 2.4). To dispel the myths and misconceptions surrounding whole language, not only is a more concise definition of whole

language required, but teachers need to be given the opportunity to examine their pedagogical assumptions and learn from the contradictions they find there. Everyone involved in whole language has to become a learner, and learning is a lifelong process.

Literature-based reading programmes are catching on in whole language (Harste & Lowe, 1991:77). But whole language is much more than an alternative to basals (Goodman, 1989a:69). Rather than teaching skills or books, whole language instruction is about supporting underlying processes in language and learning. Literature is an instructional vehicle, not an instructional end. Supporting the functions of literacy is the underlying goal (Harste & Lowe, 1991:77). Becoming a whole language teacher typically involves significant movement from essentially a transmission model toward and into a transactional model, in both beliefs and practices.

However, using a work of literature as the core for meaningful activities is one of the ways teachers move significantly into whole language (Weaver, 1994:414). The teacher reported that some of the best lessons were those characterised by good books and interesting discussions, in which the children were absorbed in the meaning of what was said to them or what was read. She observed that the books that the pupils enjoyed were on the basis of relevance and interest, rather than on readability formulas. The meaningfulness of the books to the pupils motivated their involvement in reading activities. Second language learners can greatly benefit from listening to stories, since they provide large, cohesive, uninterrupted chunks of language.

Quality literature cultivates language, provides language models, and facilitates language acquisition. According to Ernst and Richard (1995:324) listening to the language, as they both follow and talk about the thread of the story, is an important way for ESL pupils to make connections between oral and written texts, to try out recently acquired vocabulary, and to discover new ways of deploying communicative resources. When pupils can make use of the new vocabulary acquired through repeated readings and discussion of a book, then their sense of competence and their desire to communicate increases. This in turn, increases pupils' willingness to communicate and to take risks with the new language.

A literature-based curriculum may be characterised by the same old requirements that pupils all read the same selections, answer the same questions and do the same workbook pages, unless teachers are encouraged to examine their own assumptions about learning and teaching. Teachers need to be able to engage in reflective thinking.

5.2.5 Lack of pupil collaboration and meaningful social interaction

Learning in whole language is seen as active, intelligent, and both personal and social. As children participate in social language contexts, they develop their own unique, personal understanding of the forms and functions

of language. Much has been written about the importance of making the input more comprehensible for English second language pupils by involving them in authentic social interaction. Whole language teachers therefore create a supportive environment that encourages children to learn with and from each other as well as the teacher (Hudelson, 1994:141; Weaver, 1991:31). A collaborative classroom environment, one in which children see other children as resources, needs to be fostered.

Enright and McCloskey (1985:440) define collaboration as "two-way classroom experiences in which learning takes place through the participation of teachers and students together." The whole language classroom observed and analysed as part of this investigation, showed a lack of pupil collaboration and meaningful pupil-teacher interaction. The pattern of interaction observed, appeared to be that of teacher domination through the use of predominantly literal recall questions addressed to the whole class (see Table 4.2 and Table 4.3). When the teacher always occupies the role of information-giver and initiator of a dialogue and the pupils are the recipients of information and responders, there are few opportunities for pupils to talk with one another and to learn from their own use of the second language or the content material. As a result, a sense of community was not developed. Copying was discouraged and was not viewed as "helping" or "working together". Rather, the teacher spoke of copying as being "... opposed to learning." However, the teacher expressed that one of her most important objectives was to develop the pupils' ability to work constructively on dyads, triads, and small groups. She was interested in observing how the weaker pupils could be assisted by the other members of the class.

Goodman (1992a:361) notes that this "collaborative, mutually supportive classroom community" is not the current norm in schools. Such a learning environment does not happen by itself. Nurturing this kind of environment takes time, effort, and patience. This observation also corresponds to the observation made in this inquiry, that to establish a collaborative community, knowledge of ways in which a classroom community may be developed, is vital. However, knowledge of interaction strategies and ways of encouraging collaborative learning should be both **principled** and **creative** (Johnson, 1994:184). By drawing on a large base of relevant theory, research, and practical experience, teachers can construct a set of operating principles to guide their actions in the classroom. As indicated previously, teachers need to be encouraged to constantly reflect on their notions of teaching and learning and work through new ideas.

5.2.6 Teacher is a role model and facilitator

As noted earlier, a whole language view requires change. According to Trika Smith-Burke, Deegan, and Jaggard (1991:65) two factors in particular have to undergo radical revision: a.) the nature of the classroom, and b.) the role of the teacher. Whole language teachers assume many roles, but all are contingent upon their knowledge of human development and learning, understanding of language and literacy learning, and training

and practice as an observer of children.

The roles assumed and emphasised by the teacher in this study were that of role model and facilitator. She describes herself as " ... more a facilitator than anything else ..." and "... just being a role model and showing them how they can actually use their language." As a role model she insisted on modeling correct language usage and successful reading and writing processes and strategies. Robbins (1990:54) states that through modeling, teachers not only encourage children to imitate their actions, but they also help their pupils feel that they are sharing in an interesting process, rather than having it imposed on them. Closely related to this is the teacher's conception of facilitation. Her view of facilitation is similar to that of Trika Smith-Burke's, *et al.* (1991:66) who propose that the facilitator lets the learner do the work and follows the learner's lead. This means that pupils are led to take as much responsibility for their own learning as possible.

Whole language teachers are redefining themselves as teachers. It appears that, although this teacher was not assuming all the roles of a whole language teacher as proposed by the whole language advocates, she is in the process of ascribing to herself new roles as a teacher. This process continues as whole language assumptions are continually examined and opportunities for reflection are created.

5.2.7 Instruction moves from whole to part

Whole language teachers emphasise progression in learning from whole to parts and back to the whole. The critical element is not whether or not there are subskills, but rather that the teaching of subskills be integrated into a whole reading or writing act. The important principle is that reading and writing begins and ends as a total act, with the use of meaningful and authentic materials (Dechant, 1993:47). While involved in the reading and writing of authentic texts, the teacher helps the pupils and the pupils help each other, learn skills in the context of need and/or interest. As in other areas of learning, children develop literacy "... by beginning with function and gradually developing control over form, by starting with gross features and gradually learning finer distinctions" (Weaver, 1990:24).

The recognition that all learning, including language learning, involves a gradual process of differentiating the parts out of the whole, has led to a change in second language teaching. Instead of beginning with discrete bits of language, teachers attempt to immerse pupils in whole meaningful experiences with the target language. They make the input more comprehensible. Fitzgerald (1993:645) notes that successful pupils of English as a second language start by focusing on holistic features of language - features which revolve around communicative functions and intentions. These pupils need context-rich language so that they can understand instruction.

This principle of teaching skills in context and moving from whole to part, was observed in the video recorded lesson as well as expressed by the teacher. She states, "... as the children approach me, as they need those skills, then I give it to them." Word identification strategies were taught while reading real literature books and poems and as the need arose. Similarly, new vocabulary was introduced within the context of a story and pupils were provided with opportunities for meaningful use of new vocabulary. Finally, all language and learning activities were closely related to a chosen theme that facilitated the use of literacy and language for authentic, meaning-making, message-sharing purposes.

The above discussion emphasises the successful implementation of a whole language principle. It appears that teachers possess differing strengths in implementing the various whole language principles and that the whole language perspective goals can be overwhelming and not all achievable simultaneously. As Walmsley and Adams (1993, as quoted by Pieronek, 1994:250) asserts, "Whole language advocates have underestimated the demanding nature of making the transition to whole language." It may be assumed that teachers require greater preparation and continual support to bring about these changes.

In conclusion, it can be said that the seven main categories constructed from the data, although discussed individually, cannot be separated. They are all interrelated and interactive and underline the close relationship between theory and practice. "The whole is more than the sum of its parts" (Westby & Costlow, 1991:69). In a similar way the wholeness of a set of findings is also more than the sum of its parts.

A consolidated matrix of examples of raw data representing the consolidated categories appears in Appendix C.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM RESEARCH FINDINGS

Several conclusions that are applicable to developing a whole language philosophy and teaching English second language learners from a whole language perspective, may be drawn from the interpreted empirical findings.

Change is not a simple trouble-free process, but long and drawn-out. Teachers are finding their own ways to whole language. There is no such thing as a "purist" whole language teacher. As stated in Chapter Two, the individual teacher and the whole language movement are in a constant state of evolution and development, as perceptions and beliefs are reexamined, synthesised and put into practice. To support this process, teachers not only require a broad base of theoretical knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of the nature of learning and the learner and the nature and development of the curriculum, but also practical knowledge (knowing how) of techniques and strategies to facilitate the implementation of whole language principles in

the classroom. This means that part of teacher preparation should be placed on techniques of "how" and on effective and appropriate strategies to maximise learning. Teacher support is essential in transforming declarative or static knowledge into procedural knowledge (see paragraph 4.3.2.3).

Perhaps the hardest thing for the newcomer to whole language to really understand, is the paradigm shift that it both reflects and requires. Many of the myths and misconceptions about whole language that have developed in recent years, derive from not understanding the alternative transactional paradigm. A common misconception appears to be that whole language is a set of correct practices for teaching literacy. It is thought of as a methodology rather than as a philosophy - a theory of knowledge as well as a theory of language, learning and schooling. To understand the whole language philosophy of learning and teaching, teachers need to be encouraged to examine their own assumptions and perceptions about learning and teaching. They need to be given opportunities to work through new ideas or practices themselves - the only way to truly make them their own. Whole language teachers are reflective practitioners and researchers and require knowledge on reflective thinking so as to effectively reflect on what they are doing, in light of what they understand and believe.

What occurs in a whole language classroom is really dependent upon the expertise of the teacher. Becoming a whole language teacher is both challenging and demanding and cannot be accomplished in one or two workshops or conferences. It follows then that thorough preparation and continuous support of both a **theoretical** and a **technical** nature is essential if teachers are to successfully meet the needs of each pupil in their classrooms.

This study illustrates that the whole language philosophy and its related principles apply to all learners, including English second language learners. Drawing upon whole language theory and practice to suggest principles of language learning and learning in general is a starting point for teachers of English second language pupils. The pupils in this inquiry became actively involved in using language naturally and spontaneously when communicating for real purposes and engaged in authentic, meaningful literature. These reading, writing and oral language behaviours demonstrated by these second language learners indicated that they were risk takers, using their developing English for exploration and expression of meaning. Whole language principles focus on what second language learners **have** rather than on what they **lack**. However, to best support the needs of second language learners, teachers require more than just a knowledge of whole language. A whole language philosophy needs to be complemented with an understanding of second language acquisition, ESL methods and effective instructional practices of specific importance for ESL pupils such as repetition, mediation and feedback, expanding of responses and scaffolding.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

5.4.1 Implications for practice

It was mentioned in Chapter One that this is a traumatic time for many teachers in South Africa, who have had little or no training in teaching English as a second language or in multilingual settings. Considering that whole language recognises the strength of diversity within a community and believes that everyone has the inherent right to name the world as he or she sees it, it appears that whole language is a suitable curricular philosophy for giving each child a voice in today's classrooms. Yet the research indicates that while whole language supports the learning of English second language pupils, it needs to be integrated with a solid knowledge base in second language learning and acquisition, ESL methods and effective instructional strategies for pupils acquiring English as a second language. The implications for practice is thus to develop a model for training teachers in both whole language and English second language learning and methods.

5.4.2 Implications for teacher training and consultation

Many of the difficulties that arise with whole language instruction appear to be related to inadequate preparation of teachers - teachers who have been taught only how-to-do teaching, rather than how to make decisions about teaching. Whole language often requires an extensive reconceptualisation of the overall instructional process. However, research is beginning to show that approaches are more successful when they try to enhance and expand a teacher's current repertoire of instructional strategies, rather than radically altering them (Gersten & Jiminez, 1994:438). Educational psychologists as consultants to teachers, should focus instead on creating structures that allow educators to examine and reflect on the teaching and learning of reading and writing. Because children and the contexts of education are ever changing, the need for educational transformation is endless. Educators need tools for continuous discussion about literacy and learning. Their own assumptions about learning and teaching need to be continually examined so as to consider the what and the how in the context of the why. With these tools, educators can construct a practical theory of learning and literacy instruction that can be constantly reexamined. However, without concrete, tangible guidance, innovative ideas typically fail to take root in classroom practice. Teachers need continuous support and assistance in translating philosophy into practice. Collaboration between teachers and educational psychologists should focus on the development of teachers as life-long learners. Structures need to be created that allow teachers to a.) continuously acquire knowledge about research and the nature of learning and language development, b.) engage in reflective thinking and examination of their own assumptions, and c.) practice new ideas and obtain practical knowledge in translating philosophy into practice.

5.4.3 Implications for further research

The demands made on a whole language teacher are great. To meet these demands, teachers not only require better preparation, but ongoing support and assistance. There exists a strong need for the development of a teacher-consultant model to train teachers in both whole language and English second language learning and teaching. This model also needs to be further developed to provide ongoing support to teachers as they continue their journeys with whole language. Efforts to implement whole language and ESL methods will fail if teachers do not have consultants readily available to assist them and provide support. Teachers simply cannot be expected to implement on their own, complex instructional processes embedded in an unfamiliar philosophy, without being given numerous opportunities to reflect on it and make it their own.

5.5 VALIDITY OF THE STUDY

Concerns about validity and reliability are common to all forms of research. The goal of the validity criterium is to demonstrate that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described (Marshall & Rossman, 1989:145). However, unlike experimental designs, where validity and reliability are accounted for before the investigation, "... rigor in a qualitative case study derives from the researcher's presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description" (Merriam, 1991:120).

The strength of the qualitative study that aims to explore a problem or describe a setting, a process, a social group, or a pattern of interaction will be its validity. Marshall and Rossman (1989:145) state that "An in-depth description showing the complexities of variables and interactions will be so embedded with data arrived from the setting that it cannot help but be valid." A qualitative researcher must therefore adequately state the parameters of the setting, population, and theoretical framework.

Henning (1995:32) notes that "Validity is generally regarded as credibility of procedures which are articulated succinctly." It is impossible to evaluate procedures if they are not explicitly stated. One of the main aspects of this study's validity, lies in the detailed account and rich description of how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry (see Chapter Four). Such an "audit trail", which makes available the entire body of research evidence for replication, also enhances the reliability and generalisability of the research findings (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:147).

Furthermore the validity of the study will be assessed by discussing the validation tactics suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994:262-277), Marshall and Rossman (1995:142-152) and LeCompte and Preissle (1993:325-329), that are also employed to verify the conclusions reached in this study.

Checking for representativeness

In this study, the possibility of nonrepresentativeness was countered as effectively as possible by paying particular attention to sampling, the nature of the data and looking purposively for contrasting cases. The possibility of including nonrepresentative events and activities was countered by obtaining data systematically during the course of the investigation. The development of the programme was closely observed by the researcher, from its inception in the second quarter of the year to the end of the school's academic year. Representativeness was further made possible by increasing the number of video recordings made of the classroom activities.

Checking for researcher effects

Especially at the outset, both the "outsiders" and the "insiders" to a group influence each other. Miles and Huberman (1994:265) assert that this results in biased observations and inferences that "confounds" the setting's natural characteristics and influences analysis deeply, both during and after data collection. In this investigation Miles and Huberman's (1994:266) advice for avoiding bias was followed by spending hours in the classroom just "hanging around and fitting into the landscape", using unobtrusive measures and conducting the interview off-site in a more relaxed social environment. To avoid biases stemming from the effects of the site on the researcher, the study was triangulated with the use of several data-collection methods which have already been mentioned, and the data was inspected not only by the researcher, but also by the research supervisor to identify areas where the researcher had been misled or co-opted.

Discovering a research philosophy

LeCompte and Preissle (1993:326) and Marshall and Rossman (1995:147) believe that the way in which the researcher's *philosophical tradition* affects the quality of the research should be considered. Assumptions need to be stated, and biases expressed. The researcher's view on research and research philosophy are clearly formulated in Chapter One and Chapter Four, contributing to the validity of this study.

Triangulating

Triangulation is a powerful strategy for enhancing validity of the research: "It is based on the idea of convergence of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data to ensure that all aspects of a phenomenon have been investigated. The triangulated data sources are assessed against one another to cross-check data and interpretation" (Krefting, 1991:219, see also Denzin, 1988:511). The triangulation of this study, viewed from Denzin's (1988:512) perspective, employs data triangulation involving time (the study is a cross-

sectional study) and triangulation of data methods. The concluding dendrogram in Chapter Four, indicates that all the final patterns identified in the inquiry occurred in at least two methods, and were analysed by means of different analytic techniques.

Weighting the evidence

Conclusions are always based on certain data. Some of these data may be stronger and more valid than other data and subsequently conclusions drawn from such data are strengthened. The data that was weighted most strongly in the study, were those final patterns that frequently emerged from the final consolidation of all the categories. The findings obtained from the main methods of data collection were also regarded as more important than the findings obtained from the other methods, as the data from both the video recordings and the interview were collected after repeated contact and reported firsthand.

Outliers

Outliers are exceptions and often strengthen an original conclusion. Outliers were identified in each method of data collection and examined, in order to illuminate the meaning of the empirical findings. The outlier that emerged in the interview that showed that the curriculum is integrated around topics and themes, served to strengthen the finding that instruction moves from whole to part and takes place within a meaningful context. While most outliers appeared to strengthen the original findings, others were found to be insignificant and no further value was attached to them.

Looking for negative evidence

Looking for negative evidence entails asking: "Do any data oppose this conclusion, or are any inconsistent with this conclusion?" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:271; Marshall & Rossman, 1995:147). Thus the researcher constantly seeks disconfirmation of what he/she believes. During the course of the investigation, the researcher constantly looked for negative evidence in order to test any pattern that emerged. However, no instances of negative evidence were discovered which could undo the final categories. Rather, the different sets of data appeared to reinforce and support the final patterns.

Replicating a finding

Due to the focus on triangulation of data methods and data sources in this inquiry, there existed no need to engage in replication of the findings by using methods of the same kind in another part of the case or data set.

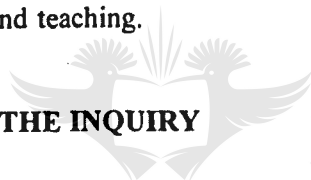
Checking out rival explanations

The competent field researcher looks for the most plausible, empirically grounded explanation of events from among those that emerge during the course of fieldwork (Miles & Huberman, 1994:274; Marshall & Rossman, 1995:145). Rival explanations are held onto until one of them gets increasingly more compelling as a result of a larger amount of evidence and evidence from different sources. This procedure was strictly implemented as far as possible during the course of this study. Rival explanations were looked at fairly early and sustained until they were proven to be no longer feasible.

Getting feedback from informants

A logical source of confirmation and validity is the people the researcher has talked with and watched. In this inquiry, feedback was obtained from the teacher during the course of data collection. Some of the findings that had evolved over the period of data collection were checked out with the teacher during the individual interview which was the last source of data to be collected. Most of the findings were confirmed, while at the same time contextualised and supplemented with information that the teacher offered about her beliefs and philosophies on learning and teaching.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE INQUIRY



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The limitations of this study are varied and may be viewed from different perspectives. An important limitation of the study is that it is a small monographic study and therefore the findings cannot be directly generalised. A further limitation of the study is that it was conducted by a novice researcher with no research experience whatsoever. Inexperience can result in the emergence of many unintentional errors being made throughout the research process. However, reflection upon these errors provide opportunities for gaining further insight into and understanding of the research process. Even experienced researchers make errors and all findings are at best tentative without further corroboration, challenging and substantiation.

5.7 FINAL COMMENTS

In this chapter the findings of the analysed data were consolidated against the background of the existing theoretical framework concerning whole language and English second language teaching. Conclusions were subsequently drawn, and implications and recommendations for practice, teacher training, consultation and further research were stated. The paramount idea of this chapter is that whole language has a great deal to offer literacy education in culturally and ethnically diverse classrooms. With its constant emphasis on justice, democracy, and empowerment, whole language can empower people to participate effectively in all the

processes of democratic society. However, teachers as lifelong learners require long-term commitment and support as they change and develop a new culture and belief system - a new paradigm of learning and teaching. This study specifically emphasises the practical knowledge that the whole language teacher requires, as well as knowledge of second language acquisition and ESL methods. The educational psychologist, as a consultant, plays a vital role in facilitating teacher change and providing in-service support.



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APPENDICES



Appendix A

Individual Interview Guide

The following interview guide contains a list of the questions asked of the teacher during the individual interview conducted on 30 September 1994.

1. How would you describe your role in the project?
2. How would you define whole language?
3. What is learning?
4. How would you define teaching?
5. How do children acquire a second language?
6. What have you learnt about implementing whole language with second language children?
7. What is the role of the teacher in a whole language classroom?
8. What are your beliefs about language and language development that guide your decision making?
9. What have you observed about the pupil's reading, writing and oral language?
10. What is the role of the group in the children's learning?
11. What is the importance of the child's first language?



Appendix B

Extract from Individual Interview

The following is an extract from the recorded individual interview conducted with the teacher of the whole language English second language class on 30 September 1994.

<i>Transcription Code</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
I	Interviewer
R	Respondent

- I: How would you describe your role in the project at I.H. Harris at the moment?
- R: I think, it's not really a teaching role, I wouldn't see it like that. I would see it more as a language therapy kind of role, you know, as well as being in there with the children obviously, planning all the lessons as well, and evaluating the children and progress and that sort of thing.
- I: OK. When you say language therapy, em, how would you describe that? What type of therapy are you doing in language?

R: Well, with second language speakers, English speakers, then obviously we're focusing on the English side of things. And we're just hoping to upgrade the English to a level of communication. Not really anything more than that. I'm not really aiming at specific structures of grammar, but just to upgrade communication purposes. That's where I'm aiming at.

I: And to upgrade the communication process, what are you doing to assist that process?

R: Well, working a lot in themes and obviously using the literature and that kind of thing a lot.

I: All right.

R: Well, to ... basically the first step is to give them the vocabulary on which to base their language and from there, obviously working in a group ... it is also a social setting, just being a role model and showing them how they can actually use their language. And when they get stuck and they can't actually help themselves and obviously to step in and help them then.

I: Right, and obviously using quite a few whole language principles. What else do you understand about whole language, or what other principles are you incorporating, do you think, in the programme at the moment?

R: I think, I'm using quite a few, well hopefully. I think the first thing is obviously that the base is a book. Each session we have a book or in fact two books, it depends sometimes we have even more, like at the moment ... and sharing the book with the children ... I don't think it's just really reading the story to them ... it's actually showing them, pointing to the words, showing them how a book works, em oh, and the discussion about the content of the book is not just only on that book, it can then be integrated into the whole theme of that day or that kind of thing you know ... and asking them their personal experiences on that particular issue, or their feelings about it, or their descriptions of the characters in the stories, or stuff like that. I think it's a sharing experience more than a teaching experience.

I: That sharing obviously takes place in amongst individual members?

R: That's right

I: As well as in the group?

R: Yah

I: What, ... when you have a look at English second language acquisition, what would you say that you're doing at the moment that is really helping them, what have you learnt from your language therapy sessions with them?

R: I think the first thing to realize is that it's a slow process. That's really struck me this year. I think that if English is not happening at home, then it's not happening to the best of its ability at school either. So I think that there is a bit of a dilemma for the children, you know, let alone for myself or for the planning of lessons, I think that's a big issue. And I think more parent involvement is vital. You know, time wise and the whole thing.

I: Do you feel you'll be able to achieve more if you can get more parents?

R: Yah. I think parents generally even in their own languages, they don't really know how to best facilitate language learning for their children, and I think that a few guidelines or an actual demonstration for them and explanation of what I am doing and why I am doing it would be really great. I think then you can really get the program on the go. When you are sending the material home for them to read, and what's happening at home?... I don't know, and I can't tell you what's happening or whether it is beneficial or not.

I: You are not getting much follow through ...

R: ... I think in some children you are. Those are the ones whose parents come to the school and chat about them and, you know ... trying to learn about how to cope with the problem at home. It's more often that they are not at the school.

I: And anything else in your instruction and teaching and your therapy with them that you can say is really, or you can see it really works with English second language children, or any principles?

R: Yah... I think the idea of working from a book is really exciting. I think that it really works, because you are getting the child's attention each time. Every child enjoys stories. And they become very involved in the story. They don't

really even realize that it's working, you know, it's just fun for them really. And, em, especially in the first term when we were involving them in a lot more activities, things like cooking, making a salad, cooking breakfast. We were actually doing it all together, you know, reading from a recipe and actually doing the activity together, and that allows for a lot of social language interaction, which was just spontaneous, which was great.

I: So, you find that when they are actively involved and then they really...

R: Yah, and I think the other thing that works really nicely is working in pairs, or something like that, that really works really nicely, because then it gives them some degree of independence at their own sort of level of development and they can choose how to go about it, so they are actually involving themselves cognitively without me directing them, and I think that's a very important whole language principle that works really very well with them. Even though they may not have the language to express themselves sufficiently, they have still got the cognitive approaches with which to deal with a topic or a task or something like that.

I: ... You feel that, that facilitates their communication in English?

R: Absolutely, because they get so involved and they want to communicate, they actually need to share their ideas. Nobody wants to sit there and be quiet, when you are involving them in that way. So I think that's the thing. You know you've got to create the need for the communication, otherwise it will not happen.

I: Right. And then speaking in their second language, how do you describe that? Are they hesitant or have you seen a growth actually take place?

R: Lots of growth. Lots of growth. Even with the weaker pupils. Definitely with the stronger ones there has been an amazing growth, in the oral language and in the literacy side. Definitely. Em. Their whole approach to things, there is actually sort of a more mature kind of outlook on things, over the year. I suppose that's natural to have that development. But, em, even with the weaker ones I found quite a lot of, they are a lot more oral now, they were very, very quiet at the beginning of the year ... and more able to think, em, like holistically and actually see the whole theme and the big picture and not just to see a particular thing in the theme, but to see the whole thing and how it fits in with their life, and they are able to actually give a personal opinion on something now, which is really great.

APPENDIX C

Consolidated matrix of examples of raw data and final categories

CATEGORIES	INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW	TEACHER'S JOURNAL	VIDEO RECORDING
Emphasis on meaningful and functional language learning	"... we're just hoping to upgrade the English to a level of communication" "... they get so involved and they want to communicate."	"I feel they are learning by active participation and enjoyment in lessons." "The children need to use the language learnt in a spontaneous manner."	Teacher relates to pupils' previous experiences: "Who can tell me? What did you hear at the fire station?"
Integration of the language arts	"... all the literacy skills ... are really based on oral language." "... if they don't know how to write something, then we talk about it first."	"... but now so is the written form aiding pronunciation and memory." "General awareness of relationship between reading, writing, talking."	Teacher and pupils read book together. Pupils retell story. Pupils create authentic materials of their own and engage in drawing and writing.
Problems experienced with weaker pupils	"I am not sure about what to do with the weaker ones in their writing." "For the weaker children, I am not sure."	"Some still have difficulty engaging with reading." "Some are still finding it difficult to piece all the letters together to form a 'whole'."	***
Whole language is sharing real literature with pupils	"... the base is a book ... and sharing the book with the children." "... it's very child-based which is wonderful."	"Gorgeous story and pictures - whole book - perfect for whole language."	Teacher reads from whole, real texts. Teacher shares a whole poem with the class. Teacher reads, stops and asks questions during the story.
Lack of pupil collaboration and meaningful social interaction	"They just focus on what they are doing, there is no way that they can learn from one another."	"I usually read the book, with them watching my finger moving along... we would all read together." "Interesting to see socialisation immaturity eg. pressure to win."	Pupils work on their own when completing a task. "That is Lungile's idea, you must think of your own." No social interaction amongst pupils.
Teacher is a role model and facilitator	"... just being a role model and showing them how they can actually use their language." "I suppose more a facilitator than anything else."	***	T: Why must they move away from the car? P: Car will chase them T: The car can knock children down and hurt them. (Teacher models correct language)
Instruction moves from whole to part	"... I am using the skills ... but only as the children approach me, as they need those skills..."	***	Teacher reads whole story to the pupils. Encourages pupils to use picture cues and the context of the story to identify words: What is the sister playing?