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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*An investigation of parental involvement in the development of their children's literacy
in a rural Namibian school*

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the involvement of parents in the development of their children's literacy. The study was conducted in a rural school in the Omaheke region of Namibia, a school selected for reasons of representativeness and convenience. The research took the form of an interpretive case study focussing on a study sample of nine parents, their children, and one teacher in the Ngeama community. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and then subjected to comprehensive descriptive analysis.

The findings of the study indicate that parents in the Ngeama rural community have not been effectively involved in their children's acquisition of literacy, for a number of reasons. These include the parents' not feeling appropriately empowered to influence the development of their children's literacy, the absence of environmental literacy programmes within the community, and the shortage of literacy materials such as newspapers and magazines. Perhaps the most important factor is that there is no public or school library in the Ngeama community.

In view of these findings, the study recognizes a need for parental empowerment in terms of knowledge, skills, understanding and resources allocation regarding the education of their children. It recommends that a relationship of trust and understanding be built between the school and the community to ensure the sound development of literacy skills. The study further recommends the establishment of a library in order to enhance the literacy levels of teachers, parents and children alike.

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ACRONYMS USED IN THIS STUDY

IFESH:	International Foundation for Education and Self-help
DLO:	District Literacy Officer
EMIS:	Education Management Information System
MBEC:	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
MEC:	Ministry of Education and Culture
MOE:	Ministry of Education
NERA:	Namibian Educational Research Association
NIED:	National Institute for Educational Development
RLC:	Regional Literacy Coordinators
SACMEQ:	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
PIRLS:	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
U. S:	United States

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Context of the study.....	1
1.3 Research questions.....	2
1.4 Research approach.....	3
1.5 Research site.....	3
1.5.1 Location and regional context.....	4
1.6 Structure of the thesis.....	6
1.7 Conclusions.....	8
 CHAPTER TWO.....	 9
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Definition of terminology	9
2.2.1 Literacy.....	10
2.2.2 Family literacy.....	10
2.2.3 Parental involvement.....	11
2.3 The importance of parental involvement in children's literacy	12
2.3.1 International context.....	12
2.3.2 Namibian context.....	14
2.4 Ways how parents can develop children's literacy.....	16
2.4.1 Storytelling.....	16
2.4.2 Reading aloud.....	18
2.4.3 Writing.....	19

2.4.4 Talking.....	20
2.4.5 Playing.....	21
2.4.6 Rich home environment.....	22
2.5 Home-school relationship	24
2.6 Barriers to parental involvement.....	26
2.6.1 Poor educational level of parents.....	26
2.6.2 Poverty.....	28
2.6.3 Lack of resources.....	29
2.7 Conclusion.....	30
CHAPTER THREE.....	32
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	32
3.1 Introduction.....	32
3.1.1 Research goals.....	32
3.2 Research design.....	32
3.2.1 Research orientation.....	32
3.2.2 Qualitative methods.....	33
3.2.3 Case study.....	33
3.2.4 Sampling.....	34
3.3 Data collection.....	35
3.3.1 Semi structured interviews.....	35
3.3.2 Pilot interviews.....	36
3.3.3 Interviews.....	37
3.4 Data analysis.....	38
3.5 Research ethics.....	38
3.5.1 Gaining access.....	39
3.5.2 Anonymity and confidentiality.....	39
3.5.3 Informed consent.....	39
3.6 Validity.....	40
3.6.1 Triangulation.....	40
3.6.2 Member checking.....	41

3.6.3 Language use during the interviews.....	41
3.7 Limitations.....	41
3.8 Conclusion.....	42
CHAPTER FOUR.....	43
PRESENTATION OF DATA.....	43
4.1 Introduction.....	43
4.2 Profiles of parents, children and the teacher who participated in the study.....	43
4.2.1 Contextual analysis of Ngeama community.....	44
4.2.2 Profiles of parents interviewed.....	44
4.2.3 Profiles of children interviewed.....	45
4.2.4 Contextual analysis of Ngeama Primary school and the professional profile of the teacher interviewed.....	46
4.3 Parents' views on activities they use to support the literacy development of their children in their homes and children's voices on how parents support them with literacy homework.....	47
4.3.1 Reading aloud to children.....	48
4.3.1.1 Exposure to reading during childhood.....	48
4.3.1.2 Reading aloud to their children.....	49
4.3.2 Storytelling.....	51
4.3.3 Talking.....	54
4.3.4 Playing.....	55
4.3.5 Writing.....	58
4.4 Parent's and teacher's perceptions on factors that limit parental involvement.....	60
4.4.1 Lack of literacy resources.....	61
4.4.2 Lack of a library.....	63
4.4.3 Poor educational level.....	64
4.4.4 Poverty.....	64
4.5 Teacher and parents views on teacher support in the literacy development of their children.....	65
4.6 Conclusion.....	67

CHAPTER FIVE.....	68
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	68
5.1 Introduction.....	68
5.2 Discussion of findings.....	68
5.2.1 Attempts by parents to develop the literacy of their children.....	68
5.2.1.1 Reading aloud.....	69
5.2.1.2 Storytelling.....	70
5.2.1.3 Playing.....	72
5.2.1.4 Writing.....	73
5.3 Poor involvement of fathers in the literacy development of their children.....	74
5.4 Poor environment as an obstacle to literacy development.....	75
5.4.1 Lack of literacy resources.....	75
5.4.2 Lack of a library.....	76
5.5 Poor educational level.....	77
5.6 Poverty.....	80
5.7 Communication gap between the parents and the teacher.....	80
5.8 Conclusion.....	82
 CHAPTER SIX.....	 83
CONCLUSION.....	83
6.1 Introduction.....	83
6.2 Overview of the key findings.....	83
6.2.1 Parent's educational background.....	83
6.2.2 Storytelling and reading aloud.....	83
6.2.3 Home and school relations.....	84
6.2.4 Poverty and literacy mitigating factors.....	85
6.2.5 Promotion of reading culture in the community.....	85
6.2.6 Literacy resources.....	85
6.2.7 Literacy programmes.....	86
6.3 Tentative suggestions.....	86

6.4 Potential value of the study.....	87
6.5 Reflection on the research process.....	89
6.6 Limitations of the study.....	90
6.7 Conclusion.....	91

REFERENCES.....	92
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APPENDICES.....	103
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Appendix A: Permission letter to the director.....	103
Appendix B: Permission letter from the director.....	104
Appendix C: Permission letter to school.....	105
Appendix D: Permission letter from school.....	106
Appendix E: Permission letter to the traditional leader.....	107
Appendix F: Permission letter from the traditional leader.....	108
Appendix G: Memorandum of agreement.....	109
Appendix H: Teacher interview schedule.....	110
Appendix I: Parents interview schedule.....	112
Appendix J: Children's interview schedule	114
Appendix K: Teacher transcript.....	115
Appendix L: Parent's transcripts.....	125
Appendix M: Children's transcript.....	183
Appendix N: Pilot interviews.....	202

FIGURES.....	5
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Figure 1: Map of regions of Namibia.....	5
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TABLES.....	44
--------------------	-----------

Table 4.1 Profile of parents.....	44
--	----

Table 4.2	Profile of the Grade 3 children interviewed.....	45
Table 4.3	Professional profile of the teacher at Ngeama Primary school.....	46
Table 4.4	Strategies which parents claim they use to support reading and writing.....	47
Table 4.5	Availability of reading and writing resources.....	61

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical background for my research. The context of the study where the research was conducted is described, followed by a brief description of the research site. Research questions and the research approach are introduced and justified. Finally an overview of the different chapters in this study is provided.

1.2 Context of the study

The importance of parental involvement in their children's literacy development has been documented by many researchers, practitioners, and policymakers including Kaperu (2004), Mubita (1998) and Vassallo (2000). A significant body of research (Henderson & Berla, 1994) indicates that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an increase in learner's achievement and an improvement in learners' attitudes. The positive effects of increased parental involvement have been known for some time (Henderson & Berla, 1994). Vassallo (2000:1) points out that parental involvement in a child's education is a strong predictor of learner achievement: typically, the more involved the parent, the more the child achieves.

The importance of parental involvement in education has been supported by Mubita (1998) who argued that parents can be incorporated into school activities in many ways; they can give lessons in the areas of their specialization such as storytelling, singing songs, field trips, sport activities and Bible reading by giving assistance to the learners with reading. In addition, parents can be involved in school policy making which can be effective as long as teachers and policy makers examine their assumptions and views about the role of parents in the participation paradigm (Mubita, 1998).

Parents' role in children's literacy development is very important because they are the children's first and most influential teachers. International research shows that there is a relationship between parental involvement and children's success in literacy.

This has been a concern for me since I became the principal of a rural primary school in Omusati region in the northern part of Namibia. As a principal of the school I was disappointed by the level of involvement by parents in the education of their children. Parents believed that the extent of their involvement was covered by paying school fees, sending children to school and disciplining them. The children's literacy seemed to them to be the sole responsibility of the teacher. This concern intensified when I did some small-scale research in 2005. I conducted research on literacy development with Grade 7 learners and their teacher at a rural primary school in the Otjozondjupa region. Teachers complained about the lack of involvement of parents in their children's literacy education. It was against this background that I thought it necessary to investigate the extent of rural parents' involvement in the literacy development of their children and how teachers support this.

1.2 Research questions

The goal of this study is to investigate how rural parents are involved in the development of the literacy of their children and to explore how teachers support and encourage rural parents to become involved in children's literacy development. In order to achieve these goals, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- Are rural Namibian parents involved in developing their children's literacy?
- If so, how are they involved?
- If not, why not?
- What role does the teacher play with regard to parental involvement? To what extent does she/he support and encourage parental involvement?

Having demarcated the research questions it is now necessary to state the research approach of this study.

1.4 Research approach

I located my research within the interpretive paradigm where I seek to understand the phenomenon and to interpret meaning within the social and cultural context of the natural setting (Cantrell, 1993:84). In order to understand and interpret social situations, the researcher should interact with people involved in such situations; listen to them, and try to make sense of their perceptions and experiences (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The interpretative paradigm in particular was appropriate for this research because it enabled me to investigate how parents are involved in the literacy development of their children and how teachers support them.

1.5 Research site

The study was conducted at a primary school situated in a village in Omaheke region in Namibia. The community built the school and the hostel with the assistance of foreign donors to serve the communities of the neighboring villages. The school has 220 learners with eight teachers led by a principal. All the teachers at this school are academically qualified. The school caters mostly for children from a marginalized rural community. Learners in this region come from poor homes with unemployed parents. This means that the households can only contribute little if anything at all towards the school development fund. There is no electricity at this rural school, no library and no laboratory. There are no adult education programmes (literacy classes) taking place in this community. There is no means of communication in terms of postal services. The school is administered by a school board elected by the community. Some community members contribute whatever they can to sustain the hostel which accommodates 100 children. The Ministry of Education through the Schools Feeding Programme supplies maize meal to the school. The residents of this community rely heavily on one borehole for their daily water supply. The water consumption has increased in the village, resulting in a shortage of water for the community and the school. There is no clinic or health centre in the village. The parents' homesteads are built in the Otjiherero traditional way. Most of the people in this community are unemployed. The community depends mainly

on meat and sour milk as staple food. The means of transport available are limited to a few cars, donkey carts and horses.

1.5.1 Location and regional context

The research was carried out in Omaheke, one of the thirteen regions in Namibia, which is located in the east of Namibia bordering Botswana. The region is situated in the north-western part of the huge Kalahari Desert and borders the Khomas region in the north. The main languages spoken in the region are Otjiherero, Afrikaans and English. According to the SACMEQ report (2004) the region has an area of 84,612 square kilometers and 68,039 inhabitants. Numerous reports such as the EMIS report (2004) and Namibian Annual Report (2006) give different estimates of the Adult Literacy Rate in Namibia which vary between 81%-84%.



Figure 1: Map of regions of Namibia

(Sue Abrahams (2006). Graphics Unit, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.)

The agricultural pattern of this region is to a large extent homogenous. The region's economy is dominated by cattle farming in both the commercial and communal farming areas.

There are 43 schools and 7 cluster centres in the region. There is one education director, two inspectors and two advisory teachers. There is a directorate of Adult Education with one Education Officer and three District Literacy Officers (DLO) stationed in Gobabis. A resource centre is fully operational in the region with two staff members. Road conditions

are very poor and vehicles are in short supply for the officials to carry out their expected duties.

The problem of under- or unqualified teachers is a common one in the Omaheke region. It is not unusual for the teacher to lack knowledge of the subject he/she is teaching. Only a minority of teachers have initial teacher education, the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD). This situation occurs mostly in rural areas where teachers are in possession of a simple matric certificate yet are given subjects to teach at all levels without thought to the educational consequences. The reason for this is that the qualified teachers do not want to go to the remote areas where their services are really needed and as a result the Government is forced to recruit under-or unqualified teachers. Rural schools in Omaheke region have a poor physical infrastructure with learners being taught in dilapidated classrooms.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 deals with an explanation of the background of the study, the context, research problem, and the reason for the study. It outlines the research questions and goals of the study and finally the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the literature which is relevant to the research topic as well as the literature which has informed this study. This provides the theoretical framework of the research.

Chapter 3 presents and discusses the chosen research methodology in terms of my research paradigm (interpretive) and the research method. This research used a case study method and semi-structured interviews as a research tool. I further explain how the research was initiated, how research data were collected and analysed. The chapter also notes the validity and the potential limitations of the study. Finally, ethical issues conclude this chapter.

Chapter 4 deals with the analysis of the data without any comment in terms of theory and literature. These topics are presented in the order in which they emerged from the study. They are as follows:

- Profiles of the parents, children and the teacher who participated in the study
- Contextual analysis of the Ngeama community
- Parents' views on activities they use to support the literacy development of their children in their homes and children's voices on how parents support them with literacy homework
- Parents' and the teachers' perceptions of factors that hinder parental involvement in literacy development
- Parents' views on how teachers support them in the literacy development of their children

Through out the chapter I let the reader listen to the voices of participants by quoting and including them.

Chapter 5 presents the discussions of the main findings in terms of my research goals and research questions. The six main themes emerging from Chapter 4 forms the structure of this chapter. They are as follows:

- Attempts by parents to develop the literacy of their children;
- Poor environment as an obstacle to literacy development;
- The communication gap between the parents and the teacher;
- Poor educational levels of parents as a stumbling block to parental involvement in children's literacy;
- Poverty;
- Poor involvement of fathers in the literacy development of their children.

In Chapter 6, I present my conclusions by summarizing my main findings on the basis of the themes presented under Chapter 5. The potential value of my research study and its

limitations are spelt out, followed by a final section on my personal reflections. Tentative suggestions are made.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides an introduction to the study with regard to its context, research questions, research approach and research site where the study was carried out. The structure of the thesis is provided. In the next chapter, I will review literature related to the topic of investigation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the overall purpose of my research is to explore how rural parents are involved in their children's literacy development and how teachers support them. The focus will be Grade 3 learners since Namibian learners in Grade 3 are taught in their mother tongue as the medium of instruction. There are few studies of parental involvement in children's literacy in Namibia. Therefore, the literature reviewed in this section comes from various studies undertaken in other countries. To form a logical argument, this chapter is organized in the following manner:

Firstly, in order to ensure clarity and understanding of terms, definitions will be provided as they are used within the context of this research. Secondly, the section focuses on the importance as well as the roles of parents in the development of their children's literacy. Thirdly, the review also considers previously conducted research findings to acknowledge the work of other researchers in the same field of study. Fourthly, this section focuses on a number of support home-school relationships identified in the literature. Finally, a number of barriers to the involvement of parents in their children's literacy development will be presented.

2.2 Definition of terminology

This section will clarify the definitions of terms as they are used in the context of this research. This clarification is important in order to ensure an understanding of the concepts. Sallis (1993:21) argues that it is necessary to have a clear understanding of concepts as they imply different things in different contexts to different people.

For this study the following concepts will be defined:

- Literacy

- Family literacy
- Parental involvement

2.2.1 Literacy

According to Legere, Trewby & van Graan (2000:47) the terms “literacy” and “functional literacy” are often used interchangeably in Namibia, when referring to reading and writing skills. Literacy was once defined as the ability to read and write. It was considered a set of neutral and objective skills independent of social context or ideology (Street, 1995). Jackson (1993:3) summarises literacy as being “much more than the ‘simple’ acts of reading and writing; it involves notions of power, of culture and community and of social learning.” She continues to define the meaning of literacy in a school context where children engage in literacy events, of which reading and writing are only two of these events, in order to ‘make meaning’ of their worlds (Jackson 1993:11).

2.2.2 Family literacy

Family literacy is a program that provides adults with instruction on how to foster literacy in their children or other young relatives. The program may also provide direct literacy instruction for children and/or adults, and may involve classes where adults and children are working together (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Family literacy is a term that was coined by Denny Taylor in the 1980s as she and others conducted ethnographic research into the literacy development of young children (Hannon, 2000). Originally, the term was used to refer to the ways in which literacy is interwoven into the daily routines of family life.

The Literacy Dictionary (Harris & Hodges, 1995) provides a brief and open-ended definition of *family literacy* as “literacy efforts or activities involving more than one generation.” The International Reading Association’s Family Literacy Commission offers the following conceptualization of the term *family literacy*:

Family literacy encompasses the ways parents, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in their community. Sometimes, family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children “get things done.” These events might include using drawings or writings to share ideas; composing notes or letters to communicate messages; making lists; reading and following directions; or sharing stories and ideas through conversation, reading, and writing. Family literacy may be initiated purposefully by a parent or may occur spontaneously as parents and children go about the business of their daily lives. Family literacy activities may also reflect the ethnic, racial, or cultural heritage of the families involved (Morrow, 1995:7-8).

2.2.3 Parental involvement

Parental involvement entails the participation and the amount of assistance a parent gives the child in his/her schoolwork either directly or indirectly. This includes verbal encouragement or assistance given to the child in doing his/her schoolwork, and direct reinforcement of improved academic performance by giving rewards. It also includes academic guidance and support, participation in learning activities, attending school functions, discussing future plans for tertiary education careers and punishing bad habits that may interfere with the child’s proper learning.

According to Lareau (1989) researchers usually define parent involvement as preparing children for school (for example, teaching children the alphabet, talking and reading to children to promote language development) attending school events, for example parent-teacher conferences and fulfilling any request teachers make of parents, for example, playing word games with their children at home. Others include providing children with a place to do homework and ensuring the completion of homework.

Myeko (2000:12) defines parental involvement as a process through which parents meaningfully participate in the various educational activities of their children, ranging from occasional attendance of school functions to intensive efforts to help parents become better educators of their own children.

2.3 The importance of parental involvement in children's literacy

A number of research studies done on parental involvement in education prove that parental involvement in the education of their children is very important. The literature suggests that there is a relation between parental involvement and success, high academic performance, greater cognitive competence, greater problem solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance and fewer behavioural problems at school.

In this section I will discuss the importance of parental involvement drawn from research done in Namibia as well as internationally.

2.3.1 International context

Research into parental involvement in children's literacy suggests that:

- Early reading experiences with their parents prepare children for the benefits of formal literacy instruction. Indeed, parental involvement in their child's reading has been found to be the most important determinant of language and emergent literacy (Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995).
- Involvement with reading activities at home has significantly positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills (Gest, Freeman, Domitrovich & Welsh, 2004), but also on learners' interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom (Rowe, 1991).
- Parental involvement in their children's literacy is a more powerful force than other family background variables, such as social class, family size and level of parental education (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004).
- Research also shows that the earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer-lasting the effects (Mullis, Cornille, Ritchson & Sullender, 2004). In addition, of all school subjects, reading has been found to be most sensitive to parental influences (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002). In turn, research shows that success in reading is a gateway to success in other academic areas (Jordan, Snow & Porsche, 2000).

- Although parental involvement has the greatest effect in the early years, its importance to children's educational and literacy outcomes continues into the teenage and even adult years (Desforbes & Abouchaar, 2003). For example, Feinstein and Symons (1999) found that parental interest in their child's education was the single most powerful predictor of achievement at age 16.

When teachers understand and respect the importance of the parent's involvement and contribution to school activities, a strong and valuable partnership between the school and the community can be established.

Berger (1987:103) states that:

Parents sometimes serve as resources in the school's instructional program. As volunteers they may develop materials and curriculum ideas or occasionally share their expertise. Schools that have encouraged innovative development of resource materials by parents emphasise the benefits schools may receive.

Vassallo (2000:1) points out that parental involvement in a child's education is a strong predictor of learner achievement: the more involved the parent, the better off the child. He confirms that the key to school reform is the parent. Vassallo (2000:1) also claims that once parents assume the responsibility of advocating for and supporting their children's education, they will become partners with educators to create the schools their children need.

Wolfendale and Bastiani (2000) are of the opinion that if parents involve themselves more actively in their children's development and learning, then evidence shows that children achieve more. This is supported by Epstein, Salinas, Mavis, Sanders, and Simon (1997) who are also of the opinion that parental support, encouragement, appropriate supervision and guidance as well as positive communications about school and learning positively influence children's grades, attitudes, aspirations and behaviour.

2.3.2 Namibian context

Before 1990, the education system in Namibia followed the colonial South African system. This was considered discriminatory, unfair and fragmented in that it favoured the interests of a dominant group. As a result the majority of the adult communities, especially those who were not literate, did not receive a good enough basic education to enable them to be partners in education. In 1990, when Namibia attained her independence, one of the major challenges facing the new government was to redress illiteracy among the adult community. The Ministry initiated the creation of the Directorate of Adult Education. The National Literacy Programme was launched in 1992 and Family Literacy Programmes were launched in 2004.

According to Scheffers (2005:1) a Family Literacy Programme has been launched by the Ministry of Education in all 13 regions of Namibia. Before launching the programme, the Ministry commissioned a survey of one Lower Primary school and community in each of the 13 regions. He further states that the survey was commissioned due to the strong belief that supporting parents to help their children would result in improved early literacy, coupled with an ability to do better at school. He further indicates that the main purpose of the research study was to find out in what ways a family literacy program in Namibia could enable parents and other care providers to support their children in the first years of primary education. Scheffers (2005) indicates that this report prompted the country's Ministry of Education to address the problem of literacy levels in the home environment. As a result, family literacy became one of the objectives included in the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2001–2006. The first step was to assess the current situation in Namibia to see how such a programme (family literacy), could address local circumstances. The next step was to form a Family Literacy Reference Group to advise the Ministry of Education on how the project would be implemented after the research was carried out. At the first meeting of this group, a resolution was adopted that national research should be carried out by the Namibian Educational Research Association (NERA). Two people with research experience from each region, who were fluent in English and the local language, were selected to carry out the research. Participants

comprised principals, teachers, learners, literacy officials, parents and other care providers of learners in Grades 1-3.

The Family Literacy Program created a curriculum which targetted homes of under performing school learners coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, aiming to help parents to become their children's first teachers via fun, and strong hands on activities. According to Scheffers, the programme covers the following themes: storytelling and story reading, song/dance, play and drama, household chores and numbers, environmental literacy, outings, health rules and discipline, and homework. Through these activities the program aims to lay a strong foundation for future learning.

From the outset of Namibian independence the education system has been founded on democratic principles where parents' participation in every facet of education is emphasised. In addition, educational forums in all regions were introduced. These took the form of school boards in schools, whereby parents and learner's representatives in all schools serve to chart the future of school performance. These are some of the positive interventions which have been put in place to give real meaning to the concept of democracy. These interventions were made legal by the enactment of the Education Act No.16 of 2001. From a historical perspective, as described at the beginning of this study, this policy has been introduced to address the inequality that prevailed during the apartheid era. It was intended to involve parents in the education of their children in recognition that they are the initial teachers and the primary influential drivers in children's lives and thus the determinant of school effectiveness at both the learning level and in the management of change.

Several workshops, meetings and conferences country wide have highlighted the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children. For instance, the Directorate of Adult Education in the Omaheke region reported that the Family Literacy Programme is important because it teaches parents to assist their children with schoolwork and it will enhance children's performance and encourage parents to be part of their children's education. At a conference in Vaalgras, Mungunda (2001), who is the Regional Education Officer in Keetmanshoop, stressed the importance of parental

involvement in education by emphasizing that parents are the lifeblood of any schools' activities.

The importance of parental involvement in education has also been supported by Mubita (1998:3) who argued that parents can be incorporated into school activities in many ways: by giving lessons in the areas of their specialization such as storytelling, singing songs, field trips, sports activities and Bible reading. All of these activities will assist the learners with reading. In addition, parents can be involved in school policy making. This can be very effective as long as teachers and policy makers examine their assumptions and views about the role of parents in the participation paradigm. Parents remain the first teachers of their children (Hannon, 1995). Berger (1987:103) indicates that "whether sufficiently appreciated or not, parents have always reared and educated their children until informal education was supplemented by formal education".

According to Stouffer (1992:109) there are reasons why parental involvement in education is important and necessary. Firstly, it enhances the sense of pride in the community and the school. He further argues that if parents have a substantial input in the education of their children, they will be less inclined to sabotage educational decisions.

2.4. Ways how parents can develop children's literacy

Various studies have attempted to establish the variety of ways in which parents can develop their children's literacy. In this section, I will discuss some examples from African as well as international countries.

2.4.1. Storytelling

Research by Heath (1983) advocates that storytelling contributes significantly to early literacy development. By doing this, Phillips (1999) believes that children will encounter a broad range of language; new words, phrases, rhymes metaphors, and more. Mallan (as cited in Phillips, 1999:3) claims that storytelling is a social experience with oral narrative, incorporating linguistic features that display a sophistication that goes beyond the level of conversation. It is widely accepted, as indicated in the literature review, that story telling

has immense gains for children with regard to early literacy development. The results of a study conducted by Trewby (2004) in the 13 regions of Namibia revealed that parents narrate folk tales, traditional stories and Bible stories to their children.

According to Sloan, (1991: 107 as cited in Schiro, 1997:64) stories:

- teach children to read and write
- help children make sense of their inner and outer worlds
- convince them that reading is worth doing
- provide children with enjoyment.
- motivate children to explore literature
- allow children to express themselves and communicate intimately with others who have expressed themselves
- allow the child to experience, respond, reflect, understand, empathise, imagine, wonder, question, and create in thoughtful and feeling ways
- allow children to imagine themselves as someone else and experience a reality other than their own
- allow children to observe and then model another person's behaviour, thoughts, or feelings.

Listening to stories develops a sense of story structure, positive attitudes toward reading and writing and helps children to develop their own stories (Morrow, 1985). Research demonstrates that children who frequently listen to stories develop more sophisticated language structures and a larger vocabulary (Lenz, 1992). Listening to stories establishes favourite storybooks and encourages children to want to read actively and to master the skills necessary to read by themselves (Sulzby, 1985). Ellis & Brewster (1991) argue that storytelling provokes a shared response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation which is not only enjoyable but can help build up the child's confidence and encourage social and emotional development.

2.4.2 Reading aloud

According to Ndjoze-Ojo (2006) reading is a skill that is vital for the learning process, for good academic performance, for research, to develop writing skills and decision making at all levels.

Parent/child storybook reading has been the focus of numerous studies and family literacy programs Huebner (2000) suggests that children benefit most from shared storybook reading when they actively participate by asking and answering questions, engaging in discussion about the stories and talking about the meaning of words in the stories. Saracho & Dayton (1991) argue that attitudes should improve in an environment in which reading is positively modelled by an adult and where interesting books are read aloud. This has been supported by the U. S. Department of Education (2004) which claims that reading to young children promotes language acquisition and correlates with literacy development, and later on with achievement in reading comprehension and overall success in school. This is corroborated by a study done by Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson (1985) that identified and reported a strong correlation between parental reading to and with children and children's later success with literacy. Children whose home experiences promote the literacy scene as a source of entertainment are likely to be motivated to read (Baker, Serpell & Sonnenschein, 1995).

Children experience enjoyment when parents show that a book is a wonderful thing by reading one to them. Even if the child cannot understand the story, the child experiences the intimacy of sharing a book with a loving parent. When parents and their children read, the child receives undivided attention and affection from their mother or father for a few minutes a day. Besides getting the much needed reading practice, the children have a model of a fluent reader (the parent), and they experience reading in a warm, encouraging environment (Kajinga, 2005).

Reading aloud to children has been called the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading and establishing closeness between the

parent and the child (Armbruster, 2003:8). She further argued that reading aloud with children who participate actively helps children to read new words, learn more about the world, learn about written language and see the connection between spoken and written words. According to Epstein (1997), parents should read to their children individually and in small intimate groups. She further indicated that parents should also establish daily story times during which they read to children and listen as children read to them or to one another. Armbruster (2003:14) is of the opinion that reading times can be brief, about 5-10 minutes for younger children and still be of great value.

Researchers believe that parents are potentially in the very best position to make reading a personally rich and rewarding experience. However, not every parent will model and encourage reading in exactly the way described above. Literacy practices vary tremendously in different communities as Heath (1983) has shown. She argued that in some families there may be more storytelling or there may be more recounting of happenings or TV stories.

It seems that researchers support the idea that involving parents in reading aloud to their children can enhance children's literacy development. There is real evidence that reading together as well as listening to children read can have positive effects.

2.4.3 Writing

Reading and writing are mutually supportive and interactive processes. Good readers tend to be good writers, and good writers tend to do well in reading (Teale & Sulzby, 1989).

These findings are in line with the Namibian Grade 3 language syllabus (2005:56) which suggests activities that could lead to achieving the competencies that will develop literacy of the children. They are as follows:

- Listen to/sing songs
- Recite rhymes
- Listen to stories and retell

- Ask/answer questions
- Read aloud
- Practice writing
- Extend vocabulary
- Read frequently in the reading corner of the classroom or library
- Show respect for books and handle them with care

Baghban (1989) argued that with little encouragement, children's reading and writing development will proceed on parallel tracks. He further argues that even a young child who sees the adults in her life writing letters and grocery lists and telephone messages will also want to try writing. Heath (1983) cited that children learn much about reading and writing by observing the reading and writing that occurs in their families.

2.4.4 Talking

Research, among others, Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, Wilkinson, Dickinson & Tabors (1985) shows that for children to become readers they should listen and talk frequently. Through this they recognise speech sounds, and know which sounds make the words that are important to them. They begin to imitate those sounds and they learn all of this by listening to family members talk. Children who do not hear a lot of talk and who are not encouraged to talk themselves often have problems learning to read.

Hart and Risley (1995), found that the amount and kind of talking that parents use with their young children is highly predictive of valuable educational outcomes. Parents who talk more with their children and who use affirming supporting responses to children tend to have children with larger vocabularies. Another study which highlights the pivotal role played by talking in literacy development was undertaken by Heath (1983:350). The study revealed that when parents talk more to their children, they are more likely to succeed in school.

In the light of this view one understands that talking to your child regularly is imperative as it lays the foundation for the child's language and literacy development.

2.4. 5 Playing

Research shows that literacy and play are compatible and that play in fact, can support the application of literacy skills. Play provides a meaningful setting, supportive peer interactions, and functional opportunities for using skills (Morrow, 1990). Play can support literacy by providing settings that promote literacy activities, skills, and strategies; offering language experiences that build associations between oral and written modes of expression; and providing opportunities for teachers to instruct children in functional literacy skills (Neumann & Roskos, 1990) and incorporate literacy concepts, skills, and processes (Neumann & Roskos, 1992). When appropriately facilitated by an adult, play and literacy can be integrated to comprehend books and increase memory for stories (Rowe, 1998), and assist children in learning to read environmental print (Vukelich, 1994).

Bruner (1986:81) claims that:

It is not so much instruction in either language or thinking that permits the child to develop his powerful combinatorial skills, but a decent opportunity to play around with his language and to play around with his thinking that does the trick.

Isenberg and Jacob (1983:272) claim that symbolic play, the process of transforming an object or oneself into another object, person, situation, or event through the use of motor and verbal actions in a make-believe activity, provides an important source for literacy development. It does so because both play and literacy involve handling words in such a way as to represent objects, ideas, or actions. The work of both Piaget and Vygotsky suggests that this ability to handle symbolic systems has immense potential for facilitating literacy development. Galda and Pellegrini (1985:vii) claim that 'the language used in play is similar to more formal, literate uses of language required of children in school'.

Hall & Robinson (2003:11-12) claim that if you want to study the relationship between play and literacy then you put children into situations where they are able to demonstrate what they do when they play with literacy. In other words, give children contextualized play situations where they can demonstrate what they know about the ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘where’, and ‘how’ of literacy. Robinson argued that play offers an opportunity to help children develop this wider understanding of literacy by allowing them the chance to explore literacy in contextualized situations.

An ethnographic study was conducted by Heath (1983) in the United States with the Roadville and Tracton community. The results of the study revealed that boys and girls in the American town did not play together, but were gender-segregated. The study further revealed that girls were given educational toys which stressed girls’ and women’s activities; boys were given those which emphasised the activities of boys and men.

Play is important to all aspects of a child’s development, including the development of language and literacy. It is through play that a child discovers language and learns to communicate through reading and writing. Reading, writing, talking and listening can all be encouraged through play (Wurman & Civitas, 2002).

2.4.6 Rich home environment

Kajinga (2005:18) indicates that the home environment plays a crucial role in early child literacy development. This is done by either the mother reading to a young child, or by making provision for reading materials or storytelling. Similarly, Bloch (2002:11) argues that the environment in which literacy learning takes place needs to be one where children see regular reading and writing happening and where they get the opportunities to behave like readers and writers. This means that there need to be sufficient appropriate materials for reading and writing in children’s homes. Kupetz (1993) also points out that an environment rich in libraries can help parents who feel uncomfortable with reading to their children. The library staff can hold story groups, and by modeling read-aloud techniques, they can help parents develop their own literacy, and encourage them to enjoy their own reading.

Baker, Serpell and Sonneschein (1999) claims that the home literacy environment may include observing parents reading (books, magazines, newspapers, bills) and writing (shopping lists, menu planning, budgeting, letters); opportunities and materials for the child to draw and write; the number of books in the home (adult and child), library visits with parents; opportunities for the child to read independently and engaging in shared-book reading with parents. Orellana & Hernandez (1999) suggest that parents can take “literacy walks” with children, pointing out signs and print seen in the community and discussing the colours, pictures, and numbers. They further suggest that parents and children can collect food labels that children recognize and make a game with them, such as matching similar labels.

The most important factor in a child's acquisition of literacy is the reading practices of the parents. This has been shown in numerous studies, including the 2001 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which showed that, in the case of Sweden, the number of books and reading material in a family was the deciding factor influencing the reading scores of pupils (Stiftung Lesen, 2004: 56 as cited in Krolak, 2005:3-4). Similarly, a study of the German Foundation Stiftung Lesen on "*Reading Behaviour in Germany in the new Century*" revealed that the positive attitude of parents and the availability of reading materials at home are the most important factors in creating positive lifelong reading motivation in children. Children have different reading needs at different stages of their lives, but they need access to enjoyable reading materials from the very beginning. Parents have to be encouraged to read to their children while they are small, sing with them and play creative language games with them as part of their everyday life. Furthermore, parents have to be a good example by being active readers themselves. Children who grow up in a literate home environment are at an advantage and are more likely to be successful throughout formal schooling than their peers from non- or semi-literate home environments (Stiftung Lesen, 2004:30 as cited in Krolak, 2005:3-4). The desire to support the literacy acquisition of their children is a strong motivation for illiterate adults to become literate and this should be seen as a perfect opportunity to reach them through family literacy programs

In sum, one can therefore deduce that a print rich environment is an advantage to both the parents' and children's literacy development and parents should therefore be encouraged to create such an environment in order to enhance learning.

Thus far I have been presenting ways parents can develop their children's literacy. The next section will look at ways in which schools can support parents in literacy development. Henderson (1988) shows that through the relationship between schools and communities, children can succeed academically and can be less involved in violent behaviour.

2.5 Home-school relationship

In this section, a number of strategies that support parent-school relationships identified in the literature are presented. Research has shown that parents need to understand what their children's teachers are trying to accomplish, and teachers need to know about the parents' concerns and aspirations.

Epstein (1992) states that to accommodate the current needs and realities of families, schools should communicate regularly through the following means: phone calls, progress reports, parent conferences, personal notes from the teacher. Epstein went further and suggested that schools should do the following:

- help parents increase their knowledge of child development and support them in their parenting skills
- encourage many different types of involvement and develop strategies for increasing involvement
- break down barriers and establish trust by reaching out to families through home visits, having meetings in less formal and intimidating settings, and using written communication that all parents understand. In a separate study, Kaperu (2004) echoed the same sentiment that teachers should pay regular home visits

- communicate regularly with parents in a variety of ways to keep them informed about their children's progress and school activities
- accommodate parents' work schedules and time constraints when creating parent-involvement opportunities
- ensure that school staff is accessible to parents and families
- learn about the various ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds of children and know how to communicate with diverse families; reach out to families
- begin building close relationships with families in the opening conference of the school year and continue to provide a comfortable environment for parent-teacher conferences
- make parents feel welcome in the school by providing opportunities for parents to visit the school, observe classes, and give feedback. Consider building a parent center for parents to use while at school
- engage parents in decision making practices of advisory groups, school reforms committees, and other school restructuring efforts. Kaperu is in support of this view
- write a school policy statement that delineates ways to ensure a positive school climate for family involvement.

Comer (1988) claimed that when the parents and teachers work together as a team, the child benefits; working in partnership with children and parents creates an environment of trust, positive interaction and optimism for what can be accomplished. Research (Dauber & Epstein, 1993) suggests that when schools create a positive school climate by reaching out to families and providing structures for them to become involved, the result is effective school-family partnerships. Such partnerships connect families and schools to help children succeed in school and in their future.

Senechal (2006:3) suggests home-based involvement, which involves parents actively encouraging children to engage in learning in the home setting and providing learning opportunities for their children. Some examples she gives of home-based involvement include reviewing a child's homework, spending time working with a child on reading

and writing skills, bringing home learning materials such as books, or talking to a child about the parent's love for learning.

According to Dekker and Lemmer (1994:166-167) teachers should send home booklets of the learners' work on a regular basis containing stories or poems or any other activities to help parents feel connected with their child's experience at school. According to Snow and Tabors (1996) adult directed activities can be carried out through adult education classes that emphasise the development of parents' self-images as readers and writers. According to them these programmes can convey functional as well as enjoyment values of reading and writing. They go on to say that if parents develop a positive attitude toward these activities, they will be more likely to buy books and model reading and writing at home, thus creating home environments where literacy is highly regarded.

To sum up this section, it is appropriate to acknowledge that the relationship between the school and home is important for literacy development.

2.6 Barriers to parental involvement in developing children's literacy

Parents' involvement and participation in their children's school activities is influenced by a number of factors. The common inhibiting factors that were identified were lack of education, a negative attitude towards education, lack of understanding, poverty, low self esteem, poor home environment and lack of literacy resources.

2.6.1 Poor educational level of parents

Kohl, Lengua & McMahon (2000) found the more educated the parent, the greater their involvement in their child's education. They found that having a more limited educational experience meant that some parents lacked the relevant skills to get involved. Dekker and Lemmer (1994:161) revealed that parents do not know why and how they can be involved in school activities. They are thus unsure of their responsibility as parents and how education at home serves as the basis for education at school. Similarly,

according to the SACMEQ report (2004:41) parents with more education will provide a home atmosphere that is more conducive to learning than parents with lower levels of education. They will help their children in many ways with their learning. A study which investigated the involvement of Namibian parents in education was conducted by Trewby (2004). The study involved 89 parents or care providers in 78 homes. His study in the Erongo region revealed that parents have the will to help their children but are prevented from doing so because they have a poor opinion of their level of education.

An ethnographic study was conducted by Singh and Mbokodi (2004) in South African historically disadvantaged black secondary schools. The study focused on the effects of black parental involvement on the scholastic success of their children. For a period of twelve months spread over two years, 24 parents in eight different historically disadvantaged secondary schools were investigated. The results of the study revealed that many parents did not seem to understand their roles as parents in education. Given the similar socio-political histories of the two countries, one can therefore conclude that the Namibian situation is not much different from South Africa's where parents do not understand their roles.

A study was carried out by Kaperu (2004) at three primary schools in Windhoek. The purpose of the study was to find out if parents, and particularly those parents who have children at the formerly disadvantaged schools, are involved in the education of their children. The results show that parents have different understandings of what their role in the education of their children should be or how they can be involved in their children's education. Another finding from a study conducted by Williams (2002) in London revealed that parents felt the responsibility for education belonged to the school. Parents are often eager to support their children's learning but do not always know how to help or why their involvement is important. (Epstein & Van Voorhuis, 2001). These findings are similar to the study conducted by Hannon and James (1990:265) who interviewed 40 parents from varied social backgrounds in an area of Sheffield about their children's experiences with literacy at home. The interviews showed that parents were anxious about helping their children with reading and writing activities because they had no

confidence in their ability to teach them correctly. Yet again the study showed that most parents are interested in supporting their children's literacy development but may need more help with the "how to".

2.6.2 Poverty

A study was conducted by Magara (2005) in all five divisions of the Kampala district in Uganda to assess and establish the best approach for enabling parents and children to read together. Kampala district was selected because of the social problems associated with cities, for example, most homes lack proper accommodation and reading facilities. Results at the end of the study revealed that poverty, domestic problems, lack of time, lack of home libraries and a communication gap are some of the problems which affect family literacy. According to the study, some people are too poor to afford school fees, and to provide essential facilities for their children. The study further stressed that poor provision of scholastic materials and meals all reduce the child's morale for reading and learning. This situation described in Uganda applies equally to Namibia where my study was carried out, since poverty in Namibia is concentrated among the historically disadvantaged rural communities. Wealth permits parents to provide books and other materials necessary for successful study as well as the means to give children privacy and comfort that enhances serious study Jubber (as cited by Singh & Mbokodi, 2004:305). Furthermore Jubber (1994:137) contended that economic status correlates highly with other significant education performance influencing variables such as parental level of education.

In Namibia most rural communities live in poverty or under harsh socio-economic conditions. The effects of such conditions on the performance of the children are likely to be negative. Often learners have to study by candle-light, which discourages reading. Hunger, disease and poor sanitation, which are often the case in the households, are not conducive for learning.

2.6. 3 Lack of resources

The ethnographic study by Heath (1983:232) revealed that Tracton residents did not have reading materials; whatever came into the community is usually either read, then burned or used for other purposes, or immediately discarded.

Libraries encourage children and parents to have a love for reading, to have a love for literature and to want to read and practice reading skills, Magara (2005:2). However, this was not the case with his findings in his study conducted in the Ugandan community. His results revealed that in most Ugandan homes in his study there was a lack of reading materials. Some families had no access and capacity to buy the reading materials like newspapers and magazines. It revealed that few of the families had books to read. The study showed that although there were school libraries available in the area; there was no strategy that encouraged children to use books at home which could lead to them using the local libraries. The study further revealed that libraries play a role in literacy development. It further revealed that the availability of reading materials has been a matter of serious concern in most studies on reading. Trewby (2004) also found a lack of reading materials in Namibian homes. The most common types of printed materials available in the homes were the Bible and other religious books, which were indicated as being present in 15 out of 78 homes. Newspapers were only said to have been found in 4 homes and only 2 had story books or children's books. Other books found in some homes according to this study, included literacy books, health booklets, the telephone directory, the Namibian Constitution and magazines. The SACMEQ (2004:43) report has further found that the number of books at home had declined from 27.6 to 22.0 books per home in Namibia. The study further indicates that 48 percent of learners were exposed to the newspaper at home and 28 percent to magazines. Similarly Krolak (2005:2) found that in many developing countries there is a serious lack of reading materials and hence a lack of a reading culture.

The study by Trewby (2004:21) also found newspapers flying around in home yards as well as at the water point, suggesting that the home community may not attach great value to the written word. The study revealed that in the environment where the San community lived there was virtually no evidence of literacy. The similar study in Kavango region revealed that parents had hymn books and Bibles. The problem of lack of facilities and materials, especially in rural areas was also reported by Callewaerts and Kallos (1989). After visiting one rural school and one town school in the Caprivi region, they reported that significant differences existed between the rural and town schools in terms of materials and facilities.

Article 20 of the Namibian Constitution (as cited in Ministry of Education and Culture: *Toward education for all*, 1993:3) states that:

Primary education shall be compulsory and the state shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia.

It seems that the so called ‘reasonable facilities’ that should be provided by the state to all government schools are not being equally provided to all communities. The situation in the rural schools does not seem to have improved much since independence in 1990. If we advocate parental involvement in literacy development, provision of resources to all communities and schools is very important in order to achieve this goal.

This section has discussed the factors responsible for hindering parental involvement in literacy development. This could be the reasons why Namibian Grade 4 and Grade 7 learners scored relatively poorly in the national external examinations and SACMEQ survey.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter is a review of literature related to my research study. It has presented a discussion of what has been researched and published on parental involvement in the literacy development of their children. The chapter also addresses the importance of

parental involvement in education. The chapter also looks at the factors that hinder parental involvement in the education of their children. In chapter 3 which follows, I will present the methodology, the research paradigm within which the research has been located, the research method, data collection and data analysis.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes firstly the goal of my research as well as the research paradigm, which is interpretive. I then discuss my interviews which were the method used to collect data. I discuss the case study as a research method, the sample that I selected, and the tools that I used to collect my data. I then discuss how I dealt with ethical issues and the limitations of the study. Finally, I describe how I approached my data analysis chapter and the validity of my study.

3.1.1 Research goals

The goals of this study are to investigate how rural parents are involved in the development of their children's literacy and to explore how teachers support and encourage this involvement. In this chapter I describe how I designed my research to achieve these research goals

.

Below is a clear outline of the research design, which follows an interpretive paradigm.

3.2 Research design

3.2.1 Research orientation

According to Patton (1990:479) "a paradigm is a world view, a general perspective, and a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world". The research is located within an interpretive paradigm, as I am interested in understanding the views, perceptions and experiences of parents, teachers and learners on parental involvement in children's literacy. According to Cohen and Manion (2000:36), the central endeavour of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Cantrell

(1993:84) further argues that this paradigm allows a researcher to understand the situation of the phenomenon under scrutiny and to interpret meaning within the social and cultural context of its natural setting.

3.2.2 Qualitative methods

I used a qualitative case study method for this research. Janse van Rensburg (2001:16) states that this method reflects an interest in contextual meaning making rather than generalized rules. Instead of surveying large groups, this method takes a close look at individuals or small groups in “naturalistic” settings. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:45) a natural setting is a place where the researcher is most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest. In a natural setting, human behaviours can be truly reflected on and their meanings interpreted. Qualitative research requires methods that “probe deeply and analyse intensively” (Cohen & Manion, 1994:106). I specifically adopted a qualitative case study approach because it provides more information and a more intensive detailed examination of the phenomenon.

In the following paragraphs I give a brief overview of the research method that relates to my research, namely a case study.

3.2.3 Case study

Bogdan and Biklen (1982:58) defined a case study as a detailed examination of one setting, a single subject, or a particular event. The unit may be a school or even a setting within it, or a teacher or a learner.

The case study approach has been chosen as it provides a unique example of real people and events in real situations, which might enable the reader to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories and principles (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:181). A case study strives to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a

particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experiences of a situation and their thoughts about and feelings for a situation (Cohen, et al., 2000). In order to reinforce this notion, I allowed the parents, their children and the teacher to speak for themselves rather than to be largely interpreted, evaluated or judged by me.

I fully concur with the ideas of Stake (1994:237) when he contends that a case study is both the process of learning about the case, and the product of our own learning.

3.2.4 Sampling

Research defines sampling as the procedure a researcher uses to select people, places, or things to study. Maxwell (2005) further defines sampling as decisions about where to conduct the research and whom to involve, an essential part of the research process. He further adds that sampling usually involves people and settings, events and processes.

I used a purposeful and convenience sampling. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:169) see convenience sampling as a group of subjects selected on the basis of being accessible, appropriate or convenient. I selected a rural school in Omaheke region because it fell within a radius of 1km from where I was based and hence was easily accessible. I selected a school which is in close proximity to my home. I interviewed nine parents with their children because they are the key players of the study. The selected parents are all from the same community and I had access to them because they are known to me. My intention was to interview two teachers in order to get different views on the issue rather than only relying on viewpoints from the parents and their children but unfortunately the school has only one Grade 3 class.

Sample size and character in qualitative methods are related to the purpose of the study. The researcher looks at what she or he wants to know, what will be useful, what will be credible, and what can be done within the constraints of time and resources (Patton, 1990: 184).

This sample was selected as I was convinced that these participants were going to provide me with rich and valuable information on my research topic.

3.3 Data collection

In this section I will describe how and why I opted for interviews as an appropriate tool to collect data.

3.3.1 Semi structured interviews

I administered in-depth, semi-structured interviews to the parents, the children and the teacher in their home language. The great advantage of the semi-structured interview is ‘its flexibility’ as Markson and Gognalons-Callard (cited in Stones, 1998:152) point out. In this type of interview the ordering of questions is less important and the interviewer is free to probe any interesting areas that arise. I used open-ended interviews to create opportunities for providing in-depth information (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The duration of all interviews was approximately one hour. All participants were interviewed individually. I used a tape recorder to record responses in order to supplement the interviews and also to obviate the necessity of writing during the interview, which was less time consuming. The reason I used tape recording was that it was useful to check the wording of any statement I might wish to quote and to check that my notes were accurate. In addition, it ensured that everything said is preserved for analysis. I audio-recorded, transcribed and translated the interviews myself.

My interview consisted of open-ended questions and the participants expressed themselves clearly. More probing questions were asked to allow the interviewees to express their feelings and to give the participants more time to think. The information I gained was relevant for the study.

3.3.2 Pilot interviews

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:213) advise that: “Before devoting oneself to the arduous and significant time of the qualitative study, it is a good idea to do a pilot study”. The purpose of the pilot study, according to Huysamen (1993:205) quoted in De Vos (1998) is “an investigation of the feasibility of the planned project and to bring possible deficiencies in the measurement procedure to the fore”. De Vos (1998:179) views the pilot study as “the dress rehearsal of the main investigation”. He continues by saying, that the pilot study “is similar to the researcher’s planned investigation but on a small scale”.

I conducted a pilot interview to determine the length of the interview, suitability of questions, ethical issues and practical issues related to the use of a tape recorder. My main purpose was to discover which areas would need attention and to make some adjustments if necessary. My pilot interviews involved a teacher, a parent and a learner whom I selected purposefully and conveniently in order to meet the needs of my study and for accessibility. I chose them because I hoped that they would provide me with the necessary feedback. Another reason is that I had easy access to them.

As a result of the pilot interview, I have learned that I needed to take notes to show the participants what they said was relevant to my study, as well as listening very carefully and acknowledging their responses to convince them that what they were saying was valuable and important. The most important thing which affected my study was the quality of the questions that needed to be reduced and rephrased. Finally, I learned that I should probe to get in-depth information.

I made adjustments to my questions where I changed the order, rephrased and reduced them (see Appendix N). Through this pilot study I learned how to transcribe the interview, how to translate, to observe ethical issues and it gave me an insight into the type of data to expect. The next step was to conduct the interview proper. The aim was to understand experiences and perceptions from the participants’ point of view.

3.3.3 Interviews

Cohen, et al., (2000) see interviews not as a dispassionate and technical instrument of data generation but as an emotionally engaged social interaction about people's real experiences in constructing their personal accounts on a particular topic. According to Whyte (1982) quoted in Cohen et al. (2000) the interview process is characterised by continuous probing in order to elicit more information.

I contacted each participant personally to schedule the interview at a convenient time and place and I confirmed the interview. I interviewed the teacher in her classroom because this was comfortable for her and it provided easy access to any materials that were referred to during the interview. I interviewed the parents in their homes, except one who suggested an off-site interview because she finds her home noisy. In this case, I worked with her to find a convenient location, which was at the school. I confirmed the time and place of the interview with the participants the day before it was scheduled to minimize missed appointments.

Prior to the introduction of the purpose of the interview, we engaged in a few moments of informal chat not related directly to the interview to put the participants at ease. I reminded the participants about the length of time I expected the interview to take. I jotted down brief notes about each answer to use as back up should anything go wrong with the tape. I translated the data and transcribed it from the interview verbatim.

For Cantrell (1993) interviews allow for the collection of data in the subjects' own words, thereby affording the researcher an opportunity to discover the subjects' perceptions, interpretations and the meaning that they give to their actions. Interviews are very effective data collection tools, according to Ochurub, "because the interviewer could clarify the questions which were vague, or respondents could be asked to elaborate some issues". (Ochurub, 2001:149). For Walker "interviews could be seen as the most rewarding and potentially the most informative way of carrying out a small-scale study to collect data". (Walker, as cited in Ochurub, 2001:149).

Because of the above characteristics of the interview I decided that my primary source of first hand information would be obtained through interviews. In sum, the interview method would offer an approach that could potentially uncover rich data and layered insights into the phenomenon I was interested in.

3.4 Data analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (1982:154) argued that “data analysis involves working with data, organizing it, breaking it down, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others”. Seliger and Shohamy (1989:201) describe data analysis as “sifting, organizing, summarizing and synthesizing the data to arrive at the results and conclusions of the research”.

The data collected were in the form of notes taken during the interviews and transcripts derived from the audiotapes. These helped me to identify the themes that formed the final basis of my data analysis. I listened to the raw data on tapes while transcribing them. This helped me to become familiar with the data. When I was transcribing I identified striking data recurring in different respondent’s answers. These helped me to arrange my data into themes.

Chapter 4 presents and interprets the data. The nature of qualitative data that I obtained, and the fact that I was operating within an interpretative paradigm required me to present a descriptive and interpretive account that incorporates quotations from respondents’ answers.

3.5 Research ethics

Among other issues, I gave serious thought to ethical issues during my research as they are fundamental to research. Cohen, et al. (2000:292) argue that it is important to take note of the following ethical issues: informed consent, access and acceptance. When research is conducted through an institution, such as a university or school, approval to

conduct the research should be obtained before any data are collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:195)

3.5.1 Gaining access

Before the commencement of the study, permission was sought from the Regional Director of Education in order to be allowed to carry out research with the teacher and children as specified in the letter. The Regional Director of Omaheke region granted permission. (See Appendix B). To gain access to the parents I obtained permission from the traditional headman. (See Appendix F). I felt that it was necessary to involve the leaders at the initial stage so that they could become aware of my presence in their constituency. I also wrote an official letter to the parents that included a description of the purpose of the study, what their children would do and I assured them that their results would be kept confidential and their children's school programme would not be affected in any way by participating in the study (See Appendix G).

3.5.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Since it is very important that anyone involved in research should be a willing participant, I notified the research participants ahead of time that I wanted to schedule an interview with them where I explained the purpose of my study and its importance. I explained to them that their identity would not be revealed in the interview and that it would remain anonymous. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:195) state that information about subjects must be regarded as confidential unless otherwise agreed through informed consent. Only the researcher has access to names and data.

3.5.3 Informed consent

I gave potential participants sufficient information about the study in a simple way so that they understood what was involved thereby enabling them to exercise their right to make an informed decision whether or not to participate in the study. I also gave them an

opportunity to ask questions about the study to help them decide if they wanted to take part. All of them expressed their willingness to participate and appointments for the interviews were made. The arrangement was that some parents would be available after working hours, and others during the week after finishing chores at home. In order to ensure that participants' consent was voluntarily and informed, I drew up a clearly written research protocol in their mother tongue and for those with a poor education level, the document was read and explained to them. According to Diener and Crandall (in Cohen et al., 2000:51) informed consent can be defined as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in any investigation after being informed of facts that would be like to influence their decisions. (See Appendix G).

In order to enforce the ethical requirements, I sought permission from the participants to tape record the interviews and informed them that I needed to conduct the interviews for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of an M ED (GETP) thesis. Prior to introducing myself, we engaged in a few moments of informal chat not related directly to the interview to put the participants at ease. I reminded the participants about the length of time I realistically expected the interview to take. I jotted down brief notes about each answer to use it as back up should anything go wrong with the tape. I translated the data and transcribed it from the interview in verbatim form.

In conclusion, I thanked the participants for their contribution. I asked them if they had anything else to say, to validate the importance of their views and to raise issues that I overlooked.

3.6 Validity

3.6.1 Triangulation

I used multiple data sources. This is referred to as triangulation. Triangulation, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:112) is when multiple data sources help the researcher to “map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human

behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint”. Anderson (1998) supported this (1998:131) when he stated that triangulation is “the use of multiple data sources, data collection methods and theories to validate research findings”. He further stated that, “triangulation also helps eliminate bias and can help detect errors or anomalies in your discoveries”. Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993:117) state that triangulation is an important method for contrasting and comparing different accounts of the same situation. It gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation. In order to ensure validity, trustworthiness, add credibility and make my findings stronger I also used multiple sources of information i.e. parents, children and the teacher.

3.6.2 Member checking

To ensure validity I took the data and tentative interpretations back to the participants from whom they were derived and asked them if the results were plausible. I did this continuously throughout the study.

3.6.3 Language used during the interviews

In order to ensure that my data was rich and to strengthen its validity I decided to give the participants the opportunity to be interviewed in their mother tongue. As far as possible, I translated the questions addressed to the parents into their mother tongue because many of them, being illiterate and uneducated, had a poor understanding of the English language. I did the transcription and translation to strengthen my data validity.

3.7 Limitations

Children in this particular community are not used to talking to strangers. They were shy and they could not articulate easily. The other issue was the time factor, where one could not get the complete picture within one hour. Children were disturbed when they needed a break and I had to stop the tape for them to talk to their parents. The concept of family literacy is in theory, appropriate and easy to define but proved to be difficult to explain in

practice to the parents. I was therefore obliged to spend more time explaining the concept than I would have liked.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described the research design I used and focused on the methods used to collect data in order to achieve my research goals. Interviews have been used as a method of collecting data in this study. I considered ethical issues as well as validity. Data analysis was also done. In the next chapter I will present my findings from semi-structured analysed interviews.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings gained from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with parents, their children and a teacher teaching at a rural school in Omaheke region of Namibia. The chapter begins with a contextual analysis of the community and the research site.

There are five topics that emerged from the semi-structured interview questions. Within each of these topics additional sub topics were identified. These topics are presented in the order in which they emerged from the study. They are as follows:

- Profiles of the parents, children and the teacher who participated in the study
- Contextual analysis of the Ngeama community
- Parents' views on activities they use to support the literacy development of their children in their homes and children's voices on how parents support them with literacy homework
- Parents' and the teacher's perceptions on factors that hinder parental involvement in literacy development
- Parents' views on how teachers support them in the literacy development of their children

4.2 Profiles of the parents, children and the teacher who participated in the study

In this section the profiles of the parents, children and the teachers who participated in the study are presented and the context is analysed.

4.2.1 Contextual analysis of the Ngeama community

The study took place at Ngeama, a rural community in the eastern part of Namibia in Omaheke region. There is only one primary school that caters for children from this community and nearby villages. There is no post office, clinic, libraries or electricity in this community. Otjiherero is the dominant language. Most parents in this community are unemployed and those that work are labourers on farms and cattle posts. This is a socio-economically disadvantaged community.

4.2.2 Profiles of parents interviewed

Table 4.1 **Profile of parents**

Name	Highest level of education	Sex	Age	Marital status	Job description
Ms Vatji	Grade 3	F	45	single	employed (hostel matron)
Mr Kapena	Grade 4	M	52	married	employed (hostel superintend)
Mr Uazuu	Grade 6	M	45	married	unemployed
Ms Kamapoha	Grade 7	F	44	married	unemployed
Mrs Karuu	Grade 8	F	42	married	unemployed
Mrs Uazuu	Grade 9	F	41	married	unemployed
Mrs Kapena	Grade 10	F	39	married	employed (literacy promoter)
Ms Operi	Grade 10	F	31	single	unemployed
Mr Karuu	Grade 10	M	46	married	unemployed

The table describes biographical data of parents interviewed in this study. As indicated in Chapter 3, pseudonyms were used for the sake of confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of the interviewees. The educational background of the parents varies. As can be seen from the table, all parents interviewed fell within the age group of 31-52. Of the nine parents six were females and three males, two parents were single and seven were married. The dominance of females in the sample could be attributed to the fact that mothers interviewed were housewives who were readily available while fathers stayed at cattle posts and could not be easily reached. Out of nine parents, only three parents were employed, one as a literacy promoter and the other two as hostel assistants at Ngeama Primary School. The unemployment rate is high in this community for various reasons, but educationally, many people left school without completing and some have had no

education at all. The main source of income is farming. The number of family members of the parents interviewed ranged between 3-9. The home language of the parents is Otjiherero.

4.2.3 Profiles of children interviewed

Table 4.2 Profile of the Grade 3 children interviewed

Name	Sex	Home Language	parent/guardian with whom they live	Age
Jaanda Vatji	F	Otjiherero	mother	10
Tjipuu Kamapoha	M	Otjiherero	mother	9
Kioki Karuu	F	Otjiherero	mother and father	10
Kove Uazuu	F	Otjiherero	mother and father	10
Kameri Kapena	F	Otjiherero	mother and father	10
Nokoo Operi	M	Otjiherero	relative	10

A total number of six Grade 3 children aged between 9 and 10 years were interviewed at Ngeama Primary School. Six children were interviewed because three stay with both parents while the other three stay with single parents (either mother or relative). As mentioned in Chapter 3, pseudonyms were used for the sake of confidentiality, privacy as well as anonymity of the school and children interviewed. There were four girls and two boys who took part in this study. The home language of all the six children is Otjiherero, which is the medium of instruction in Grades 1-3 at this school. Five of the learners were under the care of their biological parents, while only one was living with his relative. The children indicated that the average number of their family members was 3-10, which differed slightly with what was said by the parents (3-9).

4.2.4 Contextual analysis of Ngeama Primary School and the professional profile of the teacher interviewed

The table below is self-explanatory. It reveals the professional profile of the Grade 3 teacher, Elfriede, who participated in the study.

Table 4.3 Professional profile of the teacher at Ngeama Primary school

Teacher	Sex	Age	Home language	Academic and professional qualifications	Teaching experience	Current studies
Elfriede	F	49	Otjiherero	ECP	21 years	BETD

Acronyms

BETD-Basic Education Teacher Diploma

ECP- Education Certificate Primary

Elfriede teaches at Ngeama Primary School which ranges from Grades 1-7. This is a rural primary school situated in Omaheke region in the east of Namibia. This is one of the new schools in Omaheke region. Elfriede has been teaching at this school since 2001 and she has 21 years teaching experience. She is a qualified lower primary teacher teaching Grade 3 since she started. She has done a certificate course in education (ECP) and at the time of the interview she was doing her BETD through the Teacher's Resource Centre in Gobabis. There is only one Grade 3 class of 24 learners. Otjiherero is the medium of instruction from Grades 1-3 and English is taught as a subject. English is the medium of instruction in Grades 4-7 while Otjiherero is taught as a subject.

4.3 Parents' views on activities they use to support the literacy development of their children in their homes and children's voices on how parents support them with literacy homework

This section describes a variety of activities used by parents to support their children's literacy homework. The responses have been summarized in Table 4.4 below. The voices of children on how their parents support them will also be presented.

Table 4.4: Strategies which parents claim they use to support reading and writing

Topics	Ms Vati	Mr Kapena	Mr Uzuu	Ms Kamapoha	Mrs Karuu	Mrs Uzuu	Mrs Kapena	Ms Operi	Mr Karuu
Reading aloud together	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Storytelling	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Talking to their children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Playing together					✓		✓		
Watching children playing			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Praying together	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Singing	✓				✓			✓	
Writing		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓

As I have mentioned earlier, the research aimed to find out how parents are involved in the literacy development of their children; therefore, parents were asked to specify the strategies they use to develop the literacy of their children. Their responses are shown in the Table 4.3 above. As can be seen from the table, the results show that according to the parents, reading aloud, storytelling, praying and talking to children, were common

compared to the other strategies like playing together, watching children playing and writing. This will be discussed in detail below.

4.3.1 Reading aloud to children

4.3.1.1 Exposure to reading during childhood

In order to get a better picture about the reading experience of the parents, I took them back to their early childhood where I asked them about their experience of reading from the time they were in school. None of the parents recalled being read to at all when they were growing up but only when they started school. Ms Vatji responded: “Aye! *No one read to me at home. I grew up in an environment where I had not seen a book. Books were not part of our household. Yes, that is my personal experience*”.

Mrs Uazuu responded:

There were no books at home, parents could not read. The environment where I grew up did not encourage reading at all. It is only when I started my Sub A. And I remember that quite clearly. I grew up in a poor family background where you couldn't see a book.

It was interesting to note that Ms Kamapoha could remember the first book she read in Sub B which is “Sara’s book”. She put it this way:

Yeeeh! I remember that when I was in Sub B we read from the small book about Sarah. I remember it very clearly because my uncle was a teacher and he liked it. We read the book and questions were asked from this book. We wrote dictation on words I remember very well such as: Sara, rara, tate, mama, etc. We were drawing pictures, and learning from pictures. We never read at home because my parents were illiterate. There was no one to encourage us.

The broad picture indicates that parents missed the exposure to reading and reading materials during their early childhood experience. This could have an impact on their ability to inculcate a culture of reading and their attachment of value to reading materials.

4.3.1.2 Reading aloud to their children

One of the literacy activities that emerged from the data generated by this study is reading aloud to children. The general feeling of the parents about reading was that reading is the key to all academic subjects children are doing in school. When asked whether parents read aloud to their children, eight parents claimed that they read the Bible aloud to their children at bedtime for religious purposes while one claimed that she read it for enjoyment and closeness. Eight parents claimed that they read school books to their children whereas three claimed that they read story books. Two claimed that they read newspapers and another two read magazines for themselves. However, two children did not always support their parents' claim that they read to them. Of the parents, Mrs Karuu said:

"I do. We read together so that my child can get close to me and we enjoy reading it together. This is not on a regular basis".

Kioki, her child, said: *"Yes. Yes, my mother and my sisters read to me. My mother does not help me with writing"*.

Similarly, Ms Vatji said:

Yes, I do a little bit of reading with my poor level of education for Christianity. We don't have reading materials at home. We only read the Bible. Reading materials are not part of my household except the readers from the school and the Bible.

Jaanda, her child, supported this claim. She said: *"My mother and sisters read to me. My father helps if he is around"*.

Mrs Uazuu put it differently, saying that she read the Bible to her children for morality education. She further claimed that she wanted her child to learn moral values of what is good and bad. Finally she responded that she preferred reading the Bible because she did not like the criminal issues in the newspaper. Similarly, Ms Operi indicated that she was very selective because newspapers are full of criminal issues. She further claimed that she only read the health part which interests her. Ms Kamapoha claimed that she reads simple storybooks aloud to her child which are appropriate to her level and which interest her.

Mrs Uazuu responded as follows:

We want them to follow our moral values, therefore I read the Bible to them so that they can know what is good and bad. I read almost everything in the Bible. I prefer Bible stories because I don't like crime stories.

Kove, her child, did not support this claim. She responded: “*My parents do not help me with writing and reading activities. I do it myself and my two sisters who help me*”.

Ms Operi responded as follows:

I buy magazines when I go to Gobabis and I'm very selective because newspapers are full of crime and war. I don't like it. I only read the health part because that is what interests me most. I have to know it.

Nokoo, her child, supported this claim. “[Silent] *My mother likes reading to me. She tells me stories from the books she reads*”.

Ms Kamapoha responded:

“When I go to towns I ask for story books which are at my children level. Books which I know will interest them. We only read simple books”.

On the same point, Tjipuu, her child said: *“My mother buys her own books and reads. They don’t read to me. Only my sister”*.

A picture that emerges from the data is that it is sometimes siblings who read to children rather than parents.

4.3.2 Storytelling

Storytelling plays an important role in early literacy development (Phillips, 1999:1). It provides enjoyment and allows children to express themselves. The Lower Primary Curriculum (2005) stipulates clearly that Grade 3 children should be able to listen to stories and tell stories.

In order to get a better picture about the storytelling experience of the parents, I took them back to their early childhood where I asked them about their experience. Eight out of nine parents recalled being told stories by their parents. Mr Uazuu’s experience is still strongly present in his life. He mentioned the love and warm feeling he got from his grandparents telling him stories. Mr Uazuu illustrated his feelings as follows:

I was blessed to listen to stories narrated by my grandmother with the kind of warm feeling I got. What was important was the love I could feel between myself and my grandmother. I think that is a fondest memory I will never forget.

All nine parents considered storytelling to be an important activity in their daily lives. The study wanted to find out from parents the type of stories they tell to their children. When asked what kind of stories they tell, parents claimed that they tell traditional stories, stories from their own personal experience or simplified Bible stories. One parent claimed that she tells stories about familiar events and real life stories from newspapers. For example, she mentioned the increasing crime rate in Namibia as examples of the stories she tells her children. On the same issue six parents claimed that they tell traditional stories as narrated by their grandparents to assist their children with literacy

development. All six children confirmed that their parents tell them traditional and folktales stories.

For example, Mr Uazuu said:

This is what I know. These are traditional stories and stories about old people. Yeah. I enjoy storytelling very much. It can be ghost stories to simplified Bible stories about Adam and Eve and Jesus.

Kove, his child, supported this claim. She responded: *“Hmm, yes, my mother and father tell bedtime stories. My father tells stories on hunting and cars. I like it”*.

As indicated earlier, the study suggests that parents tend to tell stories that have a connecting point to real life situations. It further suggests that stories are told for entertainment, to improve listening skills, for learning, to transfer cultural and traditional values, to expand vocabulary, and to enhance morality.

Mrs Kapena said:

I tell them traditional stories and other stories (fables) I have read in magazines and newspapers. I tell her about current burning issues in the newspapers e.g. alarming violent crime rate in our country. Yaa! Personal stories on my experiences as well.

Kameri, her child, supported this claim. She said: *“My mother likes newspapers stories and old traditional stories”*.

Mr Karuu said:

I’m a story teller, but not a reader. Yeah, especially in the evening the family comes together and sits down at night, surrounds the fire and listens attentively to

the stories. These are stories about the stupid wolf and the clever jackal. You know what, children like it. They enjoy it.

Kioki, his child, said: *“My mother likes traditional stories. I memorise them and if I visit my friends or relatives homes then I tell them the stories”.*

Storytelling in this culture is presented as an enjoyable way to entertain each other and to understand the world better. This is confirmed by one parent, Mrs Kapena, who remarked: *“This is the time of enjoyment, happiness and unity. We tell stories about anything in the world. It can be war, crime, or diseases”.*

I asked parents whether their children showed interest in the stories and what kind of behaviour showed whether they were interested or not. The following extract gives some insight on the children’s interest in storytelling:

Interviewer: *“What does your child do that shows interest or no interest?”*

Mr Uazuu: *“Listens attentively, laughs and asks questions.”*

Mr Karuu: *“She comes closer, retells and asks questions.”*

Ms Kamapoha: *“He laughs and wants me to repeat over and over.”*

Mrs Kapena: *“Looks at me, come closer, smiles and asks simple questions.”*

The teacher, however, did not support the claims made by the parents and the children about storytelling. She claimed that children only tell stories from the school. She responded as follows:

Hmm! How will one know? But I can always see from the children if I asked them to tell stories from home. They will not tell I tell you. They will just tell the ones I told them in the class. No new stories from home. Some even tell me that parents don’t tell them stories.

According to the interviews with parents and children, storytelling was a dominant activity, which was seen as important by all the parents because it develops the literacy of

their children. The interviews with the children gave a clear testimony that mothers are the storytellers rather than fathers. Looking at parent's views, they believe that children learn good morals, about traditions, society and many other things through stories. The analysis also suggests that storytelling in this community instills a sense of closeness between the parent and the child. However, these claims are not supported by the teacher, who doubts whether the parents tell their children stories at all.

4.3.3 Talking

Both parents and children were asked whether parents talk to their children. There was disagreement on this issue: although parents claimed to talk to their children, children's responses did not support this claim. Parents claimed that talking varied from social problems, general issues, and discipline to moral and cultural values children are expected to have in a society. Mrs Uazuu claimed that talking is a daily activity in their home. Although the other parents did not explicitly mention it as a daily activity, their responses were similar.

Mrs Uazuu responded:

Yeah! Ijaa! Always. We talk about social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse. It is crucial issue in this village among the youth. If we don't talk now.....then I don't know. I talk about cultural values I want her to have".

Kove, her child, said: *"I don't remember"*. Ms Operi said: *"We talk about good and bad things in life. I encourage him to complete his school and not to do what I did"*

Nokoo, her child said it differently: *"My mother does not talk to me. She only sends me"*. In addition to Ms Operi, Ms Kamapoha said the following:

Very much. I used to look at the life of today. To show them the right way they should take and not to follow the wrong ways we used of not completing school. To take the way that leads them to success and later to better future.

However, Tjipuu, her child, said: *“We do not talk”*.

The teacher said: *“[Yaah] Parents do talk to their children but not on literacy activities. They talk about things in general but not on literacy development of their children”*.

Thus, although the parents claim to talk to their children, this was not always supported by the children or the teacher. This suggests that although the parents recognize that they should talk to their children, they do not always do so in practice. Their responses suggest that they see talk as an opportunity to moralise rather than to support their children’s developing language and literacy. This view of language and literacy encounters as opportunities to communicate moral messages runs through the responses reported in Section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 as well.

4.3.4 Playing

Play is important to all aspects of a child’s development, including the development of language and literacy. It is through play that a child discovers language and learns to communicate through reading and writing. Reading, writing, talking and listening can all be encouraged through play (Wurman & Civitas, 2002). While storytelling cuts across all parents, this was not the case with playing as a learning activity. It was only Mrs Karuu who claimed that she plays with her children. Mrs Karuu responded:

Oh no. I like singing with my children. We like playing ‘Amangus’, hide and seek and rope skipping. We dance our old traditional concert together. We laugh and enjoy when playing together. When you play Amangus with the children, they enjoy it, laugh. They are in happiness. They get rid of fear.

Kioki, her child, supported this claim. She said:

Yes, my mother plays Amangus with us. She makes our dolls with plastics and from her old cloths. She gives us food for our outdoors playhouse. She sometimes shows us how to mix and cook things when we play.

To this Mr Uazuu had the following to say:

Yeah. Yeah. I like sport. I like watching children playing traditional games i.e. Amangus. Children learn a lot of things through playing together. They teach each other a lot of things. Their mind and body develop.

However, Kove, his child, did not support this claim. She said: *“They do not play with us. They are busy with their things... [Silence] they do not talk to us”*.

All the other seven parents claimed that they only watch their children playing. Mr Uazuu sees playing as very important in a child’s development and that a child learns through playing. He also mentioned that play develops the mind and body of the child. From the responses, Mrs Karuu claimed to play with her child for enjoyment. Four children claimed that they ‘play house’ where they pretend to be teachers, mothers and fathers.

When asked what kind of play children are involved in, three claimed that they play ‘school’ and ‘mothers and fathers’. Nokoo said:

[Silence] We play school. One is a teacher and the others are learners in the classroom listening to the teacher talking. We write homework and tests. We write spelling and we read those words loudly. We write sentences and the teacher asks us to read and gives us marks. The teacher tells us to give it to our parents to see how we perform. The next day somebody else becomes a teacher and teaches the learners. We recite poems loudly and do mathematics.

Tjipuu said: “[playing with his nails....head downwards] *We play school at home. We write the things we do at school with our teacher. We tell stories. We recite poems If it is wrong the teacher beats you. We write birthday cards*”.

Jaanda said:

[Thinking] *We play school and use coal as our pencils and piece of papers or boxes from home. We also write in the sand. We sing our songs from our teacher. We draw pictures with coal. We also play mummy and daddy, shop and we write money and our names.*

Kameri said:

We play mother, father and children. The mother cooks food and wash dishes. The father takes the children to school and looks after the cattle. The children are sent to the shop to buy.

When asked about children’s play, the teacher responded:

Oh! Children play school which I think helps them very much. Those who play school are performing better in class especially in reading. They have the confidence. I mean they are not shy. They do different activities I teach them in the classroom. If you listen and watch what they play, you will be amazed by what they are doing. They are acting as teachers. You feel proud! They do everything I do in the classroom. They are reading to each other, drawing pictures and talking like a teacher. They don’t just play but also marking the scripts of others. You won’t believe it. They use old pieces of paper, boxes and the sand to write their activities. When you look at it you will see it as the best way children can learn because they know each other better. They sing, pray and listen to the teacher. They ask each other questions. What is very interesting is when they change their voices the way I do it in the class. [Smiling] They shout and talk very softly. They

write and read which tells you that they will become good readers and writers in the future through this simple play. They make jokes and laugh. We share this in the classroom the next day and I encourage the shy children to participate in this type of play. This is working, believe me.

This shows me that parents are claiming to do more than they actually do. This suggests that they may know they should be supporting their children's literacy development, but they actually do not do so. From the children's and the teacher's responses, it seems that some of their play activities support literacy and that their play is meaningful and enjoyable.

4.3.5 Writing

Mrs Kapena and Ms Operi claimed that they assist their children with writing whereas Mr Kapena did not do so. It has emerged quite strongly that writing is supported by older siblings and neighbours. Mr Kapena and Mr Uazuu claimed that they do not have stationery therefore children only write at school. What was interesting is that Ms Operi and Mrs Uazuu do the practice of writing with their children in the sand. Nokoo, a child, supported his mother's claim.

Mrs Kapena said:

Well, I ask her to write a simple shopping list when I go to Gobabis, and her own name at the bottom of a letter or card I have written. I send her to our local shop with her own list and she does a good job.

However, Mr Kapena responded thus: "We don't have pens and pencils; children do the writing at school while their older siblings just help with reading." Kameiri their child did not support her mother's claim either. She said: "I do it myself".

Similarly, Ms Operi responded:

Yes, only if she cannot. She writes and if she cannot I help her ...just like that. I show her how to write words correctly. Sometimes she writes in books and sometimes in the sand. I show her how to do it and she copies it in the sand. I point to the words she missed and I asked her to read and we talk about what she reads. We talk about what happens in the story.

Nokoo, her child, supported this claim: “Yes, I write on a piece of paper or in the sand”.

Mrs Uazuu had this to say:

Yes, especially writing. I'm helping. Reading I never helped a child coming to me with the problem of reading homework but they come with writing homework. I help them doing it on a piece of paper, but more in the sand than on a piece of paper because we don't have papers.

However, her child, Kove, did not support this claim; she said: “My parents don't help me with writing activities. I do it myself and my two sisters who help me. If I don't understand I take it back to the teacher”.

The teacher indicated that parents do not support their children with writing activities. She further claimed that the school is not doing enough to encourage parents to support their children's literacy development. She responded as follows:

I think parents are motivated but the school has not tried to ask parents to tell stories, sing for the learners, share their experiences or read something to the children. It is our fault.

Overall, parents in this community claimed that they read aloud, tell stories, talk, and write to their children which suggest that parents are supporting the literacy development of their children. However, there is counter evidence from the children.

4.4 Parents' and teacher's perceptions on factors that limit parental involvement

This section discusses problems faced by parents that affect their involvement in the development of their children's literacy.

With regard to the poor involvement of parents in the development of their children's literacy, parents were asked to state issues they think prevent them from developing the literacy of their children. The parents had different perceptions on a variety of factors they felt were relevant. (It was discovered that the teacher Elfriede's perceptions of problems that limit parents in the development of their children's literacy are related to what was said by the parents.) The teacher gave a wide range of explanations about why parents are not involved in the literacy development of their children. Challenges that emerged from the findings were: lack of literacy resources, lack of a library, poor educational level, poverty, lack of interest, the communication gap, and lack of electricity. Among all these challenges, only the most recurring ones will be discussed.

4.4.1 Lack of literacy resources

Table 4.5: Availability of reading and writing resources

Topics	Ms Vati	Mr Kapena	Mr Uazuu	Ms Kamapoha	Mrs Karuu	Mrs Uazuu	Mrs Kapena	Ms Operi	Mr Karuu
Newspapers and magazines			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
School books	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Bible and hymn book	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stationery	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
Storybooks	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		

A number of questions were posed to parents about the possession of reading materials in their homes. There were some commonalities among their responses. The following emerged: three out of six children indicated that there were no reading resources in their homes except their school textbooks, exercises books, Bibles and hymnals. Similarly, eight out of nine parents claimed that there were Bibles and hymnals; four parents claimed that they had newspapers and magazines in their homes; while one reported that she did not have school books in her home. Three parents said that they had storybooks and three parents said that they did not have stationery. All parents complained bitterly about the lack of reading materials. The teacher echoed similar views by indicating that the lack of reading materials is a serious concern which is hindering literacy development and learning as a whole.

Mr Uazuu had this to say about the availability of newspapers, magazines in his home:

No. No. No. We don't have. We don't have because these children are still young to read them. They cannot read but I see them cutting pictures from magazines which I don't know where they get it from. Yeah.

Mr Karuu complained that newspapers and magazines are available only in urban areas. His further concern was that parents lack a culture of reading and finally that materials available are in foreign languages. Mr Karuu responded:

You will only find magazines and newspapers in towns not here where we stay. We don't have love for books and our educational level is too poor to read magazines and newspapers in English. We want materials in our own language.

Similar concerns were raised by Mr Uazuu:

Reading materials are only found in urban or better areas and not in rural areas. People who have the money to buy magazines and who understand the importance of reading are living in towns. Libraries are only built in towns. You will never find a library in our communities.

In addition, the teacher had the following to say:

Parents are living in a poor environment with no reading materials. There are no newspapers in their mother tongue. No books which they can understand better. You will not even find any street sign, sign board or libraries here.

Similarly, Jaanda, Tjipuu, and Kioki, claimed that there are no newspapers and magazines in their homes. Jaanda responded: “*Hmm. There are no newspapers and magazines at our house*”. Tjipuu said: “*We do not have newspapers*”. Kioki, said: “*I only see them in our classroom*”.

When children were asked what they used the newspapers and magazines for, Kove, a child, claimed that they used newspapers and magazines for cutting out pictures and pasting them in their picture books. She went on to say that they have old newspapers which are often used for making fires while Tjipuu made a similar claim that they had newspapers and magazines but they were used by his parents for reading and wrapping purposes.

4.4.2 Lack of a library

There were diverse responses from the children to the question whether a school library or a public library existed in their community and whether they knew what a library was. A very interesting response emerged when I asked whether there was a library in the community where they could borrow books. Kove, said: *“Maybe it is at those houses”*. This response sparked a concern in me that children did not know what a library looked like. This is an indication that children are not exposed to libraries or reading corners and that they do not have access to library facilities.

From the findings parents, children and the teacher felt that there was a need to establish a community and a school library to promote a culture of reading and love for books which in turn would improve their reading skills. The parents also suggested that literacy classes be introduced, and that reading materials be provided in rural areas.

Ms Kamapoha responded: *“Sure! We need it to improve our reading skills. The children will also benefit from it”*. Similarly, Ms Operi said: *“Oh! Ja. Very much we want to read! We want to read! It will help in the sense that we will practice our English and improve our reading levels”*. The teacher echoed similar views. She responded: *I think it is essential. Parents will use it if they are told how to use it. Children as well will use it. It will improve their reading skills and maybe encourage them to read. I mean the culture of reading which lacks. I hope so.*

4.4.3 Poor educational level

Apart from the poor environment another serious concern raised by all parents interviewed was the poor educational background of parents, which creates difficulties for them in helping their children with literacy homework. Ms Vatji said: *“It is difficult to help our children with literacy because we have poor education”*. In addition Ms Kamapoha said: *“Aaai! My education is very poor to help a child learn how to read and write but I try. I help her in Otjiherero and in English a little bit”*.

The teacher suggested that the poor educational level of parents is one of the contributing factors to the lack of parental involvement in children’s literacy. She also revealed that they lack the skills and knowledge to help their children. The teacher responded:

The main problem is the poor educational level of the parents. It is sometimes difficult to expect them to help, but there is no other choice. They have to. They lack knowledge and skills of what education is.

The parents suggested home visits as a way of motivating them to partake in the literacy development of their children. The same views were echoed by the teacher. Parents felt that there was a need for their skills to be upgraded in order to make them active participants in their childrens literacy development. They felt that efforts should be made to empower them.

4.4.4 Poverty

Both parents and the teacher had a common concern with poverty and financial problems. Mrs Uazuu felt that poverty is a serious concern in their community. Even though the parents in this study are all under the age of 55, all adults over 55 qualify for a pension. The effect of this on the community mentioned by the teacher is that the parents receive insufficient pension money from the Government.

Mrs Uazuu expressed her concern as follows:

Poverty is a problem. We try to support our children, but it is a big problem. You have to buy food everyday, the hostel capacity is too small, it cannot accommodate all children, and you have to buy food. How can a poor woman like me buy food and stationery everyday? You need to have water and wood. Children have to fetch water at the water point and collect wood in the field and they are also human beings they are tired from school. The only food we provide for our children is porridge mixed with sour milk (Omaere). Children need to eat body building food but we don't have money to buy it. Therefore we give them porridge from the beginning of the year till the end of the year.

The teacher put it in this way:

Lack of finances is a big problem as parents get money from a pension which is not enough. This money is not enough to buy reading materials and pay for the school fees. Most parents are looking after their grandchildren. As you know, this community is economically very poor.

4.5 Teacher's and parents' views on teacher support in the literacy development of their children

Eight parents felt that they do not get support from the school concerning their children's literacy development. Parents expressed their concern that the school seemed more interested in extracting school fees from them. Mrs Uazuu claimed that the school never told them how to develop the literacy of their children. She complained that they sent reading books home with the children without instructions on how to use them effectively at home. In addition, Mr Karuu stated that the school was concerned about absenteeism and money. Similarly, the teacher claimed that she only visited homes if a child was not doing homework or was absent for consecutive days. Again the teacher blamed the parents for not coming to school and asking for guidance. Interestingly, the teacher revealed that parents only come to school when they wanted to complain.

A parent, Ms Operi said:

There is nothing like support on the literacy development of our children from the teachers. We are told about the importance of the education of our children and that education is important in life. They want us to pay that's all.

Mrs Uazuu echoed this sentiment: *"I cannot remember a day when a teacher helped me on how to develop the literacy of my child. They just send reading books home but they don't tell us how to do it. It is difficult".*

Mr Karuu, in support, stated that:

Teachers only come if the child is absent for many days. One cannot really say we are supported by the teachers as to how to develop the literacy of our children. They are more concerned with absenteeism and money. Letters and messages on money are sent everyday.

Mr Uazuu, concurred: *"We struggle on our own without any support from anyone whether it is a teacher or whoever. One thing we can be sure of is that they will ask for their money."* Ms Kamapoha also affirmed: *"They know how to call you to a meeting on financial matters only. That they know. Don't make a mistake".*

This is how the teacher put it: *"I only visit parents if a child is not doing his or her homework or not coming to school and that is when I go to the home to find out".*

The teacher had this to say:

I know. We don't support parents in literacy development because they don't come and ask. Parents in this community do not make an effort to come and find out how they can help their children with literacy homework. They only come when they get a report with poor results

shouting at the teachers or if they hear that a teacher did something wrong to their child.

What is inferred here is that parents are not supported in assisting in their children's literacy development. This implies that there is a communication gap between the teacher and the parents which will have an effect on the literacy development of these young children.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the findings that emerged from the data collected by conducting interviews. Findings that link to the research questions were reported. The chapter also reported on themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data during the data analysis and will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I presented the views, perceptions and experiences of nine parents, a teacher and six children regarding the involvement of parents in the literacy development of their children and how teachers support this in the Ngeama community. This chapter discusses the results of this study in the light of the research questions and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Relevant themes that emerged from the findings will form the basis of the discussion, supported by the literature.

5.2 Discussion of findings

The following themes form the core of the discussion of this study:

- Attempts by parents to develop the literacy of their children;
- Poor environment as an obstacle to literacy development;
- Communication gap between the parents and the teacher;
- Poor educational levels of parents as a stumbling block in parental involvement in children's literacy;
- Poverty;
- Poor involvement of fathers in the literacy development of their children.

5.2.1 Attempts by parents to develop the literacy of their children

In this section, I discuss the ways in which parents develop the literacy of their children. Looking at the findings, I have noticed that literacy practices varied in this community. For instance, in some homes there were more storytelling activities; in others more reading aloud or writing and playing. This is an indication that parents are involved in the literacy development of their children in different ways. Reading aloud, storytelling, writing and playing will be discussed below.

5.2.1.1 Reading aloud

Reading aloud to children is essential in helping them to become readers and it is an important aspect in the child's learning. During the interviews it emerged that parents emphasized the importance of reading in general. Previous researchers have had similar views on the importance of reading to children. The U.S. Department of Education (2004) claimed that reading to young children promotes language acquisition and correlates with literacy development and later on with achievement in reading comprehension and overall success in school. Similarly, the Deputy Minister of Education in Namibia, Ndjoze-Ojo (2006), argues that reading opens doors to learning for all academic subjects taken by children in schools.

The most significant finding regarding this topic is that reading aloud at home is being done either by parents, older siblings or neighbours but mostly by older siblings. Further investigating revealed that reading the Bible was the most common activity children and parents do together to transfer cultural values and traditional norms. A study conducted by Magara (2005:7) in Uganda uncovered similar results. This may be for cultural reasons in that in Namibia the contents of the Bible are associated with acceptable moral behaviour. Another reason may be the link to the colonial era where the Bible was the only reading material available to teach reading and writing. Contrary to the claims made by the parents, two children indicated that their parents did not read to them but their older siblings did. One child claimed that her mother bought her books to read.

One parent claimed that she read the interesting parts in newspapers and/or magazines and made them understandable to her child. On the face of it this seems unlikely and indeed the child did not support this parent's claim. However, it does indicate that such a parent feels she ought to be reading to her child and not just from the Bible. Two other parents claimed that they buy reading books from urban areas, the contents of which are pitched at their children's level of understanding. Again, this suggests that parents are aware that they should be reading to their children.

As noted in Chapter 2, the research literature suggest that reading books to young children will develop their listening skills, love for reading, and extend their vocabulary and knowledge. Above all, children's interest in reading books will be stimulated. This is also in agreement with the Namibian Lower Primary Curriculum (2005) which requires children to read and retell stories. In addition, the new Namibian education system discourages children from learning from one source of information (textbook) only, but rather to use different local and national reading resources. This indeed is a challenge to rural schools but all children are expected to follow the national curriculum.

It is also worth highlighting the problems parents claimed to experience in supporting their children with literacy homework. These problems include:

- poor education level;
- poverty;
- lack of resources;
- lack of a library;
- lack of knowledge and skills;
- lack of exposure to information about early literacy development.

It appears that although parents recognize the importance of reading to their children many obstacles stand in their way of getting involved in the literacy development of their children.

5.2.1.2 Storytelling

Looking at the results, another issue that emerged from the interviews is storytelling. Research by Heath (1983) advocates that storytelling contributes significantly to early literacy development. According to Mallan (as cited in Phillips, 1999:3), storytelling is a social activity. This is understood by parents in this study who indicated that their children enjoy storytelling, make jokes, express themselves, listen, retell stories, etc. The results further revealed that three parents hold the view that they narrate stories for

entertainment, enjoyment, to transfer cultural and traditional values and morality. As was discussed in Chapter 2, Schiro (1997:64) suggests that stories provide children with enjoyment, allow them to express themselves, and communicate with others. The study suggests that parents narrate simplified Bible stories, traditional stories, fairy tales, ghost and personal stories since all these are popular aspects of Namibian culture. A previous study conducted by Trewby (2004) in Namibia has supported these findings stating that parents narrated folk tales, traditional and Bible stories to their children. These results are supported in this study. Another interesting dimension is that parents tell stories to their children to teach them about the world they are living in and to be aware of the social problems in their society. This was evident when one child revealed that his parents tell stories about good and bad things.

However, looking across the data, it seems that parents claimed to do more than they actually do. As with 'reading aloud', this suggests that they may know they should be supporting their children's literacy development, but are not actually doing so. In the case of reading aloud, there exists material obstacles such as poverty preventing them from doing so, but in the case of storytelling this is not so. Thus, storytelling may be an aspect of literacy in which parents could more easily be encouraged to support their children.

In addition, it was observed that there is a strong moralizing tone which runs through the parents' responses. Worth mentioning is that traditional African stories usually have a moral purpose to guide people's behaviour. This view seems to pervade the parents' approach to reading aloud, talking, and storytelling. This is different in some ways to the middle class, western view of reading as being primarily pleasurable, enjoyable, or personally enriching, engaging the imagination and the senses and enabling one to empathise with others. It is the latter view that underpins the notion of 'reading for pleasure' advocated in school reading programmes.

The next section discusses playing as a literacy activity.

5.2.1.3 Playing

Play is important in all aspects of a child's development, including the development of language and literacy. It is through play that a child discovers language and learns to communicate through reading and writing. Reading, writing, talking and listening can all be encouraged through play (Wurman & Civitas, 2002). Looking at the findings of this study, play as a natural activity was evident from the information gained via the interviews where children stated they 'play house'. Children also said that they 'play school', which relates directly to their literacy development. For example, three children claimed that when they play school they do what they do at school in their classroom. Through play children imitate how their teacher teaches reading, writing, spelling, sentences writing, drawing pictures, telling stories, writing birthday cards, singing songs from the school and reciting poems. They also described how they wrote tests and homework on reading and spelling. They imitated their parents and teachers, their behaviour and their conversation. The teacher corroborated that children play school where they read, write, talk and mark scripts the way she does, they also asked each other questions. This is consistent with Galda and Pellegrini (1985:vii) who claimed that "the language used in play is similar to more formal, literate uses of language required of children in school".

One can deduce that through this play children begin to play together, talk to one another, and become creative. The children also played imaginative games which are important for learning. They acted out the roles of the people who surround them, reading and writing as their teachers did in the classroom; and mimicing the language of their parents. These are all good ways of developing the language and presentation skills of the child in terms of self expression. It therefore promotes creativity and self-confidence.

Another interesting dimension that emerged when I examined the data was that role play in this particular community was gender biased. This was evident during interviews when girls indicated that they play with dolls, old clothes, cooking and baking; whereas boys indicated that they play with donkeys, wire cars and clay. Ovaherero culture predetermines these gender roles. This is consistent with the findings of Heath (1983:

133) whose study showed that boys and girls in the American town of 'Roadville' did not play together, but in a gender-segregated way. Their games and toys were sharply differentiated. Her study further revealed that girls were given educational toys which stressed girls' and women's activities while boys were given those which emphasised the activities of boys and men.

Based on these results, it can be deduced that children are developing their language skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading) problem solving, creativity, social and communication skills through home play.

5.2.1.4 Writing

Writing is one of the important literacy activities emphasized in the Lower Primary Curriculum (2005). Children learn much about reading and writing by observing the reading and writing that occurs in their families. They then begin to read and write as part of their home experiences (Heath & Taylor, 1983). This is in agreement with Baghban (1989) who argued that with little encouragement, children's reading and writing development will proceed on parallel tracks. He further argued that even a young child who saw the adults in her life writing letters and grocery lists and telephone messages would want to experiment with writing. However, looking across the data, only three parents claimed to support their children with writing homework while the other six parents claimed that older siblings and neighbours were the ones who supported their children in this regard. Parents did not have extra exercise books for their children to practice writing at home. From the responses, it seemed that parents supported their children by making sure that older siblings and neighbours helped them to write. This was confirmed by one child who indicated that he did his homework in the sand before he wrote it in his school exercise book. This is good for the tactile development of children and it forces them to be more mindful about letter creation. On the other hand, four children claimed that no one helped them to write; they either did it themselves or took it back to the teacher. In addition, the teacher claimed that writing homework was never done at home by children. They rather returned the homework to school claiming that

there was no one to help. The question is: Has the teacher done anything to help the parents in this regard? One would argue that if writing is not well supported, then all other academic subjects would be affected as learners would not be able to apply the required writing skills in those subjects. In summary, this could be a concern which could hinder the performance of the children in literacy and also in all the other subjects.

5. 3. Poor involvement of fathers in the literacy development of their children

The study also found that females or mothers are more involved in reading aloud to their children than their male counterparts. This is consistent with the findings of Singh and Mbokodi (2004) whose study showed that it was usually the mothers' task to help their children with school work. According to their research, in 80% of the households visited, it was clear that female parents were the ones who attended school meetings and were keen to know about the children's progress. The same holds true in this study. These authors' claims were substantiated by the teacher I interviewed who indicated that female parents and married couples are more involved in school activities than their male counterparts in the Ngeama community. A separate study, conducted by Lareau (1989) suggests that efforts to monitor children's school activities are almost exclusively undertaken by mothers. This is also in line with the findings of the study conducted by Williams (2002) which revealed that more mothers than fathers were involved in their children's learning. The dominance of females in the findings could be attributed to the fact that mothers are usually more closely involved in looking after the children and monitoring their school work regularly. It could happen that certain stereotypes such as this one exist in a particular community especially in OvaHerero culture. In order to bring about change there is a need to educate the fathers in an attempt to reduce stereotypes related to issues such as gender in raising children. By doing this, fathers could to a great extent change attitudes in relation to these gender roles. Another strategy which I believe can be helpful is the one whereby fathers are encouraged or motivated to be full partners in the education of their children. While there are many things that could be done to encourage male participation in children's education, what is happening in the community is a reflection of OvaHerero culture.

5.4 Poor environment as an obstacle to literacy development

5.4.1 Lack of literacy resources

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the problems experienced by the parents with regard to developing the literacy of their children. Analysing the findings, I realized that lack of environmental print featured strongly in the interviews with parents, their children and the teacher. This refers to a culture that is print rich in literacy materials such as newspapers, magazines, leaflets, posters, television print, road signs, labels, shop front messages, writing materials, etc. Only a few parents seemed to expose their children to any reading materials, which were not all used appropriately. For example, a very interesting picture emerged when parents indicated that newspapers are used for various purposes such as making fire or smoking, whilst one child mentioned that newspapers were used for wrapping purposes. From the responses one can infer that reading materials are to some extent not valued in this community or the parents do not know their value. A study by Trewby (2004:21) in Kavango region in Namibia had similar results. The study revealed that parents had only hymn books and Bibles while newspapers were flying around in yards and also at water points. The study further revealed that the San community environment was found to be without evidence of literacy materials but rather surrounded by refuse. Similar findings were found in the study carried out by Magara (2005) in Uganda. The study found that there was a lack of reading materials and that some families had neither access nor capacity to buy such materials. The notion is further supported by the SACMEQ report (2004:56) that revealed that the home backgrounds of children in the six northern educational regions (Omusati, Ohangwena, Oshana, Oshikoto, Kavango and Caprivi) did not provide an adequate enabling environment for successful learning. Parents disclosed that rural communities are neglected in terms of resources and facilities as compared to urban areas. A practical example of the latter was illustrated when two parents revealed that reading materials are only for urban areas. Similarly, Callewaert and Kallos (1989) also reported the problem of lack of facilities and materials, especially in rural areas. After visiting one rural school

and one town school in the Caprivi region, they reported that significant differences existed between the rural and town schools in terms of materials and facilities.

It was apparent from the interviews that printed materials which reflect the local culture, language and surroundings were hardly visible in the Ngeama community. This was confirmed by one parent and the teacher who claimed that reading materials in this community are only in foreign languages (Afrikaans and English) even though two parents mentioned that they read newspapers which are in their mother tongue. A specific reference was made to the *New Era* newspaper.

The challenge here is to assess what is at the heart of this concern of lack of literacy materials. On one hand, there is an attitude among the parents that the provision of materials is the responsibility of the school. In this sense they feel that they should sit and wait for the school to provide everything without realising that the child is the victim in this situation. On the other hand, it may also be based on the poor culture of reading among the Ovaherero community which has its roots in the apartheid era before independence in Namibia where books were not part of their households and where no one read to them. This was apparent from seven parents who were never read to by their parents and/or grandparents. There was a complete absence of literacy books in some homes except two who had access to 'Sarah Book' and 'Okaserebuki'. This indicates that they were not exposed to books in their early childhood. This phenomenon was explicit across the parent's data. There is, therefore, evidence that children are not read to by their parents as claimed by these parents. This fact would have an influence on the reading culture of the children. The end result being a lack of interest and self-confidence from the parents and their children. But still, it can not be used as an excuse not to improve the current situation.

5.4.2 Lack of a library

Libraries play an important role in literacy development. This was also confirmed in two separate studies, the study of Magara (2005) from Uganda and the study of Krolak (2005)

from Germany. However, this was a dream to the Ngeama community since the children said that they never had access to a library. There is supporting evidence from the teacher that the only available school library is not accessible to the children because there is no one who can run it.

According to the findings, parents in this community know the role played by the libraries in general. It was interesting to note that parents', children's and the teacher's responses revealed that there is a strong need for a community library to enable them to read, to be able to know how to use books properly and how to take good care of them and to develop their children's literacy skills. One would support this view which would promote a culture of reading and a love of books that is currently hardly visible in this community. Kupetz (1993) also points out that libraries can help parents who feel uncomfortable with reading to their children by modeling read-aloud techniques, they can help parents develop their own literacy, and encourage them to enjoy their own reading.

The next section discusses the poor educational level of parents.

5.5 Poor educational level of parents

Parent's educational level plays an important role in the literacy development of children. I have noticed that a poor educational level came out clearly in interviews with parents and the teacher as a mitigating factor against literacy development. From the parent's responses, poor educational level seems to hinder their involvement in their children's literacy development. This was evident when a parent expressed her concern that they do not have a good enough education to enable them to help their children with literacy development. The parents felt hurt by their poor educational level and it exacerbated their difficulties. As Vatji stated:

I call my children and tell them that education is the key to your future. Look at what I sell: sweets [tamalaki] and fat cakes just because I'm not educated and I want my children to be educated. Therefore I think we as parents should motivate

our children to read and write. I'm a hostel matron because I did not finish my school. The school can help.

Similarly, Karuu said the following:

Education! I tell my children about the importance of education, especially of reading and writing that if you cannot read and write you will sit like me without employment. You will suffer. I'm full of bad luck because I have thousands of children. Life is difficult, try to finish your education because no one can take it away from you. Education is your key to success. Education is your permanent inheritance. Education is your father and mother until you perish on earth.

These views are corroborated by Lareau (1989), who argued that if parents have a higher level of education, it increases their competence for helping their children in school work as well as boosting their confidence knowing that they are capable of helping their children.

Given the evidence, it would seem that there is a need for those in authority (myself included) to motivate parents to further their studies and work with them through this particular issue on upgrading themselves academically. It would also seem to be necessary to discuss the importance of parental involvement in education in general before discussing their involvement in the literacy development of their children.

This same concern has been raised in different studies conducted on parental involvement in education. Literature also showed that the more educated the parents, the greater their involvement in their children's education. Kohl et al. (2000) support this view. In this study, it became apparent that parents who receive assistance from their parents during their childhood tend to do the same for their children. Similarly, the SACMEQ report (2004:41) revealed that parents with more education will provide a home atmosphere that is more conducive to learning than parents with lower levels of education. It further pointed out that the parents with more education will help their children in many ways with their learning. This supports Lareau's (1989) findings that if parents have a higher

level of education, it increases their competence for helping their children in school work as well as boosting their confidence that they are capable of helping their children.

This assertion was true in this study. The teacher confirmed that children from the better educated parents (Gr.10 or above) performed better in school than the children of parents with a lower educational level. For example, from the two better educated parent's responses it was evident when they indicated that whenever they go to Windhoek or Gobabis they make sure that they come back with storybooks which are at the children's level. The two children confirmed that their parents buy reading books for them. However, this means that six parents do not ensure this. As was reported in Chapter 4, three parents had better educational level, whereas six had poor educational level. Parents with little education seem not to be in a position to motivate their children to do their literacy homework. The concern here is that parents lose their confidence; they do not feel that they are capable of helping their children with literacy homework and they do not have the adequate literacy skills. An earlier study by Trewby (2004) in the Erongo region in Namibia showed similar results, that parents had the will to help their children, but had the opinion that they were not sufficiently educated. One can link this to the results found in another study by Kaperu (2004) that parents have a different understanding of what their role in the education of their children should be. These findings are similar to the study conducted by Hannon and James (1990) who interviewed 40 parents from varied social backgrounds in an area of Sheffield about their children's experiences with literacy at home. The interviews showed that parents were worried about helping their children with reading and writing activities because they did not want to teach them incorrectly (Hannon & James, 1990:265). The study further showed that most parents are interested in supporting their children's literacy development but may need more help with the "how to".

In conclusion one would also argue that parents seemed to see teachers and those in authority as the fountains of knowledge and place themselves in a submissive role. This I would say needs to be remedied.

5.6. Poverty

Another issue that emerged from the data as a stumbling block to parental involvement in children's literacy is poverty. According to Singh and Mbokodi (2004) wealth allows parents to provide necessary reading materials that develop their children's literacy. Looking across the data, I noticed that poverty featured strongly in the interviews with parents and the teacher. The findings of the study showed that parents are living in a socio-economically disadvantaged community in terms of resources, facilities and finance. Poverty was a 'cut-across' concern. In other words, it seemed that poverty was a shared and serious concern in Ngeama community.

The study by Singh and Mbokodi (2004) in South Africa had similar results. The parents in their study were at a low economic level, their involvement in school issues was highly influenced by their economic status. Their study infers that this could lead to drop-out, lack of parental support; and lack of interest; self-confidence and self-esteem.

What was revealed by the parents of the Ngeama community is that they cannot afford to provide their children with reading materials and stationery. This was evident when the hostel father revealed that his salary is too low to provide the necessary resources for his child. The teacher when interviewed supported this view.

The next section discusses the communication gap between the teacher and the parents.

5.7 Communication gap between parents and the teacher

One of the research questions sought to find out how teachers support parents in the literacy development of their children. My interviews with the teacher suggest that the teacher supports parents through homework, letters, calling, fundraising, parent-teacher day, etc. However, looking across the data, this was not corroborated by the parents. In addition, the teacher herself revealed that the school does not support parents in literacy development but rather with other school matters such as discipline problems, payment of

fees, fundraising activities, etc. It was also evident from the teacher that she only does home visits if a child is absent for consecutive days or if a child does not do homework regularly. This was confirmed by the parents. With regard to this finding one could argue teachers need to know the background of their learners before one could think about parental involvement in children's literacy.

A thorough analysis of the issue raised by the parents regarding the support received from the teacher, suggests that the teacher has more interest in the payment of fees than supporting parents in their children's literacy development. For example, it was claimed by four parents that the teacher only asks for payment, nothing else. Another interesting dimension emerged when two parents revealed that they cannot remember a day where they were supported by the teacher on how to develop the literacy of their children. Another concern raised by one parent is that the teacher sent reading books home without any instruction on what to do with them. This indicates that teachers have expectations which are beyond the capabilities of parents without some intervention on their part. Given such evidence, it would seem that there is a lot to be done to improve the situation. On the one hand, the teacher blamed the school for not supporting the parents while, on the other hand, the teacher and the parents blamed each other for the lack of support parents are supposed to receive from the teachers. However, what seems to be the issue is the poor communication between the parents and the teacher. Once again we find that parents and children do not get the attention they deserve which is a big challenge to the Namibian government.

What was further claimed by the teacher is that parents only visit the school if they are called in or if there is a problem with their children. An interesting paradox emerged when the teacher revealed that parents only came to 'shout' at teachers. The teacher went further by claiming that parents are ignorant. Similarly, the study conducted by Singh and Mbokodi (2004) revealed the same concerns that parents' ignorance was to be blamed for the schools' lack of success. The teachers in this study believed that parents were not doing their share of the work. Again, this suggests a lack of communication between parents and teachers.

Given this background, an ideal situation would be one in which parents and teachers work together for the benefit of the child, teacher and the parent.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results of the study regarding parental involvement in their children's literacy and how teachers support them in line with the purpose of this study. I discussed the findings from the parents, their children and the teacher perceptions, views, feelings and experiences in relation to literature in Chapter 2.

It is also clear that there is a lot to be done in order to improve parental involvement in children's literacy development. However, of great importance is the relationship between the school and the parents. Indeed, parental empowerment is what is most desirable.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the main findings discussed in the previous chapter. Then tentative suggestions for future research and a discussion of the potential value of the study are put forward. Finally, a reflection on the research process and a discussion of the limitations of the study follows.

6.2 Overview of the key findings

This section gives a summary of the main findings as presented in the previous chapter.

6.2.1 Parent's educational background

The findings of the study showed that the poor educational level of parents was a major concern to the rural Ngeama community. It appears that parents in this community are not fully involved in their children's literacy development due to their poor level of education. This was evident during the interviews with parents and the teacher as well. This indicates that the Ngeama community is not sufficiently prepared to achieve one of the goals of democracy, which would allow them to participate in the education of their children. Again, one can conclude that parents need to be trained in literacy for them to be able to support their children with literacy homework.

6.2.2 Storytelling and reading aloud

The study found that the stories in this community are based on real life incidents and their own culture. I believe that children will respect, appreciate and understand their culture and values better because the context is familiar to them. The study has further disclosed that storytelling is a form of entertainment and a way of passing on knowledge, traditions and customs of the community. It also revealed that children not only learn

their family history and traditions through storytelling but also the behavior considered acceptable to the family.

Another finding is that parents teach their children vocabulary directly and indirectly and stimulate the children's imagination through storytelling. Unless the Ngeama parents make an effort to continue the culture of storytelling, today's Ngeama children will have little of their culture and heritage to pass on to the next generation.

The study further showed that children get access to information about the world through reading aloud and that reading develops a close relationship between the child and the parent. Reading and writing are closely linked literacy activities but the findings of this study revealed that parents put more emphasis on storytelling and reading.

Despite shortcomings, what is practiced by the parents in this community relates to what is suggested by the Lower Primary Curriculum (2005). For example, children in Grade 3 should be able to read aloud, tell stories, listen to stories, sing songs, ask and answer questions.

6.2.3 Home and school relations

Another finding of this study is that the school does not build on what the parents already know such as telling stories, sharing ideas on culture and social issues, talking to their children. If the school incorporated the cultural and social issues into their daily timetable then I believe the participation of parents would be enhanced. This would have a positive effect on the improvement of the home-school relations which are essential to the education system. The literature review in Chapter 2 confirms that parental participation and understanding of academic issues enhances their self-esteem, self confidence and self image and reduces behavioural problems in children.

6.2.4 Poverty and literacy mitigating factors

Parents, children and the teacher cited poverty as a major factor hindering parental involvement in children's literacy development. The study further shows that the lack of adequate resources is inhibiting literacy promotion by parents. This finding is raised in different studies conducted in Namibia such as the SACMEQ report.

Another challenge is the lack of a community library which would promote a culture of reading among the community. In the absence of such resources, literacy problems are likely to continue to contribute to children's poor performance and a lack of parental involvement in literacy development.

Based on these findings one can conclude that rural parents are disadvantaged in comparison to urban parents in terms of facilities and literacy resources.

6.2.5 Promotion of reading culture in the community

One of the recurring challenges parents mention is the lack of a reading culture in the community. This is due to the lack of an environment that is rich in literacy materials such as books, magazines, newspapers, writing materials, educational toys and games, etc. The lack of reading ability and skills among the parents is a limiting factor in the acquisition of appropriate literacy materials. These may materialise if the schools, through the government, embark upon a programme which involves children and parents in joint activities that strengthen literacy such as storytelling, reading aloud, talking, playing, writing etc. This type of activity would lead to materials development for future use in the communities.

6.2.6 Literacy resources

Another aspect that surfaced in this research was the lack of literacy resources in this community, specifically in their own language. There are no traffic signs, posters,

advertisements in storefront windows, parking signs, street signs which could educate parents and their children. To this end, teachers are trying their level best to develop literacy materials but the lack of local resources makes this difficult. Efforts have been made by the teacher to establish a reading corner in her classroom. However, this does not make sense to the parents if they are not informed about it. The study revealed that reading materials such as newspapers and magazines are not regarded as valuable in this particular community since parents use them for purposes other than reading.

6.2.7 Literacy programmes

The interviews revealed that despite some efforts by the government to establish literacy classes, some parents were not interested due to a lack of relevance to their needs. Therefore it is a necessary to find ways to engage parents in meaningful literacy programmes so that the democratic education system can be enhanced.

From the findings of this study one may conclude that much still has to be done to empower, encourage and educate the parents in order for them to be able to develop the literacy of their children.

6.3 Tentative suggestions

On the basis of what has been found in this study, the following tentative suggestions are made.

- Agreed upon programmes should be in place between schools and parents which inform both partners about their roles and responsibilities.
- These programmes should extend to sub-programmes that teach parents how to teach their children literacy skills more effectively. They also need to be taught how to use songs, games, and stories effectively to develop the literacy of their children.

- Parental empowerment is a pre-requisite to accelerate their participation. The continuous use of parents' experience and involvement in school programmes should be regarded as a way of bringing them closer to schools.
- There should be a programme of school and home visits. This would enhance better working relations. Teachers would observe how parents assist their children at home and vice versa.
- Parents could also be invited to tell stories, share ideas on cultural issues (values), read simple storybooks, and sing etc. at school. This would promote trust and ownership of teaching, learning and literacy.
- Community and school libraries should be established to promote a culture of reading, love for books and to develop the literacy skills of the parents, teachers and children.
- Literacy programmes need to be revisited to accommodate some of the findings of this study.
- Parents should establish a regular time for literacy homework each afternoon and they should encourage their children to read, write, listen and speak.

It was impossible to investigate all emerging questions that arose from the data therefore I recommend that future research could focus on the following identified issues:

- The role of libraries in family literacy
- The involvement of fathers in the literacy development of their children
- The impact/role of older siblings in literacy development

6.4 Potential value of the study

This section discusses the potential value of the study in relation to the research questions. I focused my research questions specifically on parents, children and the teacher to explore the extent to which parents are involved in the literacy development of their children and the reasons for their involvement or lack of it.

This has been a concern since I became the principal of a rural primary school in the Omusati region of Namibia. As a principal of the school I was disappointed by the involvement of parents in the education of their children. Parents believed that their involvement was limited to paying school fees, sending children to school and disciplining them. Involvement in children's literacy was to them the sole responsibility of the teacher. This concern intensified when I did some small-scale research in 2005 on literacy development which I conducted with Grade 7 learners and their teacher at a rural primary school in the Otjozondjupa region. Teachers complained about the lack of involvement of parents in their children's literacy. It was against this background that I found it necessary to investigate the extent of rural parents' involvement in the literacy development of their children and how teachers support this. The Namibian education system strongly advocates for the inclusion of all stakeholders in education through capacity building and empowerment. The rationale is that in order for collaboration among stakeholders to be meaningful, they should reach a common understanding and clarity of purpose. It is against this background that the Namibian Government has embarked upon literacy programmes which enhance parents' capacity to enable them to participate in the democratic education system effectively.

Therefore, the study would provide meaningful feedback to the literacy policy makers and curriculum developers (NIED) and implementers (teachers and parents), which suggests that they need to revisit their strategies and programmes in line with the findings and recommendations.

Personally and professionally as a curriculum developer, there has been a realization on my part that parents in this community are not sufficiently empowered to enable them to be full partners in the education of their children. It also became clear which factors hinder their participation in developing the literacy skills of their children. By testing and investigating my hypotheses rather than laying blaming, the research also challenged my moral values. This study reshaped my previous understanding and my attitude towards parents.

This research is also of value to the school where the study was conducted. The school board and the community could capitalize on my findings and improve or develop strategies to address some of the issues in order to improve parental participation and the importance of literacy development of their children.

The training of parents in family literacy could be one of the aspects to be considered. Shortcomings emerged from the study as follows:

- Poor educational level of parents
- Low socio-economic conditions
- Lack of parent's empowerment in terms of training, support, workshops
- Poor literacy environment (signboards, magazines, newspapers, billboards, libraries, educational and language games/toys, etc.)
- Lack of a reading culture, abilities and skills.

The fact that very little Namibian literature on the topic could be obtained and that I had to rely on literature from other countries is in itself evidence of the need for more research in this area. Having said that, it appears that the issues which emerged from this study could inform literacy work in the Omaheke region and in the country at large.

6.5 Reflection on the research process

This section discusses the lessons learnt during the research process throughout the two year Master's course.

The study has built my research knowledge, skills and attitudes by:

- Creating an understanding of the logical steps in the research, such as establishing the questions/hypotheses to be answered/explored.

- Developing my knowledge in the formulation of relevant and appropriate questions which would focus the study and also how to conduct interviews effectively: probing, sensitivity, ethical considerations and confidentiality.
- Exposing me to the importance of triangulation and evidence seeking during the research process. This has enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings.
- Developing my writing skills in general including data analysis and presentation and discussion in a logical and reader friendly way. Also important were coherence, flow of ideas, focus, discipline, informative and critical writing, just to mention a few.

Having referred to the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired, it would be worth mentioning that the research process was challenging, and demanded a lot of sacrifice and time management to reach deadlines. However, most importantly it was rewarding both personally and professionally.

I became knowledgeable about the phenomena I studied through exposure to professional literature, discussions with colleagues, interviews and the writing process.

6.6 Limitations of my study

This is a very small-scale research project that involves one teacher from a rural school in the Omaheke region, nine parents and their six children. Therefore generalizations are difficult. A large scale study would obviously have the advantage of generalizing the findings but may lack the depth a case study can achieve. Therefore this study may be useful to cases in similar settings. The findings of my study provide a greater insight into family participation in literacy development in a rural school and this finding may to some extent be applicable to other schools and communities in similar contexts.

My inexperience as an interviewer was also a limitation. There were occasions when the use of closed ended questions (i.e. yes/no questions) to probe may have shaped the responses of the interviewees. For example:

Question: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Question: Do your parents help you with reading and writing homework?

However, attempts were made to follow such questions with open-ended questions to open up the discussion. For example:

Question: Can you read?

Follow up: What kinds of things do you like reading?

Question: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Follow up: Can you tell me about these problems

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the key findings. Tentative suggestions for future research were provided. The potential value of the study was discussed followed by the limitations of the study.

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APPENDICES


APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR

27-JUN-2006 11:07 FROM: DIRECTOR'S OFFICE-ED 065273341 TO: 0062509073 P: 3/3

14/JUN 2006 12:41 FAX 062502813 NIED 001

NIED
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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE for
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
Private Bag 2034
Okahandja
NAMIBIA

Enquiries: G Siririka
File No.: 10/3/6/7

14 June 2006

TO: THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR:
KUNENE REGION

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO VISIT SCHOOLS FOR RESEARCH


I am an Education Officer at NIED in the division: Curriculum and Research Development responsible for the Broad Curriculum. I am currently enrolled as a student at Rhodes University for the degree of Master of Education (M.Ed) in the Faculty of Education.

I am doing research in the involvement of parents in their children's literacy at Lower Primary level and how teachers are encouraging parents in the education of their children.

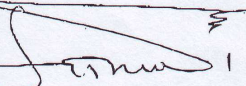
Therefore I hereby apply for a permission to visit randomly selected primary school offering Otjiherero medium instruction to learners in your region, to administer my research instruments (learner competency tests, and interviews with Grade 3 teachers and learners). If permission is granted, arrangements will be made with the principal of the selected school for visits in June and July 2006.

Thank you very much for kindly considering my request.

Yours sincerely


Gisela Siririka

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
2006-05-14
REGISTRY
Private Bag 2034 OKAHANDJA
NAMIBIA

① Acknowledge and approved


② cc Copy for NIED Director.

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APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

OMAHEKE REGIONAL OFFICE

P. O. Box 1293, GOBABIS

Enquiries: C.L. de Jager, Tel: (062) 562465 Fax: (062) 562888

14 June 2006

Mrs. G. Siririka
NIED
P/Bag 2034
Okahandja


Dear Mrs. Siririka

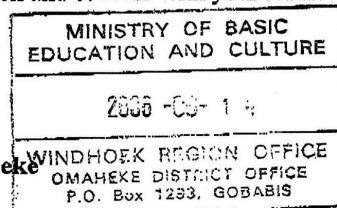
RE: YOUR RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS

Please be informed that permission is granted to visit schools of your choice for purposes of your research.

Please arrange with principals of those schools in order to arrange their programme in such a way to cause the least interruption of the normal school programme.

Wishing you best of luck and success with your studies.


C.L. de Jager
I/E Circuit 01: Omaheke



APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO SCHOOL



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE for
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Private Bag 2034
Okahandja
NAMIBIA

Tel: +264 62 509000
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E-mail: gsiririka@nied.edu.na

Enquiries: G Siririka
File No.: 10/3/6/7

03 March 2006

TO: THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
OMAHEKE REGION

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

I am an Education Officer at NIED in the division: Curriculum and Research Development responsible for the Broad Curriculum. I am currently enrolled as a student at Rhodes University for the degree of Master of Education (M.Ed) in the Faculty of Education.

I am doing research in the involvement of parents in their children's literacy at Lower Primary level and how teachers are encouraging parents in the education of their children.

Therefore I hereby apply for a permission to visit your school to administer my research instruments (interviews with Grade 3 teachers and learners). If permission is granted, the research will be conducted from June 2006.

I would like to assure you that anonymity and confidentiality are of the most importance. Hence, the identity of your school or any other information provide will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of the research and for no other purpose.

Thank you very much for kindly considering my request.

Yours faithfully

Gisela Siririka

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER FROM SCHOOL

06 February 2006
P.O. Box 1181
Gobabis

P.O. Box 112
Okahandja

Attention: Gisela Siririika

Dear Sir

RE: PERMISSION TO VISIT SCHOOLS FOR RESEARCH

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 06 February 2006 in respect of the above.

Kindly be informed that permission is granted to visit our school for your research.

Regards

.....
Principal

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE TRADITIONAL LEADER

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE TRADITIONAL LEADER

P O Box 112
Okahandja
06 February 2006

TO: THE ROYAL HOUSE

Dear Sir

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN THE
COMMUNITY**

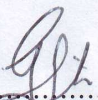
I am an Education Officer at NIED in the division: Curriculum and Research Development responsible for the Broad Curriculum. I am currently enrolled as a student at Rhodes University for the degree of Master of Education (M.Ed) in the Faculty of Education.

I am doing research in the involvement of parents in their children's literacy development at Lower Primary level and how teachers are supporting parents in the education of their children.

Therefore I hereby apply for a permission to visit your constituency. If permission is granted, arrangements will be made with the selected parents for visits from June 2006.

Thank you very much for kindly considering my request.

Yours sincerely


.....
Gisela Siririka

APPENDIX F: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE ROYAL HOUSE

THE ROYAL HOUSE

Attention: Gisela Siririka

Dear Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO VISIT THE COMMUNITY FOR RESEARCH

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 06 February 2006 in respect of visiting our community.

Kindly be informed that permission is granted to visit our community for your research.

Regards

.....
Chief

APPENDIX G: MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the research explained to me, and I have understood the explanation statement read to me. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be audio taped
- Make myself available for a further interview should that be required

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that my participation is voluntary; that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the research, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the research without being disadvantaged in any way.

Name:.....Date:.....

Signature.....

APPENDIX H: TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name of teacher:

Gender:

Age:

Home language:

Number of years of teaching experience:

Name of school:

Type of school:

Qualifications:

For how long have you been here?

What is your highest teaching qualification? Can you describe it to me?

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

What role do you as a teacher play with regard to parental involvement in the development of children's literacy?

What do you feel is the most effective way to communicate with parents to help in the development of reading aptitude?

How often did you as a teacher meet with parents each year? Can you elaborate?

How can parents help their children with the development of literacy at home?

How do you ensure that parents read to their children?

How does your school recognize parents as partners in education?

What mechanism does the school use to create effective communication channels between the school and the parents?

Are there any awareness campaigns that empower parents in the development of their children's literacy? Can you describe them to me?

What is the parents; attitude to their children's' literacy work?

Why do they have this attitude? (If it is negative) how could this attitude be improved?

Do parents attend school meetings?

Why do you think parents attend or do not attend?

Do you give your learners reading and writing homework? What kind of homework do you set? Can you please describe it to me?

Do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write? How do you think they should do this?

APPENDIX I: PARENT'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Marital status:

Type of employment/work:

Home language:

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

How long have you lived in this house?

What is the highest grade you attended at school?

How many people stay in your home?

How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Do you have electricity?

What language is mostly spoken at home?

Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Can you read?

What kind of things do you like to read?

How many of your family members can read? Do they help children to read and do home work?

Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories? What kind of stories does he/she tell?

Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Do you spend time talking to your child? Roughly how much time do you spend chatting each day?

What kind of things do you talk about?

How often do you read in front of your child?

Does your child like to be read to? If so, how often do you read to your child? Do you ask questions?

What does your child do that shows his/her interest in reading? Or non interest? Are you responding to her/his questions? How do you respond to these questions?

Does your child bring schoolwork to do at home?

Does he/she have to do reading and writing for homework?

Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Does the teacher support you in the literacy development of your child?

Do you ever help your child with reading and writing? If yes, how? If not, why not?

Do you remember your parents sharing reading with you?

Are you as a parent involved in developing your children's literacy e.g. playing, talking and rhyme?

Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

What kind of stories do you tell?

Do you remember your parents sharing songs or stories with you?

Do you share songs with your children?

How often do you attend school activities such as meetings, educational programs etc.?

Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow books? Do you think it's necessary to have one?

APPENDIX J: CHILDREN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gender:

Age:

Home language:

1. Who takes care of you?
3. In which Grade are you?
4. How many people stay in your home?
5. What language is mostly spoken at home?

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell me how your parents help you with reading and writing homework?
2. How many of your family members can read?
3. Do your parents ever read aloud to you? (If yes,) what kind of books do they like reading to you?
4. How often do they read to you?
5. Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?
6. What kind of songs do your parents sing to you?
7. What kind of play are your parents involved in with you?
8. What kind of conversations do your parents have with you?
9. What kind of reading materials do you have in your home? For example are any books, newspapers and magazines
10. What do you use your school or class library for?
11. What kind of stationary do you have at home? Things like pens, pencils and paper?
12. How often do your parents attend school activities such as meetings, educational programs etc.?

APPENDIX K: TEACHER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name of teacher: Elfriede (pseudonym)

Sex: Female

Age: 49

Home Language: Otjiherero

Number of years of teaching experience: 21

Name of School: Ngeama Primary School

Qualification: ECP

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning madam [sound of papers]

Teacher: *Yes, good morning* [very soft]

Interviewer: Are you ready for the interview?

Teacher: *Sure.*

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: How long have you been teaching here?

Teacher: *Four years*

Interviewer: What are your highest teaching qualifications? Can you describe it to me?

Teacher: *Aeh, [uncomfortable] only Lower Primary Certificate*

Interviewer: What do you understand by family literacy?

Teacher: [Silent] *A program that helps parents and children to read and write*

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: What role do you as a teacher play with regard to parental involvement in the development of children's literacy?

Teacher: [Smile] I encourage parents to help their children with reading and writing homework by sending reading homework e.g. simple reading books, cutting out words and pictures from newspapers. I do home visits if necessary to show parents how to help their children with homework. I keep parents informed about my classroom activities especially the reading activities.

Interviewer: How often do you as a teacher meet with parents each year?

Teacher: Frequently

Interviewer: Can you elaborate more?

Teacher: We have three meetings during the year where we discuss matters on issues such as school development fund, discipline, policy issues etc. Then we have meetings where parents are requested to come and see the work of their children.

Interviewer: How often do you meet parents on meetings where they come and see their children's books?

Teacher: This is twice a year but parents are allowed to come in anytime they feel they want to talk to the teachers about their children's progress. We do have an open door policy. They are free to come.

Follow up: Do parents know that they can come anytime and talk to teachers? Do they have this information?

Teacher: Ya. Exactly. We informed them at the beginning of the year and we announce this over the radio and meetings.

Interviewer: [Quite interesting] How do you think parents can help their children with the development of literacy at home?

Teacher: Parents can read to their children, they can tell stories and ask children to retell; they can read to their children and help if children don't know how to read or ask their older siblings to read to them.

Interviewer: Hmmm. You mentioned that parents can read to their children?

Teacher: That's right.

Follow up: What if parents are illiterate?

Teacher: Oh! They can ask their older siblings and neighbours to help. If they cannot help then I'm ready to help.

Follow up: Do parents read to their children?

Teacher: Uh! [frowns] That's where the main problem is. Parents are not serious with the education of their children. If you give reading homework children will tell you that they didn't read because they don't know how to read and their parents don't want to help. Children always tell me that they are only helped by older siblings and neighbours. The other problem is that fathers don't do it; they think it is the responsibility of the mother. You know how our people are. The only thing I will say they read is may be the Bible. I don't think that children will learn what is in the curriculum by only reading the Bible. I tell parents to read our readers to the children but it is time wasting.

Follow up: Do you think parents talk to their children on literacy development?

Teacher: [Yaah] Parents do talk to their children but not on literacy activities. They talk about things in general but not on literacy development of their children.

Interviewer: Do you give your learners reading and writing homework?

Teacher: Oh! Yeah.

Interviewer: What kind of homework do you set? Can you please describe them to me?

Teacher:[laughter] I give them reading homework where children have to bring a piece from a newspaper on famous people in our country or sometime they have to circle all the words that starts with 'st' or 'br' and bring it to the class so that we can do it as group. They get flash cards homework where they have to come with their own words on a piece of paper. I give them homework on designing a birthday or invitation cards. I ask them to read the sports, weather, news and entertainment sections of the newspaper and come and tell stories in their own words. I borrow them simple reading books which are appropriate to their level and ask them to return it the next day to develop responsibility and independence.

Follow up: Do they do all these activities

Teacher: Aeh, Some do it. It is not easy. It is a matter of doing it again and again.

Children homework is never done. Parents send books back to school. It is frustrating.

Interviewer: What about storytelling?

Teacher: Hmm! How will one know? But I can always see from the children if I asked them to tell stories from home. They will not tell. I tell you. They will just tell the ones I told them in the class. No new stories from home. Some even tell me that parents don't tell them stories.

Interviewer: Do you encourage parents to sing to their children? How do parents do this?

Teacher: Ija. Parents sing songs to their children which have nothing to do with literacy. Yes. They sing together in the church but not our literacy songs we sing in our classroom. For example, we have a lot of songs. They sing the alphabet song, days of the week, months of the year and many other songs. We do follow a small book with songs for Grade 3 children.

Interviewer: Do you think literacy can be developed through playing?

Teacher: Yeah! Very much.

Follow up: Can you elaborate more?

Teacher: Oh! Children play school which I think helps them very much. Those who play school are performing better in class especially in reading. They have the confidence. I mean they are not shy. They do different activities I teach them in the classroom. If you listen and watch what they play, you will be amazed by what they are doing. They are acting as teachers. You feel proud! They do everything I do in the classroom. They are reading to each other, drawing pictures and talking like a teacher. They don't just play but also marking the scripts of others. You won't believe it. They use old pieces of paper, boxes and the sand to write their activities. When you look at it you will see it as the best way children can learn because they know each other better. They sing, pray and listen to the teacher. They ask each other questions. What is very interesting is when they change their voices the way I do it in the class. [Smiling] They shout and talk very softly. They write and read which tells you that they will become good readers and writers in the future through this simple play. They make jokes and laugh. We share this in the classroom the next day and I encourage the shy children to participate in this type of play. This is working, believe me.

Interviewer: What mechanism does the school use to create effective communication channels between the school and the parents?

Teacher: We encourage them to attend meetings, some are school board members. They are involved in social activities of the school such as concert, debates, bazaars etc. We involve them in sport activities, fundraising activities and I keep them informed about the classroom activities and homework. We send reports quarterly. We phone them and send letters with their children, relatives or friends for those who cannot reach the school.

Follow up: Do you think it is a good method to send messages with friends and relatives

Teacher: Not always. We experienced a lot of problems on this issue. Friends and relatives don't convey the message and we end up phoning or announcing over the radio which cost the school a lot of money.

Interviewer: How often does the school keep parents informed about the progress of their children in literacy?

Teacher: Parents are informed frequently by sending letters, sending messages and announcing over the radio on other school issues but not on literacy development.

Interviewer: How often do you as a teacher do home visits?

Teacher: I only visit parents if a child does not do his or her homework or not coming to school and that is when I go to the home to find out.

Follow up: Do you think the school is doing enough to support parents in literacy development of their children?

Teacher: I know. We don't support parents in literacy development because they don't come and ask. Parents in this community do not make effort to come and find out how they can help their children with literacy homework. They only come when they get a rapport with poor results shouting the teachers or if they hear that a teacher did something wrong to their child.

Interviewer: Are there any ways you as a Grade 3 teacher use to empower parents in the development of their children's literacy?

Teacher: If I understand you quite well you mean the methods I'm using to help parents in helping their children?

Interviewer: That's right.

Teacher: Oh! Yeah. For example, I called all Grade3 parents at the beginning of the year where I tried to tell them how to help their children with literacy homework. It was only once and that's it. I'm very busy I cannot just keep on calling parents.

Follow up: Can you share some examples with me?

Teacher: I told them that they can read our readers in a simple way pray with their children or ask them to pray the school prayer, allow playing freely and talking to them in a polite way, do shopping with them and explaining things in the shop as buying.

Follow up: Do you think that is good enough to help the parents?

Teacher: I think parents are motivated but the school has not tried to ask parents to tell stories, sing for the learners, share their experiences or read something to the children. It is our fault

Interviewer: What is the parents' attitude to their children's literacy work?

Teacher: Parents don't understand the literacy because most of them cannot read or write whole others are ignorant, negative and not interested. Is difficult....

Interviewer: Why do they have this attitude? (If it is negative) how could this attitude be improved?

Teacher: Parents, don't understand because they are illiterate. On the other hand, I feel that it will not help to develop the literacy of the children without developing the literacy of the parents as well. But parents whether literate or not they can still tell stories, talk or pray to their children. Maybe is a matter of not knowing again that these are part of literacy activities one can use to help the child.

Interviewer: Do parents attend school meetings?

Teacher: Not really. You will divide parents into two groups, those who attend and those who don't attend.

Interviewer: Why do you think parents attend or do not attend?

Teacher: [windy, noise] The main problem is poor education level of the parents. It is sometimes difficult to expect them to help, but no other choice. They have to. They lack knowledge and skills of what education is. The apartheid system kept them behind and now they feel education scares them. One will say that they lack the interest because the school is not far and those who are far from the school do attend. Distance is the problem to those who stays far and not for everyone. Single parents do suffer because they cannot afford it to support their children. Some parents are ignorant they don't even ask the children's home work. A home visit is a main problem because I will not be able to visit all parents even though I'm doing it sometimes. There is a lack of parent, child

and teacher interaction which is one of the contributing factors. I will also add that teachers are overloaded with work but we want them to do home visit. It is difficult. The serious problem is poverty in this community. Parents are lonely therefore their involvement is very low. Some parents want to be involved but they don't have money, they are economically disadvantaged

Follow up: You mention 'Ovandu ozongunga' what does that means?

Teacher: [laughs loudly] hmm. Where do you stay if you do not know these idioms? It means lonely

Interviewer: Thank you. What about finance problem?

Teacher: Lack of finance is a big problem as parents get money from pension which is not enough. This money is not enough to buy reading materials and pay for the school fees. As you know this community is economically very poor.

Interviewer: How would you describe the availability of literacy resources in this community?

Teacher: Parents live in a poor environment with no reading materials. There are no enough newspapers in their mother tongue. No books which they can understand better. You will not even find any street sign, sign board or libraries here.

Follow up: You mentioned loneliness as problem. Can you elaborate more?

Teacher: You know what? Single parents attend less school meetings because there is no one to look after the children.

Follow up: Who are the most attendees of school meetings?

Teacher: Mothers attend meetings more than fathers do. Married couples attend more than single parents

Follow up: What do you think are the causes of this?

Teacher: A mother is the one who is lovable, kind, caring and responsible. If she has a child somewhere she will be curious to know how the child is performing at school. Married couples I don't know

Follow up: Quite interesting to find out. What do you think should we do to improve this situation?

Teacher: Parents need a conducive environment where they can help their children with homework, an environment with reading and writing materials. They need an

environment that motivates their reading abilities, an environment with street signs, sign boards, labels, libraries and television.

Interviewer: Do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write?

Teacher: Yes

Follow up: How do you think they should do this?

Teacher: They have to do it by buying newspapers, magazines and simple reading books from shops, they can do shopping with their children, tell stories, sing with and to their children, recite poems and allow their children to play.

Interviewer: Does your school have a library?

Teacher: Yes, we have but not in use due to certain problems

Interviewer: Can you share some of these problems with me?

Teacher: We don't have a specialist in libraries. This is somebody who knows how to classify books on the shelves. We all know how to use books but we don't know how to put them on the shelves Above all books are not enough. These are just small amount of books donated by Samaritans.

Follow up: Do you think it is necessary to have a librarian?

Teacher: I think it is essential. Parents will use it if they are told how to use it. Children as well will use it. It will improve their reading skills and maybe encourage them to read. I mean the culture of reading which lacks. I hope so.

Interviewer: What strategies, if any, do you use to encourage reading for pleasure in your classroom?

Teacher: I read aloud for them over and over again everyday. I encourage their imagination. I tell fantasy stories e.g. 'Wolf and Jackal', 'Three Little Pigs', 'The Red Hen' etc. I share newspaper articles of interest with them e.g. sport stories, news items favourite heroes such as Frankie, leaders and weather report. I use wordless books for them to develop their own sense of the story. Children tell stories from illustrations in these books. We look at pictures and talk about them and link the story to our personal life experiences. I ask them to talk about their favourite parts of the book I was reading, why they liked the book or what they didn't like about it. I tell them stories about reading in my childhood. I ask them to bring environmental print to the classroom such as soup, soap, matches, milk, tea, sugar labels.

Interviewer: Do you give learners reading tasks to do at home?

Teacher: I give, but not too much because parents have poor education.

Follow up: Could you tell me some tasks you give?

Teacher: I give reading aloud homework from our reader, rhymes and poetry. Also give them homework where they have to do group booklets with a collection of stories, cartoons and articles on home, community, and environment. Sometimes they get homework where they have to practice correct spelling and punctuation in a sentence. I ask children to come with a picture from a newspaper or magazine of a person who is sad, happy, angry and tired to the classroom and we discuss it. We talk about the various expressions on the faces. This exercise helps them to identify their feelings. They like it.

Interviewer: What do you do if a child did not do his/her homework due to that his/her parents are illiterate and could not assist the child?

Teacher: I help by keeping the child in the classroom after school. I first inform the parents. We do have remedial teaching where I sit and help those who need help.

Follow up: Hmm. You mention remedial teaching. Can you tell me more?

Teacher: [silent for a while] Ya. If a child has a problem or cannot cope in the classroom then you help this child in the afternoon. But I use it also for those who do not complete their homework with their parents at home. The time is not enough to do that in a 40 minutes period therefore I prefer to do it after school.

Interviewer: Do you have anything else to say?

Teacher: Yes, our parents do understand education as only sending the child to school, pay schoolfee, buying pens, rubbers, books, school uniform etc. but to my experience it has to do with the way the parent communicate with their children at home, how they help their children with homework, especially literacy activities. This lacks in our community. Parents need empowerment!

Interviewer: Thanks.

Teacher: [wait] I have something else to say. One cannot just mention the negative things there are good things our parents do. They support our fundraising activities such as bazaars, concert, painting the school. This school as you sees it was painted by the parents. There are other school affairs where they help. It is not good to leave these out.

Interviewer: Do parents visit the school regularly?

Teacher: Parents are only visiting the school if they are called in by the teacher or if there is a problem with their child. You never see some parents visiting the school, they are ignorant.

Interviewer: What do you feel is the most effective way to communicate with parents in the development of literacy?

Teacher: Do home visits, have parent-teacher day and encourage parents to tell stories to their children. Parents who can read can do it to their children. We need to encourage parents to attend literacy classes so that they can help their children. We also need to encourage parents to read newspapers, magazines and other reading materials.

Interviewer: One more question. How do you see the lack of electricity as a problem?

Teacher: Electricity is a serious problem in our village. Children can not study during the evening. They should only study during the day. This is difficult because is too much work for teachers. Children do home chores during the day which means no time to do homework rather than taking back to the teacher.

Follow up: What is your view on the importance of electricity in literacy development?

Teacher: Electricity will enable children to study during the evening after finishing home chores. They will be able to read their homework especially reading homework.

Interviewer: Thanks, madam

Teacher: Welcome.

APPENDIX L: PARENTS INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIPTS

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Mr Uazuu (pseudonym)

Gender: Male

Age: 45

Home Language: Otjiherero

Highest level of education: Grade 6

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning:

Mr Uazuu: Yes, morning

Interviewer: Are you ready?

Mr Uazuu: Yes.

[Give background about the interview]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Interviewee: No, We can start.

[Okay]

2. QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you lived in this house?

Mr Uazuu: Eeh! This place had been my grandparents place. I have been here for about forty years

Interviewer: What is the highest grade you attended at school?

Mr Uazuu: [Thinking] *Grade 8*

Interviewer: I see. How many people stay in your home?

Mr Uazuu: [counting on his fingers] *We are five*

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Mr Uazuu: *The one you see over there. It is a one bedroom house.*

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing

Mr Uazuu: *Comfortable*

Follow up: Do you have electricity? If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night?

Mr Uazuu: *Where? We don't have. At night we use traditional lamp light, during the day we make fire to cook.*

Interviewer: Do you think electricity is necessary for you child's learning?

Mr Uazuu: *Electricity is needed. How on earth can children study during the day only? The time is not enough for them because during the day they need to collect wood and fetch water and the only time they can study is night time. It is difficult.*

Interviewer: What language is mostly spoken at home?

Mr Uazuu: *We speak Otjiherero*

Follow up: Is it the same language of instruction of the school?

Mr Uazuu: *Yes, Otjiherero and English.*

[Stop] Make sure whether the tape is working.

Okay, Lets proceed.

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Can you read?

Mr Uazuu: *Yes, I can read*

Follow up: What kind of things do you like to read?

Mr Uazuu: *The Bible. I read schoolbooks as well.*

Interviewer: Do you help your girl with reading and writing?

Mr Uazuu: Yes, if my wife finds things difficult I help her if I'm around. I'm always at the cattle post.

Interviewer: Do you have exercise books for your children to write in?

Mr Uazuu: We don't have exercise books for the children to write in. The books are kept at school and we don't have money to buy books. It is better to do writing at school.

Follow up: Do you read to your child if you are around?

Mr Uazuu: Oh, yeah...you know if I'm around I help and my wife as well. The neighbours and older siblings help as well. The children are helped by others.

Interviewer: Does the teacher give your child books to bring home?

Mr Uazuu: Every day

Interviewer: You mentioned that the teacher gives books to your child to bring home.

Interviewer: Does the teacher ask you to read to your child from these books?

Mr Uazuu: We are asked to read to them on a daily basis

Follow up: Does the teacher ask you to listen to your child reading?

Mr Uazuu: Listening? Not really.

Follow up: Does the teacher talk to you about how to support your child's literacy?

Mr Uazuu: Not what I remember

Interviewer: Is there anyone at home who can tell stories, and sing literacy songs to the child?

Mr Uazuu: This is what I know. These are traditional stories and stories about old people. Yeah. I enjoy storytelling very much. It can be ghost stories to simplified Bible stories about Adam and Eve and Jesus.

Follow up: What about singing?

Mr Uazuu: Singing yes. I'm a good singer but not school songs.

Follow up: You mentioned that you are a good singer, is that correct?

Mr Uazuu: Yes, that's right.

Follow up: What kinds of songs do you like singing?

Mr Uazuu: We sing songs from the Otjiherero hymn book, family songs and songs we sang during our childhood.

Interviewer: Do you remember your parents sharing songs or stories with you?

Mr Uazuu: I was blessed to listen to stories narrated by my grandmother with the kind of warm feeling I got. What was important was the love I could feel between myself and my grandmother. I think that is a fondest memory I will never forget.

Interviewer: Are you as apparent involved in play with your child?

Mr Uazuu: Yeah. Yeah. I like sport. I like watching children playing traditional games i.e. Amangus. Children learn a lot of things through playing together. They teach each other a lot of things. Their mind and body develop.

Interviewer: Does the teacher support you in literacy development of your child?

Mr Uazuu: We struggle on our own without any support from anyone whether it is a teacher or whoever. One thing we can be sure of is that they will ask for their money.

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Mr Uazuu: No. No. No. we don't have. We don't have because these children are still young to read them. They cannot read but I see them cutting pictures from magazines which I don't know where they get it from. Yeah.

Follow up: Do you read them?

Mr Uazuu: No, not always, I just read if I have time.

Reading materials are only found in urban or better areas and not in rural areas. People who have the money to buy magazines and who understand the importance of reading are living in towns. Libraries are only built in towns. You will never find a library in our communities.

[Stop] make sure whether the tape works.

Okay. Let's proceed.

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Mr Uazuu: Yes, I do have. We buy it when we go to Gobabis. They have it in their plastic bags.

Interviewer: How often do you attend school activities such as meetings and educational programmes etc.?

Mr Uazuu: Not always because I'm most of the time at the village.

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy classes, workshops or training?

Mr Uazuu: *What? workshops? It was only last year when I attended a meeting on the election of school board members. It had had nothing to do with literacy but just the election.*

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow reading books?

Mr Uazuu: *Aah, no libraries here but only a shop where we buy our groceries.*

Follow up: Do you think is important to have it.

Mr Uazuu: *Yes, sure, for children and ourselves. We can read and improve our skills.*

Interviewer: Can you encourage other parents to take part in reading and writing?

Mr Uazuu: *Education is most important; especially when you want to write some announcement or sent a message, children can help you. So Education is important parent should send their children to schools for education.*

Interviewer: Thank you, Mr Uazuu

Mr Uazuu: *Good.*

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Mrs Uazuu (pseudonym)

Age: 41

Sex: Female

Marital status: Married

Type of employment/work: Unemployed

Home language: Otjiherero

Highest level of education: 9

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning, Ms Uazuu

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes, good morning, Ms Siririka*

Interviewer: Are you ready for the interview?

Mrs Uazuu: *[laughter] Sure.*

[Give background about the interview]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Mrs Uazuu: *Good, you can start.*

[Okay]

2. QUESTION ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: How long have you been at this house?

Mrs Uazuu: *I have been here for two years only*

Interviewer: What is the highest grade you attended?

Mrs Uazuu: *I completed Grade 9*

Interviewer: Do you have children in Grade 3?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes I have one*

Interviewer: How many of you stay in your home?

Mrs Uazuu: [quiet.....counting] *We are seven and eight if my husband is around*

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Mrs Uazuu: *No, No, is not comfortable. Children don't study well, because the house is small and full of luggage and the lamp light is not good for the eyes which mean that the child should always study during the day. Many times children don't study during the day because I have to send them to collect wood and fetch water. There is no wood, no water. When they come from school.....go and fetch water and collect wood. This means there is no time for the children to study during the day, the only way left is to study at night and the candle is very poor.*

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Mrs Uazuu: *No, is only one room*

Interviewer: Do you have electricity?

Mrs Uazuu: [laughter] *We don't have electricity, therefore children don't study*

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night?

Mrs Uazuu: *Lamplight and wood for cooking*

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Mrs Uazuu: *We speak Otjiherero*

Follow up: Is that your mother tongue?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes.*

Interviewer: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes and English as a subject*

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Can you read?

Mrs Uazuu: [laughter] *Yes, I can.*

Interviewer: What kind of things do you like to read?

Mrs Uazuu: *We want them to follow our moral values, therefore I read the Bible to them so that they can know what is good and bad. I read almost everything in the Bible. I prefer Bible stories because I don't like crime stories.*

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read? Do they help children to read and do home work?

Mrs Uazuu: *It's only me.*

Follow up: What about the father if he is around?

Mrs Uazuu: *No, he does not help because he has poor education but he makes sure that I help them.*

Interviewer: Does your child like to be read to? If so, do you ask her questions?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes, she likes it very much. Hmmm! I don't ask questions always.*

Interviewer: How often do you read to her?

Mrs Uazuu: *After school and every evening before bedtime.*

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows his/her interest in reading? Or non interest?

Mrs Uazuu: *She looks at me, smiles and asks simple questions.*

Interviewer: Are you responding to her/his questions? How do you respond to these questions?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes, I answer what I know. If I don't know I refer them back to the teacher, telling them that I don't understand.*

Interviewer: Does your child bring home schoolwork to do at home?

Mrs Uazuu: Yes

Interviewer: Does he have to do reading and writing for homework?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes, especially writing.*

Interviewer: What kind of things does he have to do for reading and writing homework?

Mrs Uazuu: *Reading from their readers and answer questions. Reading stories and retells the next day to the teacher.*

Interviewer: Does the teacher support you in literacy development of your child?

Mrs Uazuu: *I cannot remember a day when a teacher helped me on how to develop the literacy of my child. They just send reading books home but they don't tell us how to do it. It is difficult.*

Interviewer: Do you ever help your child with reading and writing? If yes, how? If not, why not?

Mrs Uazuu: [Atata!] *Yes, especially writing I help. Reading I never helped a child coming to me with the problem of reading homework but they come with writing homework. I help them do it on a piece of paper, but more in the sand than on a piece of paper because we don't have papers.*

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Mrs Uazuu: *There are many problems*

Follow up: Can you tell me about these problems?

Mrs Uazuu: *Poverty is a problem. We try but it is a big problem. You have to buy food everyday, the hostel capacity is too small, it cannot accommodate all children, and you have to buy food. How can a poor woman like me buy food and stationeries everyday? You need to have water and wood. Children have to collect it at the water point and wood in the field and they are also human beings. They are tired from school. The only food we provide to our children is porridge mixed with sour milk (Omaere). Children need to eat body building food but we don't have money to buy it. Therefore we give them porridge from the beginning of the year till the end of the year.*

Interviewer: Do you remember your parents sharing reading with you?

Mrs Uazuu: *There were no books at home, my parents could not read. The environment where I grew up did not encourage reading at all. It is only when I started Sub A. And I remember that quite clearly. I grew up in a poor family background where you couldn't see a book.*

Interviewer: Do you as a parent play and talk to your child?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yeah! Ijaa!. We talk about social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse. It is popular in this village among the youth. If we don't talk now.....then I don't know. I talk about the cultural values I want them to have.*

Follow up: And what about playing?

Mrs Uazuu: *Aeh! Only look at how they play.*

Follow up: Why do you think children should play?

Mrs Uazuu: [Sjoe!] *I think that they need to relax and communicate with their friends through play.*

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Mrs Uazuu: *Aaah! no, Is only me*

Follow up: *What about the father if he is around?*

Mrs Uazuu: *He does it sometimes.*

Follow up: What kind of stories do you like to tell?

Mrs Uazuu: *Traditional stories, stories from my grand parents and I would like to share one with you if you have time.*

Interviewer: Sure! Good.

Mrs Uazuu: [Telling]

Follow up: What do children learn from the story?

Mrs Uazuu: *It tells us that we should think before we do something. The woman in this story just acted without thinking because of poverty and she found herself in trouble.*

Interviewer: Do you remember your parents sharing songs or stories with you?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes, very much. I was very happy when they told stories and my father was also a good singer which means that before bedtime we came together as a family and sang. My children come let's sing, this is your inheritance you must not miss it. Therefore we used to sing as a family. But I was not a good singer, I use to listen, come and listen to them. It was interesting.*

Follow up: Can you share one with me?

Mrs Uazuu: [laughing].....*a song? I can.....* [Making the voice ready]... [Singing loudly hymn number 1 from the Otjiherero hymn book. Mukuru eje ngatague]

Interviewer: Do you share literacy songs with your children?

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes, singing songs and hold evening church where we pray and sing before bedtime. The alphabet song, she is mad about it and some other songs which I cannot remember now.*

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Mrs Uazuu: *No, we don't have*

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Mrs Uazuu: *No, only if we go to town. The school sells. We buy and keep it at school.*

Interviewer: How often do you attend school activities such as meetings, educational programs etc? Give some of your experiences about these meetings

Mrs Uazuu: *Yes, I attend school meetings. It is always on school issues such as looking at our children's books, school fees, discipline and other school issues. If the child is doing fine I encourage her to do better than if the child is performing poorly I come and help her at home by telling her that it seems that you perform poorly and you need to work hard. We talk. This is how we work.*

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow books?

Mrs Uazuu: *No. There is no library in this community*

Interviewer: Do you think it's necessary to have one?

Mrs Uazuu: *Oh, Yeah! Very much. It will be good for the children to read. It is very important. It is also important to me because I will be able to read. I need to relax by reading an interesting book, learning about the importance of libraries, develop love for books on how to care about them, and improve my reading skills.*

1. **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Name: Mr Karuu (pseudonym)

Gender: Male

Age: 46

Home Language: Otjiherero

Highest level of education: Grade 10

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning:

Mr Karuu: Yes, morning

Interviewer: Are you ready?

Mr Karuu: Yes.

[Give background about the interview]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Interviewee: No, I don't have.

[Okay]

2. QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been a resident at this place?

Mr Karuu: I have been here for maybe three years now.

Interviewer: What is the highest grade you attended?

Mr Karuu: I completed standard 8 (Grade 10)

Interviewer: Do you have children?

Mr Karuu: Yes, we have

Interviewer: How many of you stay in your home?

Mr Karuu: [counting on his fingers] seven. We are six.

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Mr Karuu: one bedroom house.

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing

Mr Karuu: *It is not comfortable*

Follow up: Do you have electricity?

Mr Karuu: *No, we don't have children study during the day but when they study for the exam we use candles. We need electricity urgently. Children don't have enough time because they have to collect wood and fetch water after school. It is really difficult children will learn how to speak English, how to listen and stories as well.*

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night?

Mr Karuu: *We use wood to cook*

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Mr Karuu: *We do speak Otjiherero*

Follow up: Is it the same language of instruction of the school?

Mr Karuu: *Yes.*

[Stop] Make sure whether the tape is working.

Okay, Lets proceed.

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Can you read?

Mr Karuu: *Yes, I can read*

Interviewer: What kind of things do you like reading?

Mr Karuu: *I read newspapers if I find them. Yes, sometimes on Fridays we receive old newspapers. We get it from Gobabis*

Interviewer: Do you help your girl with reading and writing?

Mr Karuu: *Yes, I help sometimes if I'm around because I stay at the cattle post*

Follow up: Do you read to your child if you are around?

Mr Karuu: *I read the Bible to them and homework from the school*

Follow up: What if you don't know the answer?

Mr Karuu: *I do understand, if not we ask the older siblings and neighbour children*

Follow up: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Mr Karuu: Not really.

Interviewer: Does the teacher give your child books to bring home?

Mr Karuu: [laughter] Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: Does the teacher ask you to read to your child? If so, what type reading does she want you to read?

Mr Karuu: She does. She gives small reading books such as 'The three little pigs' and 'The little red hen'.

Interviewer: Wow! Good. Do you remember your parents sharing reading with you?

Mr Karuu: No. They were illiterate, maybe the Bible only. They sang to us.

Interviewer: Is there anyone at home who likes to tell stories and songs to the child?

Mr Karuu:[Thinking]...hmm. It's me, my wife and the children

Follow up: You mentioned that your wife and children like storytelling and songs, is that correct?

Mr Karuu: Yes, that's right.

Follow up: What about you?

Mr Karuu: Yes. I tell stories.

Follow up: What kind of stories do you like telling?

Mr Karuu: I'm a story teller, not a reader. Yeah, especially in the evening the family comes together and sits down at night, surrounds the fire and listens attentively to the stories. These are stories about the stupid wolf and the clever jackal. You know what, children like it. They enjoy it.

Follow up: What does your child do that shows her interest?

Mr Karuu: She comes closer and asks questions. They listen and retell. One can just see that they understand what you tell.

Follow up: What kinds of songs do you like singing?

Mr Karuu: We sing songs from the Otjiherero hymn book, family songs and songs we sang during our childhood.

Interviewer: Do you remember your parents sharing songs or stories with you?

Mr Karuu: Yes. My mother was a good singer and storyteller.

Follow up: Can you share one story with me?

Mr Karuu: No. Come on! [Smile] No. I forgot.

Follow up: Do you think that you have learnt from this songs and stories?

Mr Karuu: It was informative and educative

Interviewer: Do you ever pray and talk to your children?

Mr Karuu: Yes, we attend church service on Sundays. We pray at bedtime.

Follow up: Talking?

Mr Karuu: We talk about general things in life.

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Mr Karuu: You will only find magazines and newspapers in towns not here where we stay. We don't have love for books and our education level is poor to read magazines and newspapers in English. We want materials in our own language.

Follow up: Do you read them?

Mr Karuu: [laughter] Sure.

Interviewer: Does the teacher support you in literacy development of your child?

Mr Karuu: Teachers only come if the child is absent for many days. One cannot really say we are supported by the teachers as to how to develop the literacy of our children. They are more concerned with absenteeism and money. Letters and messages on money are sent everyday.

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Mr Karuu: Yes, only at the beginning of the year and that's it. If finish that's the school problem.

Follow up: Does this only stay here at home or they take it to school?

Mr Karuu: They keep it at school

l Interviewer: How often do you attend school activities such as meetings and educational programmes etc.?

Mr Karuu: I attend if I can

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy classes workshops or training?

Mr Karuu: Never

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library

Mr Karuu: No. We don't have a library

Follow up: Do you think is important to have it.

Mr Karuu: Yes, Yes, it will help children to borrow books and read. Children will get information on all the other subjects. One wish to visit a library but where do we get the time? You cannot just say in the library... other men will regard you as stupid.

Interviewer: Can you encourage other parents to take part in reading and writing?

Mr Karuu: Yes, parents should attend literacy classes in order to help their children with literacy homework. Even if the children get their reports you will be able to read it for yourself. Now, if you illiterate then you will not help your child with homework.

Interviewer: Thanks:

Mr Karuu: Good-bye

1. **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Name: Mrs Karuu (pseudonym)

Age: 42

Sex: Female

Highest level of education: Grade 8

Home Language: Otjiherero

Marital status: Married

Type of employment/work: Unemployed

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning, Mrs Karuu

Mrs Karuu: Yes, good morning, Ms Siririka

Interviewer: Are you ready for the interview?

Mrs Karuu: Sure

Mrs Karuu: Good, you can start.

[Okay]

2. **QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

Interviewer: How long have you been at this house?

Mrs Karuu: Six years

Interviewer: What is the highest grade you attended?

Mrs Karuu: I only have Grade 8 qualification

Interviewer: Do you have children?

Mrs Karuu: Yes, seven.

Interviewer: Do they attend school?

Mrs Karuu: Yes, six attend at Ngeama Primary School and a five months baby.

Interviewer: How many of you are staying in your home?

Mrs Karuu: Wait! [Quiet...counting on her fingers] we are six, plus my husband coming and going to the cattle post and the baby of five months.

[Stop, making sure that the tape is working properly]

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Mrs Karuu: No. It is only one bedroom house. It is very small.

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Mrs Karuu: [laughter] No! No, children don't study. The house is too small [laughing loudly].....full of rubbish [chorus laugh]

[Stop]

Let's proceed.

Interviewer: Do you have electricity?

Mrs Karuu: Aaaah! No electricity!

Interviewer: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night?

Mrs Karuu: Wood and Lamp light!

Interviewer: How do the children learn or study?

Mrs Karuu: Children? They just study during the day because there is no electricity for them to see during the evening.

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Mrs Karuu: Is Otjiherero and English. Children communicate in English among themselves.

Interviewer: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Mrs Karuu: Right. Otjiherero is the first language.

3. **PERSCEPTUAL QUESTIONS**

Follow up: Can you read?

Mrs Karuu: Yes, I can.

Interviewer: How important is reading to you?

Mrs Karuu: Reading is important in life because in order to succeed in school you need to know how to read. In order to understand all the other subjects you need to know how to read and write. Again, you will only read if you see others reading, if you know where to get books to read and if you are encouraged to read and understand why you should read.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Mrs Karuu: Me and my husband if he is around.

Interviewer: Do you help your child with reading and writing home work?

Mrs Karuu: [change voice] Assisting? Yes, I read and help if she brings homework from school. She asks [Mamaa what does this means?] and I respond to her questions if it is easy. I help her only with those she cannot do. It is difficult I refer her to her father if he is around [laughing loudly]. Here I'm referring to English homework. I help her with all Otjiherero homework.

Follow up: Ooh! You just told me that if you don't know the answer you send the child to her father. Can you elaborate more why you are referring her to her father?

Mrs Karuu: The father is better educated than me. The father completed Grade 10 and he really helps where I cannot because he understands English better than I do. If he does not understand we send it back to school.

Follow up: What if the father is not around?

Mrs Karuu: Neighbours help

Interviewer: What kind of other things do you like to read to your children?

Mrs Karuu: No. No. The Bible! The Bible! No, we read the Bible only. We are not born again but we want our children to become Christians. We read word by word only but not so deeply.

[Stop, testing the tape]

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping you child to read and write?

Mrs Karuu: Yes, very much.

Interviewer: Can you tell about these problems?

Mrs Karuu: [uuuh!] You mean Problems? The main problem is just that I don't understand English to help my children with homework. Those in upper grades I really don't help them. English is a good language but we don't understand it very well. If you don't understand then you will not help. The Otjiherero homework I help because I can read and understand it. I teach her how to pronounce words, vocabulary and how to spell the words. For example I teach her 'Ma-ma-ma-I ko-tju-nda' it to make sounds.

Follow up: How do you encourage the child if you don't understand?

Mrs Karuu: Study! Study! Take your books and study. Now you don't know what the child should study if there is no one to help. The child has brought books home for the parents to help and the parents don't understand. How can the poor child study?

Interviewer: Interesting! What do you think are the contributing factors?

Mrs Karuu: It is our own fault. We don't upgrade ourselves by attending Literacy classes. We don't read because our parents never did this to us. Some parents...hmmm...have negative attitudes towards reading.

Interviewer: How can this be improved?

Mrs Karuu: Parents should upgrade their education;attend literacy classes and read newspapers and other reading materials. I don't think that if you ask a teacher to help you will refuse. No, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Mrs Karuu: Aaah! no, Is only me

Interviewer: What kind of stories do you tell?

Mrs Karuu: Traditional stories [ovihambarere], stories about my parents and grand parents, funny tales and stories about everyday happenings.

Interviewer: Can you share one of these stories with me?

Mrs Karuu: [Thinking] Once upon a time....wait....switch off....cannot remember the story...] [uuuh! Aaaa!] *Switch of....Gisela....don't spoil me....laughing...[coughing]* [stop....thinking] *start.....Once upon a time there was a woman and her child. The child's name was Throwaway.*

[She is telling]

Interviewer: What do you think does the child learn from the story?

Mrs Karuu: The story tells us about the importance marriage. It tells us that everyone is entitled to a husband or a wife in life

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows her interest in reading? Or non-interest?

Mrs Karuu: Ha! The moment I say let me tell you a story; you see a big smile on her face.

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home? Do you encourage your children to read them?

Mrs Karuu: [laughter] No. No. We don't have except the children's school books (subject books).

Interviewer: Can you share with me why you don't have them?

Mrs Karuu: They are very expensive. If I cannot afford to pay the school fee of my child how can I afford to buy magazines?

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home? What do you have?

Mrs Karuu: No! No! No! [Laughing].We don't have. They bring it from the school. Parents give money for pens and pencils everyday. We give N\$1.00 for a pencil and N\$3.00 for a pen.

Interviewer: Why can you as parent not buy stationeries for your children?

Mrs Karuu: I buy stationeries in January every year but then the other children steal them. Life is expensive now, is not like those years when we got stationeries free of charge. Stationeries are not from the government anymore but the school buys and sells it to the children. The government does not provide stationeries anymore which means that we should buy it ourselves.

Interviewer: Do you help your girl with writing?

Mrs Karuu: Yes, I help her [more in Otjiherero]. It is my responsibility to help her. I write to her individually and also with her siblings. I respond to their questions and comments...hmmm I'm thinking of the radio as one of the sources that help our children to listen and retell stories from it. A lot of stories are told in the radio daily. I send her to the shop by giving her a shopping list with items such as Surf, Viva, and sugar. I explained things very clearly.

Follow up: Do you ever read aloud to your child?

Mrs Karuu: I do. We read together so that my child can get close to me and we enjoy reading it together. This is not on a regular basis.

Follow up: Interviewer: How often do you read to her?

Mrs Karuu: Regularly after every day domestic chores.

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows her interest in reading? Or non-interest?

Mrs Karuu: She laughs, asks questions and listens attentively by looking at me.

Follow up: Do you respond to her questions?

Mrs Karuu: Yes I read to them. I read all the words if there are questions and answers I asked the child to answer. If the child does not understand then you say no, here you should write this. For those who cannot read I used to read and they imitate what I have read.

Follow up: [Good] How do you respond to her questions?

Mrs Karuu: Answering their questions or responding to their comments in a very polite and positive way.

Follow up: What if you don't know the answer to what she is asking?

Mrs Karuu: If I don't know the answer I ask the father if he is around because he has Gr.10 qualification. If he is not around, neighbours help.

Interviewer: Does the teacher give your child books to bring home?

Mrs Karuu: Yes, the teacher gives different books for different subjects.

Interviewer: You mentioned that the teacher gives books to your child to bring home.

Does the teacher ask you to read to your child from these books?

Mrs Karuu: It is a daily activity. We get reading homework everyday.

Follow up: Does the teacher ask you to listen to your child reading?

Mrs Karuu: Teachers wants us to listen to everything a child reads or tells us.

Follow up: Does the teacher talk to you about how to support your child's literacy homework?

Mrs Karuu: She only gives us some hints on how to teach learners reading. She really tries to encourage us.

Follow up: Could you tell me about your experience of reading from the time you were in school?

Mrs Karuu: [Oooh! How can I remember?] It was long time ago, I cannot remember. But reading was done at school but not at home. I attended a rural school and reading was not so intensive.

Follow up: Do you remember your parents sharing rhymes, songs or stories with you?

Mrs Karuu: Yes, traditional and ghost stories. My granny used to tell us stories. We would sit down at night and she would tell us stories in Otjiherero.

Follow up: How did you feel about these stories from your grandparents?

Mrs Karuu: Hmmm! They were fantastic and interesting and I later realized that they were told for my own benefit. In our culture this is the time of enjoyment, and pleasure.

Follow up: What did you learn from these stories or what was the moral of the stories?

Mrs Karuu: Stories? I learnt how people lived and games. I learned to share them with my children, to listen attentively, laugh and play with my children.

Follow up: Songs?

Mrs Karuu: Aaaa! No, my mother was not a singer but my father yes; therefore I'm a good singer with my children.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Mrs Karuu: We can all read but not at the same level. We could have read if we could have reading books at home. We all can read Otjiherero very well.

Interviewer: Do you play and talk to your child? If so, how are you involved? If not, why not?

Mrs Karuu: Oh no. I like singing with my children. "We like playing 'amangus' hide and seek and rope skipping. We dance our old traditional concert together. We laugh and enjoy when playing together". When you play Amangus with the children, they enjoy it, laugh. They are in happiness. They get rid of fear.

Interviewer: What about praying?

Mrs Karuu: *We do it together in our language at bedtime.*

Follow up: And talking?

Mrs Karuu: *We talk about general things in life*

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy workshops or training?

Mrs Karuu: *Yes, literacy classes but they are not worthwhile. I withdrew.* [Smiling]

Follow up: Can you tell me more why they are not worthwhile?

Mrs Karuu: *We just do simple English lessons which are a waste of time. We do the alphabet, reading stories, writing our names and counting. My children are in upper grades. They don't need this simple information.*

Follow up: Wow! What about the Grade 3 child?

Mrs Karuu: *Maybe. I don't think so.*

Interviewer: Sure? How often do you attend school activities such as meetings, educational programmes etc.?

Mrs Karuu: *Hmmm. Very much [excited] Yes, I attend school meetings frequently. We have parents meetings where we go and have a look to our children's books. You come and sit, greet the teacher and go to your child's desk and go through his/her books. Look, look at it if I see mistakes I ask my child why she didn't do revision. From there I tell the child to improve on her schoolwork [look here you have these marks and here these] and compare it with the school report. If the report and the books show me that this child performs poorly then I take other steps to help my child. I talk to the teacher about the problem. The teacher also indicates that your child needs assistance in which subject.*

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where you child can borrow books?

Mrs Karuu: *No, there is no public library here.*

Follow up: Do you think it's necessary to have one?

Mrs Karuu: *Yes, we as parents will be able to take some books and read for ourselves. The children will also use it by reading different books to learn about various developments in our country. It will help us to improve our reading culture or reading skills.*

Follow up: It sounds interesting. Can you say more on the culture of reading?

Mrs Karuu: I want to say that it will encourage us to read or change our attitude against reading. We have a negative attitude towards reading. We need to read more and more.

Interviewing: Do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write?

Mrs Karuu: Muatjee...O dear! Yes, very much!

Follow up: How do you think they should do this?

Mrs Karuu: Education! I tell my children about the importance of education, especially of reading and writing that if you cannot read and write you will sit like me without employment. You will suffer. I'm full of bad luck because I have thousands of children. Life is difficult, try to finish your education because no one can take it away from you. Education is your key to success. Education is your 'erf' until you die. Education is your father and mother until you perish on earth. Parents should be taught how to read books for fun and pleasure. Parents should take reading as a daily activity.

Interviewer: [sympathetic voice] Ooh, sorry.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for the fruitful discussion! This information is very helpful. I will provide you with the transcript for you to see your contribution.

Mrs: Karuu: My pleasure

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Ms. Kamapoha (pseudonym)

Age: 44

Sex: Female

Highest level of education: Grade 7

Home language: Otjiherero

Marital status: Married

Type of employment/work: Unemployed

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning

Ms. Kamapoha: [hoarse voice] *Good morning, Madam*

Interviewer: Are you ready for our interview?

Ms. Kamapoha: *I hope so. I have flue you can see it from my voice but let it not affect our day.*

[Give background about the interview]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Ms. Kamapoha: *No, its fine. We can start.*

2. QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been a resident at this place?

Ms. Kamapoha: [hoarse voice] *I have been here for four years.*

Follow up: What is the highest grade you attended?

Ms. Kamapoha: *I have Grade 7 qualification*

Follow up: Is it since the school started?

Ms. Kamapoha: *No, is in between. The school has started in 2000.*

Interviewer: Do you have children who are staying with you?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Yes, I have five children.*

Interviewer: In which Grades are they?

Ms. Kamapoha: [Counting on her fingers] *One is in Grade 2, one in grade 3 and the other two in Grade 5.*

Interviewer: How many of you are staying in your home?

Ms. Kamapoha: [noise, wind blowing] [pause] *We are six in this house.*

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Ms. Kamapoha: *One room only.*

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Ms. Kamapoha: [low whisper] *Not so difficult, but is just that a child is a child. A child needs to be guided or disciplined.*

Follow up: Do you have electricity?

Ms. Kamapoha: *No, we don't have electricity.*

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night? Does the child use the light to do homework?

Ms. Kamapoha: Atatata! That's were the problem is! We don't have electricity which means that we have to fetch water and wood. Wood is no where to be found. We suffer. Children have to study during the day only.

Follow up: Do children also fetch water and collect wood?

Ms. Kamapoha: Oh! Yes. They have to do it for them to it.

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Ms. Kamapoha: We speak Otjiherero

Follow up: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Ms. Kamapoha: Otjiherero is the first language

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Follow up: Can you read?

Ms. Kamapoha: Otjiherero, yes. English a little bit. My young boy reads for his younger brothers.

Follow up: What kinds of books do you like reading?

Ms. Kamapoha: Traditional story books and the Bible.

Follow up: Where do you get reading books?

Ms. Kamapoha: When I go to towns I ask for story books which are at my children level. Books which I know will interest them. We only read simple books.

Interviewer: Do you help your child with reading and writing?

Ms. Kamapoha: Aaai! My education is very poor to help a child how to read and write but I try. I help her in Otjiherero and in English a little bit.

Follow up: And What about writing?

Ms. Kamapoha: I help where I can and if I cannot I ask neighbours to help.

Follow up: Do you ever read aloud to your child who is in grade 3?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yes, I read very loudly to her. I teach her how to make sounds in familiar words.

Follow up: Wow! Interesting! Do you remember some of these unfamiliar words?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yeh! g-goat, d-dog etc. Sometimes I tell her that the word is made up of three sounds namely d/o/g or g/o/a/t. This is how we were taught how to read. I also ask her what is in the pictures e.g. what do you see in this picture?

Follow up: Hmm. Good. How often do you read to her?

Ms. Kamapoha: Regularly after school if I'm finish with my domestic chores.

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows his interest in reading? Or non-interest?

Ms. Kamapoha: No, he shows interest by listening attentively and retelling what I have read to him. They participate in the discussion. He sometimes draws his imagination after listening. He draws pictures based on the story.

Follow up: Do you respond to his questions?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yes, if he ask. I encourage him to ask more questions.

Follow up: Is it? How do you respond to his questions?

Ms. Kamapoha: I listen to his questions very carefully before I respond. I respond in a positive and soft way. I sometimes praise him and ask him to do it again.

Follow up: What if you don't know the answer to what she is asking?

Ms. Kamapoha: I send him to my neighbours

Interviewer: Does the teacher give your child reading books to bring home?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yes, the child comes with a piece of reading paper everyday. We as parents have to read this paper aloud to the child and listen to them as they read and do spelling tests with them. She gives us different strategies to support reading in our children. For example she told us to select the books that interest the children and read very slowly to them. She calls us at her class to visit her corner library.

Interviewer; Does the teacher support you in literacy development of your child?

Ms. Kamapoha: They know how to call you to a meeting on financial matters only. That they know. Don't make a mistake.

Follow up: Good! Could you tell me about your experience of reading from the time you were in school?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yeeeh! I remember that when I was in Sub B we read from the small book about Sarah. I remember it very clearly because my uncle was a teacher and he liked it. We read the book and questions were asked from this book. We wrote dictation

on words I remember very well such as: ‘Sara, rara, tate, mama’ etc. We drew pictures, and learning from pictures. We never read at home because my parents were illiterate. There was no one to encourage us.

Follow up: Do you remember your parents sharing rhymes, songs or stories with you?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yes, traditional stories about a wolf and a jackal. Yes, my parents were good singers, especially my mother. She was a traditional dancer.

Follow Up: And singing?

Ms. Kamapoha: My father was not a good singer but could sing (hoarse voice...laughing]. We could sit around the fire and listen to the nice songs from the bible. My father who is an elder in the church, used to read the Bible to us because they used to read “Ouserembuki”. And I remember that quite clearly. We sang together.

Follow up: Wow! You have a good memory. Can you elaborate more on the “ouserembuki” you mentioned?

Ms. Kamapoha: These were our old traditional story books like the current one used in schools about Sarah where we learned how to read and write.

Follow up: Don’t you have one copy for me?

Ms. Kamapoha: Atata! They did not even show us these books. They only told us about these books and they were only in urban schools [coughing].

Follow up: Can you share one story with me from this book?

Ms. Kamapoha: stories? [Hoarse voice] yes, I remember one story in particular. Now, [laughing]..... [Wind blowing].....One day..... [Telling a story about the jackal wolf]..... [Coughing].

Follow up: Oh, thanks. How did you feel?

Ms. Kamapoha: [proudly] Aeh! That was the time of enjoyment, laughing with a hoarse voice]

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Ms. Kamapoha: [noise! wind blowing] that’s right. I like story telling. The other children also tell stories.. At school they expect a child to know stories. Nowadays, schools are not like those years. Children should read various stories and retell which we never did. You tell them stories for two days when you ask them on the third day they

don't remember but during my childhood it took us a day to listen and retell when sitting by the fireplace with your mother and father. They regarded it as something significant.

Follow up: What kind of stories do you like to tell?

Ms. Kamapoha: I only tell them traditional and Bible stories

Follow up: What else?

Ms Kamapoha: That all.

Follow up: What does your child do that shows his/her interest in these stories? Or non-interest?

Ms. Kamapoha: They laugh and want me to repeat again and again. Sometimes they become scared. In our days we sit as a family around the fire and enjoy story telling. It took us one day to follow what was told in the story but today these children take three days to understand a story.

Follow up: How did you feel about these stories from your grandparents?

Ms. Kamapoha: Very, very happy and blessed. I had a kind of warm feeling.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Ms. Kamapoha: Is only the children and myself. The father does not stay here, he is at the cattle post but he can also read because he attended school up to Grade 8.

Interviewer: Do you as a parent play and talk to your child?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yes, sure.

Follow up: If so, how are you involved?

Ms. Kamapoha: Very much. I look at the life of today. To show them the right way they should take and not to follow the wrong ways we used of not completing school. To take the way that leads them to success and later to better future.

Follow up: And praying?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yes, we do before bedtime.

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy workshops or training?

Ms. Kamapoha: No, I never attended any training or workshop.

Follow up: Do you think is important to attend these types of meetings?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yes, I think so because if you want us to help our children with reading then you should teach us how to read.

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Yes, we do have Otjiherero New Era.*

Follow up: Do you read them?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Yes, I do but my boy just like cutting pictures of Namibian leaders and famous people like Frankie Fredericks. I try to read it. And story books from town.*

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Ooh! Yes, we do have but they do not last. The other children steal them at school. The school should buy.*

Interviewer: How often do you attend school activities such as meetings?
educational programmes etc.?

Ms. Kamapoha: [strong wind blowing]....*Yes, we attend parents meetings
Three times a year or even more.*

Follow up: Could you elaborate more on these meetings?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Sometimes we are called by the school to attend meetings. School board comes up with their issues and we come up with our own issues. We discuss the issues until we come to solutions. If we do not agree we used to inform the school board that here we don't agree with you. At the end they make the final decision.*

Follow up: What about parent teacher evenings?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Ija. We go through the books of our children and see where they performed poorly and encourage them and they did well if we just motivate them to keep up with their good work.*

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow books?

Ms. Kamapoha: *No we don't have.*

Follow up: Do you think it's necessary to have one?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Sure! We need it to improve our reading skills. The children will also benefit from it.*

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write? Can you tell me about these problems? What are the contributing factors? How can this be improved?

Ms. Kamapoha: *Yes, I do, I don't know how to pronounce words and I cannot read all the words fluently. Vocabulary is a problem. The contributing factors I would say is my upbringing. My parents never read to me. How could they do it if they never attended*

school? We need to be taught about our roles in education. [Inaudible].....should know what is expected from us.

Interviewer: Do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write? How do you think they should do this?

Ms. Kamapoha: Yaa. Yes. Reading is significant in education. Reading is the key to schooling. Parents should love reading. Reading will make our minds grow. I don't think that we will get very far if we don't know how to read. We as parents should know that the basis of education lies in reading.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your contribution during the discussion.

Ms. Kamapoha: Hm.

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION ON INTERVIEWEE

Name: Ms. Operi (pseudonym)

Age: 31

Sex: Female

Marital Status: Unmarried

Type of employment/work: Unemployed

Home language: Otjiherero

Highest level of education: Grade 10

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good afternoon

Ms. Operi: Good afternoon, Ms Siririka

Interviewer: Are you *ready for the interview?*

Ms. Operi: Yeah

[Give background about the interview]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Ms. Operi: We can start

[Pause] clear her voice

2. QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been a resident at this place?

Ms. Operi: I have been here for three years

Interviewer: What is the highest grade you attended?

Ms. Operi: I have Grade 10.

Interviewer: Do you have children in Grade 3?

Ms. Operi: Yes, I mean.....only one

Interviewer: How many of you stay in your home?

Ms. Operi: Here? We are only three

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Ms. Operi: One bedroom house

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Ms. Operi: It's difficult.... It's really not comfortable because I have to buy candles and lamp oil every day. It is difficult.

Follow up: Do you have electricity?

Ms. Operi: No we don't have

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night? Does the child use the light to do homework?

Ms. Operi: We use wood for cooking and candle light at night and lamp oil.

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Ms. Operi: Otjiherero

Follow up: Is it the home language?

Ms. Operi: Yes.

Follow up: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Ms. Operi: Yes, they do Otjiherero as the first language or what? [Doubt]...

[Stop]

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

[Background of a child crying]

Interviewer: Can you read?

Ms. Operi: [laughter] Oh, yeah.....

Interviewer: Do you help your girl with reading and writing?

Ms. Operi: Yes, only if she cannot. She writes and if she cannot I help her.just like that. I show her how to write words correctly. Sometimes she writes in books and sometimes in the sand. I show her how to do it and she copies it in the sand. I point to the words she missed and I asked her to read and we talk about what she reads. We talk about what happens in the story.

Follow up: Why is she writing in the sand?

Ms. Operi: We did that in our days and we are use to that.

Follow up: Do you experience problems in helping your child to read and write?

Ms. Operi: Yes, I experience problems because the children cannot read. You know children read on the chalkboard but when they come home if you ask them to read than they cannot read. The answer she gives does not make sense. They can draw but not read. They find it difficult to write things in their own words.

Follow up: What cause these problems?

Ms. Operi: Aeh! Maybe the teachers don't know how to teach reading or the learners themselves don't know how to read. The child makes mistakes marked by the teacher but the mistakes are still there. Poverty is the main obstacle that prevents us from helping four children to read. The other problem is may the environment which his not rich in reading materials. I think culture of reading which lacks in this environment can have an influence on the children.

Follow up: Can you elaborate on how poverty you mentioned can be problem in reading?

Ms. Operi: We don't have money to buy reading or educational toys that can help them to read. We don't have money to install the solar system so that our children can learn to read from the television.

Follow up: Do you like reading?

Ms. Operi: Yes, if I could be in town. I like, like reading. I like stories from the magazines. I want children to read. I want children to study. I like it very much.

Follow up: What kind of books would you like reading?

Ms. Operi: I buy magazines when I go to Gobabis and I'm very selective because newspapers are full of crime and war. I don't like it. I only read the health part because that is what interests me most. I have to know it.

Follow up: Do you ever read aloud to your child?

Ms. Operi: Yes I do. I like it, I like it. I want the child to study. I like it, very much.

Follow up: And newspapers?

Ms. Operi: Aeh! Very rarely. I only look through it quickly".

Follow up: How often do you read to her?

Ms. Operi: I read every free moment I have. If we could have electricity, going to bed, I would read.

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows his interest in reading? Or non-interest?

Ms. Operi: He looks at me, retells and asks questions. He also listens very well.

Follow up: Are you responding to her questions?

Ms. Operi: Yes. Yes. I help her.

Follow up: What if you do not know the answer to what she is asking?

Ms. Operi: I send him to my neighbour to help where I cannot

Follow up: Could you tell me about your experience of reading from the time you were in school?

Ms. Operi: Uuuh! I did not have access to books because of the poor environment I come from. I remember stories from those series called 'Indjo kondjerera' which literally means 'come to light'. I think I was in Sub A only. Those were called the Folktales series. We could read and write simple stories from these books. We read it several times and predicted what would happen next.

Follow up: Do you remember your parents sharing thymes, songs or stories with you?

Ms. Operi: [frown] You mean those old stories those years?

Interviewer: Yes

Ms. Operi: Only traditional stories because she couldn't read or write. My mother told us traditional stories at night on how strangers were chased away from Otjozondjima. My parents were illiterate. I remember listening to fables that were narrated by my grand grandmother. It was always about the clever Jackal and the stupid Wolf. Fables like that, ooh! days are gone.

Follow up: How did you feel about these stories from your grandparents?

Ms. Operi: They were interesting, funny and sometimes scary.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Ms. Operi: I like story telling. My mother does it before we go to bed when we go to the cattle post.

Follow up: What kinds of stories do you like telling?

Ms. Operi: I like traditional stories and stories from magazines realistic stories such as birthday, grandfather parties in our family, problems I experienced in life etc.

Follow up: Can you tell me one of these stories?

Ms. Operi: No. No. Truly speaking, I don't have. Not today, please.

Oh! Let me give it a try. Once upon a time the clever jackal and the stupid wolf went into the farmer garden to steal his sheep. Then... [Silent] .to get into the kraal was not easy. Hmm. They had to climb through a big hole in the fence. Hmm. jackal was very clever and canny. They entered. The wolf was very hungry and he ate, ate, and ate. Then the clever jackal left and he called for the farmer. The farmer came and the wolf was too fat to run away. Can you see that the jackal is always clever? The angry farmer beat...beat and beat the poor wolf. The jackal was sitting, watching and laughing. That the end.

Follow up: What do you think is the moral of this story?

Ms. Operi: Yeah. It tells us not to steal and at the same time to be clever

Follow up: What does your child do that shows his interest in these stories? Or non-interest?

Ms. Operi: He retells what I have told him, he asks questions and become scared.

Interviewer: Why do you think that you have to tell your child stories?

Ms. Operi: For morality and all the good things.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Ms. Operi: at home? Yes, they are many

Interviewer: Do you as a parent play and talk to your child? If so, how are you involved?

If not, why not?

Ms. Operi: We talk about good and bad things in life. I encourage him to complete his school and not to do what I did.

Follow up: And praying? Yes, we do at bedtime

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy workshops or training?

Ms. Operi: No. Never.

Follow up: Do you think it is necessary to have literacy workshops or training?

Ms. Operi: Sure!

Follow up: Can you tell me more?

Ms. Operi: If we attend these workshops then we will know how to teach our children reading and writing.

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Ms. Operi: Sometimes there are old 'New Era' newspapers which are in my home language and I read it and keep them for cleaning purposes or to use if for fire making. Like this one is in Afrikaans, I read it myself. That is what I know.

Follow up: Do you read them?

Ms. Operi: I read and encourage him to page through for pictures because he is too young to read a newspaper.

Follow up: In which language are these reading materials?

Ms. Operi: They are mostly in Otjiherero, a bit of Afrikaans and English.

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Ms. Operi: Yes, you as a parent have to buy it for your child to take it to school.

Interviewer: How often do you attend school activities such as meetings, educational programmes etc.

Ms. Operi: If I don't have other activities to do I will attend, but if I'm busy I will not attend. These other things are also important as the school meetings.

Follow up: What about your involvement in the writing of your children?

Ms. Operi: No, no, nothing on that issue

Follow up: What about the teacher-parents day?

Ms. Operi: It is a fixed date where we go and go through our children's books. We didn't have it this year it will be may at the end of the month (July). If you see that the child has performed poor than you talk to the child. You look to your child's problems and tell him/her to improve.

Interviewer: Does the teacher support you in literacy development of your child?

There is nothing like support on literacy development of our children from the teachers. We are told about the importance of education of our children and that education is important in life. They want us to pay that's all.

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow books?

Ms. Operi: Library? Only at school

Follow up: Do you think it's necessary to have one?

Ms. Operi: Oh! Ja. Very much we want to read! We want to read! It will help in the sense that we will practice our English and improve on reading levels.

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Ms. Operi: Yes, I do. Children cannot read.

Follow up: Can you tell me about these problems?

Ms. Operi: The accent or pronunciation problem. Teachers pronounce different as we do. The handwriting of my child is very poor and this makes her to write very slowly. Above all, our children cannot read. I think that communication between the school and the parents is very important and is lacking. If we don't communicate with teachers, how will we know how our children perform? Children write things at school when they come home than they cannot read and what they sometimes read does not make any sense. Frustrating!

Follow up: Wow! What do you think is the problem?

Ms. Operi: May be the teacher or the child.

Follow up: What are the contributing factors?

Ms. Operi: The environment is the first thing I will blame. Nothing...nothing in the environment. Secondly, parents are not educated. Thirdly we are poor to provide

reading materials to our children. Finally, the communication gabs between the teacher and the parent. Parents don't visit the school if they are not called in. No, money.

Parents are not interested they prefer other business than the education of their children.

Follow up: How can this be improved?

Ms. Operi: Parents should be taught on how to read to their children or the importance of them reading to their children should be made known to them. Rural schools should be treated equally just as the urban schools. Import...electricity should be installed so that the children can watch reading programmes. The government can also give us stationeries.

Interviewer: Do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write?

Ms. Operi: Yes, Yes. Education is important to the children.

Follow up: How do you think they should do this?

Ms. Operi: Education is worthwhile you don't go and ask anything from someone if you are educated. If the children don't read, how can they understand the books they are given in other subjects? I think it is parents' job to encourage children to read by reading to them at a very young age.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. Again, I really appreciate your willingness to spend time helping me out.

Ms. Operi: Thanks

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION OF INTERVIEWEE

Name: Ms. Vatji (pseudonym)

Age: 45

Sex: Female

Marital Status: Unmarried

Type of employment/work: Employed

Home language: Otjiherero

Highest level of education: Grade 3

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good afternoon

Ms. Vatji: Good afternoon

Interviewer: Are you ready for the interview?

Ms. Vatji: Yes.

[Give background about the interview]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Ms. Vatji: Its okay!

2. QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been a resident at this place?

Ms. Vatji: I lived here since 2000. I have been here for six years now.

Interviewer: What is the highest grade you attended?

Ms. Vatji: [hesitating] Grade 3

Interviewer: Do you have children?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, I have four children.

Interviewer: Do you have children in grade 3?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, only one.

Interviewer: How many of you stay in your home?

Ms. Vatji: We are seven

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Ms. Vatji: No. No! It is not conducive because the house is too small.

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Ms. Vatji: One bedroom. It is very small.

Follow up: Do you have electricity?

Ms. Vatji: No we don't have electricity?

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night? Does the child use the light to do homework?

Ms. Vatji: We use wood for cooking and the lamp light during the night. No, Children don't study in the evening due to lack of electricity, it is dark.

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Ms. Vatji: Otjiherero

Follow up: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Ms. Vatji: Oh, Yes, it is the first language.

[Stop, explain the next section]

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Follow up: Can you read?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, a little bit in Otjiherero.

Interviewer: Do you help your girl with reading and writing?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, I help in Otjiherero for example to give the answers to questions, to read simple books and pray.

Follow up: And what about writing?

Ms. Vatji: No, huh uh. They do it themselves.

Follow up: Why can you not help?

Ms. Vatji: It is difficult to help our children with literacy because we have poor education.

Follow up: What kinds of books do you like reading?

Ms. Vatji: Story books and the Holy Bible.

Follow up: Do you read these stories to her?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, I read these stories to her.

Follow up: Do you ever read aloud to your child?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, I do a little bit of reading with my poor level of education for Christianity. We don't have reading materials at home. We only read the Bible. Reading materials are not part of my household except the readers from the school and the Bible.

Follow up: How often do you read to her?

Ms. Vatji: If I have enough time. Matrons don't have much time. If they get reading homework I do it on the same day.

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows her interest in reading? Or non/interest?

Ms. Vatji: She looks at me. She used to ask questions on the story of Adam and Eve. Sometimes I use to see a slight hesitation in her voice when she asks questions.

Follow up: Could you elaborate more on this?

Ms. Vatji: Her looks indicates to me that she listens and she is interested, but still certain things are not clear to her. She once asked me questions: how on earth could a human being stay with a snake? Why can we not also stay with snakes?

Follow up: Very interesting! Are you responding to her questions?

Ms. Vatji: I do. There are times when I am not even sure of the answers I'm giving.

Follow up: How do you respond to her questions?

Ms. Vatji: Very confident and in a polite way.

Follow up: What if you don't know the answer to what she is asking?

Ms. Vatji: I send her to siblings in upper grades so that they can help her.

Follow up: Do you go through the book after the child has been helped by the other children?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, Ja. Ja. I look at it and if I don't know the answer I contact the teacher personally and inform her that this is too difficult.

Follow up: Could you tell me about your experience of reading from the time you were in school?

Ms. Vatji: Aye! No one read to me at home. I grew up in an environment where I had not seen a book. Books were not part of our household. Yes, that is my personal experience.

Follow up: How old were you by then?

Ms. Vatji: I was eleven years old and I was in grade 1.

Follow up: How did you feel about reading and writing?

Ms. Vatji: It was fun, but I didn't like writing because I did not know how to grip a pencil. Those years we were taught on how to sit properly and grip the pencil. It took the whole period.

Follow up: Do you remember your parents sharing rhymes, songs or stories with you?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, we used to sing together.

Follow up: Can you sing one song for me?

Ms. Vatji: [wait....what happened to the song?] [Laughing loudly]... [Whispering].... singing with her friend.

Follow up: Very nice song! How did you feel about these stories and songs from your grandparents?

Ms. Vatji: Oh. Very happy.

Follow up: What about rhymes?

Ms. Vatji: I do not remember any. I really don't.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, I use to do it myself

Interviewer: It sounds nice!

Follow up: What kind of stories do you like to tell?

Ms. Vatji: Traditional stories

Follow up: Can you tell me one of these stories?

Ms. Vatji: [laughing] She tells a story about the wolf and the fox [telling with confidence and proudly]

Follow up: Interesting! What is the moral of this story?

Ms. Vatji: The moral is that dishonesty is not a good thing. We should always be honest.

Follow up: What does your child do that shows her interest in these stories? Or non-interest?

Ms. Vatji: She listens attentively and laughs. The youngest one used to ask a lot of questions.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Ms. Vatji: Mostly, all of us.

Interviewer: Do you play and talk to your child? If so, how are you involved? If not, why not?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, this is how they learn. We share ideas on different games, listen to their stories from the school and play traditional games. We talk about washing clothes, fetching water and collecting wood.

Follow up: Praying?

Ms. Vatji: Bedtime and before meals

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy workshops or training?

Ms. Vatji: Never, but I use to attend school meetings.

Follow up: Can you tell me more about these meetings?

Ms. Vatji: Sometimes it is schoolboard meetings, or sometimes is about the poor performance of the children or discipline problems (e.g. boys going to girl's hostel). We come for parents meeting where we as parents get an opportunity to go through the books of our children and see how they are performing. The teacher informs us about the performance of our children. We assist where we see that they need help and encourage them if they did well. The teacher tells you about the performance of the child if the child performs poorly than the teacher will ask you to encourage the child.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. How often do you attend school activities such as meetings, educational programmes etc.?

Ms. Vatji: We do have three meetings per year and I used to attend all the meetings.

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Ms. Vatji: Hmmm. No. No, we don't have. We need it please. We don't have money to buy.

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home? What do you have?

Ms. Vatji: We use to buy at the end of the year and early in the following year when they start the New Year. The government should help us with school fees and we can help them half way.

Follow up: Can you elaborate more?

Ms. Vatji: The government should take care of school fees, provide stationeries as in our time.

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow books?

Ms. Vatji: There is only a school library but is not yet in use and there is a library in each classroom where learners can have a chance to read books.

Follow up: Do you as parent take one of these books and read for yourself?

Ms. Vatji: [Smile] Never. Never. I don't know why I don't do it.

Follow up: Do you think it's necessary to have a public library?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, It will be good for those who can read. It will may be also improve my reading skills. It will helpful for our children.

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, a lot because I cannot read so well

Follow up: Can you tell me more about these problems?

Ms. Vatji : I have poor education. I cannot help my children with reading and writing the way they are supposed to. How can one help if you have poor education? It is the teachers who must do it.

Follow up: Why do you think that it is only teachers who should do it?

Ms. Vatji: They know what to do.

Follow up: What are the contributing factors?

Ms. Vatji: Poverty, we don't have money to buy the reading materials. The language is also another problem because some of us cannot speak English. Illiteracy is the problem that hinders my participation in reading homework of my child. I really need someone who can help me with encouraging me to be self-confident because I feel like I'm not educated why I should help my child. Are they not going to laugh at me?

Interviewer: Do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write?

Ms. Vatji: Yes, Yes. A lot. I call my children and tell them that education is the key to your future. Look at what I sell sweets [tamalaki] and fat cakes just because I'm not educated and I want my children to be educated. Therefore I think we as parents should motivate our children to read and write. I'm a hostel matron because I did not finish my school. The school can help!

Follow up: How do you think they should do this?

Ms. Vatji: They should ask what the children did at school and help them with what they don't understand. They should tell them traditional stories and sing traditional songs to them. If they cannot read well like me they can ask the older children to help. The other thing is that the teacher should come and see where children are staying. Here at our homes, what we eat and what we don't have. Just to see. We are in a problem.

Interviewer: Thank you, Vatji.

Vatji: Thank, you madam.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Mr Kapena (pseudonym)

Sex: Male

Age: 52

Marital Status: Married

Type of employment/work: Employed (hostel father)

Home language: Otjiherero

Highest level of education: Grade 4

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: *Good morning:*

Mr Kapena: *Yes, morning*

Interviewer: Are you ready?

Mr Kapena: Hmm, morning.

[Give background about the interview]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Mr Kapena: No, We can start.

[Okay]

2. QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been a resident at this place?

Mr Kapena: I have been here for eleven years

Follow up: What is the highest grade you attended?

Mr Kapena: [Uncertain] I have Grade 4. Yes, I remember now.

Follow up: Do you have children in Grade 3?

Mr Kapena: Yes

Follow up: How many?

Mr Kapena: [Thinking] One child

Interviewer: How many of you stay in your home?

Mr Kapena: [pause] maybe ... nine

Interviewer: How big is your home? How many rooms do you have?

Mr Kapena: Three houses

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Mr Kapena: We are too many....its hell.

Follow up: Do you have electricity?

Mr Kapena: No.

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night?

Mr Kapena: We use wood and lamp light.

Follow up: Does the child use the light to do homework?

Mr Kapena: They do not study in the evening because they cannot see. They only study during the day.

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Mr Kapena: Otjiherero

Follow up: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Mr Kapena: Yes, with English as well. Otjiherero is the first language while English is the subject.

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Follow up: Can you read?

Mr Kapena: Otjiherero, a little bit. I cannot read English because we did not have any books at home when I grew up and I lived in a location where there was no library.

Interviewer: Do you help your child with reading and writing?

Mr Kapena: [noise of a hostel worker cleaning a pot]. Yes, I only help him with basic Otjiherero reading and writing homework.

Follow up: What about writing?

Mr Kapena: We don't have pens and pencils; children do the writing at school while their older siblings just help with reading.

Follow up: What kinds of books do you like reading?

Mr Kapena: The Bible only. Our environment is a place where books are not part of our household. [Pause]...you know it very well.... [Chorus laughs].

Follow up: Do you ever read this Bible aloud to your child?

Mr Kapena: Yes, I do, a little bit with my poor education for Christianity

Follow up: How often do you read it to her?

Mr Kapena: Every evening before bedtime with a prayer.

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows his/her interest in the reading? Or non-interest?

Mr Kapena: They ask questions and listen. Sometimes they retell the stories you read to them.

Follow up: Do you respond to her questions?

Mr Kapena: Yes, where I can.

Follow up: How do you respond to her questions?

Mr Kapena: Very soft and in a good way.

Follow up: Do you experience problems when helping your child reading and writing?

Mr Kapena: Yes, I do because I'm not good in reading and writing and did not complete school. I just only used to ask her to show me things in his books e.g. show me a horse or could you find me letter'd'? The pronunciation is big problem to me as parent. It differs with mine.

Follow up: Do you like asking your children questions when they read?

Mr Kapena: Yes, if I understand.

Follow up: Do you answer his questions on reading and writing?

Mr Kapena: Yes, I do.

Follow up: What if you don't know the answer to what he is asking?

Mr Kapena: I refer him to my wife who has Grade 10 qualification or neighbour's children who are in upper grades. She is a school board member. She knows.

Interviewer: Does the teacher give your child reading books to bring home?

Mr Kapena: Yes, the child comes with reading papers everyday where I have to read the story for the child. The teacher encourages us to listen to our children reading and also to read aloud to them and with them.

Follow up: Could you tell me about your experience of reading from the time you were in school?

Mr Kapena: Heh! I was a child a very long time ago so you want me to go back. Aha! I can't remember sitting and my parents reading to me. There were no reading books those years except the Holy Bible. I grew up in an environment where books were not part of our household. Even today! Books were very expensive and my parents did not have money to buy books and there was no money to pay our school fee.... [Quiet for a while]...it's hurting.

Follow up: Do you remember your parents sharing rhymes, songs or stories with you?

Mr Kapena: I cannot recall.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Mr Kapena: No. My wife and the eldest boy do it.

Follow up: What kind of stories do you like to tell?

Mr Kapena: Traditional stories and stories from the school.

Follow-up: What does your child do that shows her interest in these stories? Or non/interest?

Mr Kapena: He laughs and asks questions.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Mr Kapena: Those who attend school and their mother .I'm poor in reading.

Interviewer: Do you play and talk to your child? If so, how are you involved? If not, why not?

Mr Kapena: No. I'm too old for playing, but I can talk a lot. My children listen to me when I'm talking. I ask them to share their ideas with me. I even ask them questions that require them to talk. I share the word of God with them. I tell them stories about our life with their mother those days when we were still young. [Laughing]

Follow up: Can you share one question with me?

Mr Kapena: Why do you think children steal food from the school hostel?

Follow up: How do they respond to such a question?

Mr Kapena: *They are hungry; they don't have food to eat. These children are not well taught at their homes. Don't do it. Do you get me right? That is how I talk to her.*

Interviewer: It sounds very interesting.

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy workshops or training?

Mr Kapena: *Yes, a little bit of literacy classes that's where I pick the skills I have with the help of my wife.*

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home? Do you encourage your children to read them?

Mr Kapena: *I don't have, no, I don't have. There are absolutely no books at all. It is only my wife who has. She makes her own reading materials.*

Interviewer: What do the children read at home?

Mr Kapena: *They only read books given by their teachers.*

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home? What do you have?

Mr Kapena: *We don't have pens and pencils. Children do the writing at school while their older siblings only help with reading.*

Interviewer: Do you ever attend school meetings?

Mr Kapena: *Yes. Not regularly because I have to attend to other things such as weddings, funerals and auctions, but I make sure that my wife attends regularly.*

Follow up: What do you do in these meetings?

Mr Kapena: *We listen to the importance of education. The reasons why we should help our children with reading and writing are discussed. Problems, discipline you name it. Then you know their song: Money, money....we are tired of this every time.*

Follow up: Can you elaborate more on this importance of education?

Mr Kapena: *Education today is the key to success. You will be employed if you are educated. Those who are not educated like me suffer. We just stand in the sun to get something because we are not educated. If you are educated you will not be standing in the sun like this.*

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow books?

Mr Kapena: *Oh! No.*

Follow up: Do you think it's necessary to have one?

Mr Kapena: We need one for the children to read. Parents will also use it to improve their reading level, especially my wife who is eager to learn. I'm old to read. [Smile]

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Mr Kapena: Yes, I'm not educated

Interviewer: Can you tell me about these problems?

Mr Kapena: I don't have money and I'm a poor person who tries to help my children and my wife. The other problem is that I don't have the English skills. This is a community hostel and the salary I get is from the community which is very less to support my family.

Follow up: How can this be improved?

Mr Kapena: We can educate the parents. We can come up with projects where parents can get something or the Government should pay the hostel workers like teachers. Literacy classes also.

Interviewer: Do you think parents should encourage their children to read and write?

Mr Kapena: Yes, they should.

Follow up: How do you think they should do this?

Mr Kapena: It is our responsibility to help our children. Those who can read should do so to their children.

Interviewer: Thank you very much sir for participating in this interview.

Mr Kapena: Hmm

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Mrs Kapena (pseudonym)

Sex: Female

Age: 39

Marital Status: Married

Type of employment/work employed: (Schoolboard member and a literacy promoter)

Home language: Otjiherero

Highest level of education: Grade 10

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning

Mrs Kapena: Good morning

Interviewer: Are you ready for the interview?

Mrs Kapena: [laughing] Yeah. I'm ready

[Give background about the interviewer]

Interviewer: Is there any other issue you want to discuss before we start or question you want to ask?

Mrs Kapena: Yeah, go ahead

[Okay]

2. QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been a resident at this place?

Mrs Kapena: I have been here for eleven years

Follow up: Did you attend school?

Mrs Kapena: Yes

Follow up: What is the highest grade you attended?

Mrs Kapena: Grade 10

Follow up: Do you have children?

Mrs Kapena: Yes, I have nine children.

Interviewer: In which Grades are they?

Mrs Kapena: Uuuh! Let me try. There is one in Grade 6, another one in grade 3 and in Grade 1 etc.

Interviewer: How big is your home?

Mrs Kapena: There are three houses.

Follow up: How many rooms do they have?

Mrs Kapena: One house is a two bedroom house while the other one is a one bedroom house.

Interviewer: How many of you stay in your home?

Mrs Kapena: We are eleven.

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Mrs Kapena: It disturbs in the sense that the place does not encourage learners to study. The environment itself cannot motivate children to study. Rural schools do not motivate because we don't have the necessary facilities such as TV's, electricity etc. Children cannot read in the evening, they cannot study during the day because they have to collect wood and water. If they don't do this then they will not eat.

Follow up: Do you have electricity?

Mrs Kapena: Ahaha, we don't have. Do you think they will think about rural areas? They won't.

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night?

Mrs Kapena: We make fire for cooking and lamp light.

Follow up: Does the child use the light to do homework?

Mrs Kapena: Homework is done during the day because we don't have electricity.

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Mrs Kapena: Otjiherero

Follow up: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Mrs Kapena: Yes, Otjiherero

[Okay, let's continue]

3. PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Can you read?

Mrs Kapena: I can read anything which I get if I go to urban areas. I collect books for various grades. If I get the chance to read, I can read anything from stories to subject's books. I read regularly. It is a hobby. I get labels from the shop and bring to my children for counting and reading for example, matches boxes, soup, food, bottle tops,

and empty cans. The teacher asks learners to collect food labels and bottle tops that is where I have learnt that I can also do the same at home.

Interviewer: Do you help your child with reading and writing?

Mrs Kapena: My girls cook porridge and bake traditional bread by following my recipes notes and instructions. This how I support them with reading.

Follow up: Can you tell me more what literacy classes is all about?

Mrs Kapena: Literacy classes teach people who never attended school on how to read and write. For example we teach a person how to write letter 'a' or 'b' or any other letter, therefore I don't get tired when I help my child to read and write. How to write their names...

Follow up: What kind of books do you like reading?

Mrs Kapena: Old newspapers, magazines, old reading books from town and children reading books although the level of their books is very low. I collect books that interested them most when go to urban areas. One of my boys likes books with cars pictures while my daughter like recipes books and I used to make sure that I come back with those books. I have seen that it encourages them to read. I have recipe books and my girls in upper grades cook porridge and bake traditional bread by following my receipts notes and instructions.

Follow up: Where do you get reading books?

Mrs Kapena: I collect old storybooks from Gobabis or Windhoek. My encouragement to them is always to read.

Follow up: Very interesting! Do you ever read aloud to you child?

Mrs Kapena: Ayeee! I like it. I read aloud to her and asked her questions even though the place is not so comfortable to her. I comment or tell her what is going to happen in the story. On the other side I ask her questions like "What happens on this page?" we gave each other turns. I read a paragraph and gave her a chance to read as well. If she got stuck I helped. I say the name of the things in the book and connect it to real life examples. It can be things around our house or domestic animals. I tell her our old poems. I like to play with words in Otjiherero. For example, 'Tate 'uai', 'Tate ueja', 'Tate uavere' to help her with sounds 'U'

Follow up: It sounds like a good strategy. I heard you talk about ‘U’, could you just give me more details about this?

Mrs Kapena: These are called alliteration. We did it with our Otjiherero teacher in Grade 10. I don’t know how to explain it to you. It’s like a repetition of words in a sentence.

Follow up: You remind me of my school years. Why do you think is necessary to read loud to your child?

Mrs Kapena: The child will be used to me and will establish the closeness. I think that the child will not be shy. The child will enjoy reading because the mother reads. Her role model reads. We as parents are the role models of our children therefore reading to them will create enjoyment, happiness and love for reading.

Follow up: Wow! I like that! How often do you read to her?

Mrs Kapena: I tell my child that reading is important and they should try to make it a daily habit. I tell them to read, read and read.

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows his/her interest in reading? Or non/interest?

Mrs Kapena: She tries to read with me and tells me about what I was reading. Sometimes she asks me to be very slow.

Follow up: Are you responding to her questions?

Mrs Kapena: Yes, I do.

Follow up: How do you respond to her questions?

Mrs Kapena: In a very polite and soft way. I don’t want to scare her! I don’t shout.

Follow up: What if you don’t know the answer to what she is asking?

Mrs Kapena: I try. If not, I refer her to the other children. I cannot send them back to school because I know what my responsibilities are.

Interviewer: That’s good! Does your child ever read to anyone else besides you?

Mrs Kapena: Yes, she does. She reads to her siblings, the father and neighbours.

Follow up: Do you provide opportunities for your child to write? Can you share some with me?

Mrs Kapena: Well, I ask her to write a simple shopping list when I go to Gobabis, and her own name at the bottom of a letter or card I have written. I send her to our local shop with her own list and she does a good job.

Interviewer: Does the teacher give your child reading books to bring home?

Mrs Kapena: Yes, she gets story books which I have to share with her for a day or a week. We as parents are required to teach them a certain page for a day. The teacher asks us to read loudly and listen to what the child read.

Follow up: Could you tell me about your experience of reading from the time you were in school?

Mrs Kapena: Uuh! We did the alphabet, making of sounds and repeated a book for a month. It was matter of struggling with your reading because my parents could not read and it made the whole process difficult. Therefore I believe that I should help my child to read to make it fun. Otherwise what happened to me will be repeated.

Follow up: Do you remember your parents sharing rhymes, songs or stories with you?

Mrs Kapena: Singing in our family is like a talent! We are all good singers and we do it as family during Christmas and Easter time. I do practice at home with my children. We sing in a choir of our Evangelical Lutheran church. The alphabet song and many other songs are daily activities of this family.

Follow up: How did you feel about these stories and songs from your grandparents?

Mrs Kapena: I felt happy.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Mrs Kapena: Myself, the father and they themselves.

Follow up: How do you feel as a family when telling stories?

Mrs Kapena: This is the time of enjoyment, happiness and unity. We tell stories about anything in the world. It can be war, crime, or diseases.

Follow up: What kind of stories do you like to tell?

Mrs Kapena: I tell them traditional stories and other stories (fables) I have read in magazines and newspapers. I tell her about current burning issues in the newspapers e.g. alarming violent crime rate in our country. Yaa! Personal stories on my experiences as well.

Follow up: Nice! Can you elaborate more on how you tell these stories?

Mrs Kapena: I stop periodically and ask her questions about the story. If it is for example, about animals I ask her to give the sound about the animals. I read the story clearly and slowly. What makes her interested is my change of the voice [my tempo, volume and expression of my voice for different characters. Sometimes if you read from a book they will look at the colourful pictures which go along with the story. Sometimes I speak less and encourage her to take the lead by reading or telling me the story. I want her to learn.

Follow up: Interesting! Can you tell me one of these stories?

Mrs Kapena: Sure.

[Telling]

Interviewer: What do you think is the moral of the story?

Mrs Kapena: It tells us that it is good to be rich because you become famous and beloved by everyone.

Follow up: What does your child do that shows her interest in these stories? Or non-interest?

Mrs Kapena: She tries to relate what she heard to her own life. For example we read a story about animals. She will immediately tell you that we have cows in our kraal or horses. The comment she makes tells me that she understands the story. Sometimes she frowns as she listens to the story. Then I know that she does not follow.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Mrs Kapena: We all can read.

Interviewer: Do you play and talk to your child? If so, how are you involved? If not, why not?

Mrs Kapena: Absolutely. [Proudly] We play our traditional games. Talking makes our day. I make her a problem solver and a talker. We do have our traditional games e.g. guessing game. I say: has four legs, two eyes, horns etc. What is it? Then you will see how she will guess. That is how we talk.....hmmmmm. She is really eager to learn reading and writing. She likes it.

Follow up: What about praying?

Mrs Kapena: Yeah. We do it every evening. We are Christians.

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy workshops or training?

Mrs Kapena: *Ooh Yeah!*

Follow up: Can you tell me more?

Mrs Kapena: *I'm a literacy teacher. We train parents how to read and write. I have classes three times a week here at this village. I have eight learners but the attendance is very poor.*

Follow up: What do you think are the causes?

Mrs Kapena: *Well I would say maybe motivation is needed.*

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Mrs Kapena: *Yes, we do have. I also make my own materials from local materials such as sticks, bottle tops. I collect them for my children. I cut pictures or stories to teach them.*

Follow up: Do you read them?

Mrs Kapena: *I read Otjiherero newspapers. I don't like reading the whole newspaper, only selected portions on crime, beauty contests and farming. I don't like politics so I just glance through. My boy in an upper grade likes reading sports in the newspaper. He starts to read the newspaper from the back, slowly but surely. The one in Grade 3 just look at how others are reading.*

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Mrs Kapena: *I make sure every time I go to town that I buy them.*

Interviewer: How often do you attend school activities such as meetings? educational programmes etc.?

Mrs Kapena: *As I mentioned earlier, I'm a schoolboard member which means I'm the organizer of all parents meetings. I always attend meetings.*

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow reading books?

Mrs Kapena: *No. One is still in the pipeline.*

Follow up: Do you think it's necessary to have one?

Mrs Kapena: *Yes! We need a library for the parents as well as the children. Reading is important in today's life we need it. We need to read, to relax and it will help to pass the boring time of doing nothing. Reading will make all the other subjects easy for our children.*

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Mrs Kapena: Well, I do.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about these problems? What are the contributing factors? How can this be improved?

Mrs Kapena: We are a very poor family which forces us to keep sending children to do the home chores for survival. We don't have money to buy reading books and stationeries for our children. As I mentioned earlier, I have too many children. [Nine]. The resources are not there. The environment is not rich in resources. The literacy environment lacks and it mostly which is available is in English which we don't understand. Educate us, please.

Interviewer: One last question, do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write?

Mrs Kapena: Very much.

Follow up: How do you think they should do this?

Mrs Kapena: They should act as role models by reading to their children everyday. Parents should buy newspapers and magazines and try to read to their children or ask an educated friend to do it. They can also use old newspapers or magazines for reading and not for smoking and making fire. Please! The government should also help us.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for the fruitful discussion.

Mrs Kapena: Thanks, Madam

APPENDIX M: CHILDREN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Kioki Karuu (pseudonym)

Gender: Female

Age: 10

Home language: Otjiherero

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning

Child: Fine

Interviewer: Who takes care of you?

Child: [laughter] I stay with my brothers, two sisters, mother and my father who sometimes stays at the cattle post.

Interviewer: How many people stay in your home?

Child: [counting on his fingers] we are eight

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Child: It is comfortable.

Interviewer: What language is mostly spoken at home?

Child: Otjiherero

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: What kind of reading and writing homework do your parents help you with?

Child: Yes. Yes, my mother and my sisters read to me. My mother doesn't help me with writing.

Follow up: What about your father if he comes?

Child: Yes, my mother does not help me with writing but my father. He helps me with homework. My mother helps with reading.

Follow up: Who helps you with writing?

Child: Hmm! I do it myself with my sisters and my father

Follow up: What about your mother?

Child: She helps with reading

Follow up: What if you do not understand it?

Child: I asked my teacher the next day

Follow up: Are you not asking your mother?

Child: She is sometimes not there but if she is not there, if she is there she helps me

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Child: My mother, father, and my two sisters

Follow up: What kind of books do your parents like reading?

Child: [Silence] They read the Bible and my school books

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Child: My mother and my sisters

Follow up: What kind of stories does your mother likes telling?

Child: [quiet] My mother likes traditional stories. I memorise them and if I visit my friends or relatives homes then I tell them the stories.

Follow up: How do you feel about these stories from your mother?

Child: I feel Happy [Smiling]

Follow up: What do you do that shows your interest in these stories? Or non- interest?

Child: We laugh

Follow up: What kind of songs do your parents sing for you?

Child: We sing together songs from the hymnals. Also sing songs from the school with my brothers and sisters. Our parents listen to us.

Follow up: What kind of play do your parents involved in with you?

Child: Yes, my mother plays Amangus with us. She makes our dolls with plastics and from her old cloths. She gives us food for our outdoors playhouse. She sometimes shows us how to mix and cook things when we play.

Follow up: Hmm. You mentioned playhouse? What do you play in this play house?

Child: We play mother and father. We do everything our parents do at home. We cook, talk, wash, clean our houses and do shopping.

Interviewer: What do you use books, newspapers and magazines in your home for?

Child: I only see them in our classroom.

Interviewer: Do you have a school or class library?

Child: [hesitating] Yes, we have

Interviewer: What is it used for?

Child: It is locked. It is not used.

Interviewer: Why is not used?

Child: I don't know

Interviewer: *Is there a public library in this community where you can borrow books?*

Child: [quiet] no.

Follow up: Do you think it is necessary to have one?

Child: Yes, I can go there

Follow up: To do what?

Child: So that I can borrow books and read

Interviewer: [Interesting!] What do you use things like pens, pencils and paper in your home for?

Child: Hmm. We don't have pens

Follow up: What do you have?

Child: Only pencils and papers

Follow up: Why do you keep it at school and not at home?

Child: My brother will use it up

Interviewer: Do your parents attend school activities such as meetings?

Child: They don't attend.

Follow up: What about your father when he is around?

Child: He is always not here when there are meetings

Interviewer: Thank you very much, girl.

Child: Hmm.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW OF AN INTERVIEWEE

Name: Kameri Kapena

Gender: Female

Age: 10

Home language: Otjiherero

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Morning

Child: Fine

QUESTIONS ON CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: Who takes care of you?

Child: [soft] I stay with my mother, father, brothers and sisters

Interviewer: How many people stay in your home?

Child: [counting on her fingers] We are seven

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Child: It is comfortable

Interviewer: What language is mostly spoken at home?

Child: Otjiherero

QUESTIONS ON EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTUAL

Interviewer: What kind of reading and writing homework do your parents help you with?

Child: My mother and my brother who is in Grade 5 help me with reading.

Follow up: Do they read aloud to you?

Child: Yes.

Follow up: Can you tell me what they read to you?

Child: My brother reads my books from school and my mother as well

Follow up: Who helps you with writing?

Child: I do it myself

Interviewer: Is your mother not helping?

Child: She does not help with writing but only with reading

Follow up: Who helps you with writing then?

Child: My brother. If he doesn't know, I do it myself or ask the teacher

Follow up: What if he cannot do it?

Child: I asked my teacher

Follow up: Are you not asking your mother?

Child: Sometimes

Child: Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Child: My mother, father, brothers and sisters as well.

Follow up: What kind of books do your parents like reading?

Child: Newspapers and my school books

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Child: Yes, my mother

Follow up: What kind of stories does your mother likes telling?

Child: My mother likes stories from newspapers and old traditional stories

Follow up: After listening what are you doing?

Child: I keep quiet, listen and then retell the story

Follow up: How do you feel about these stories from your mother?

Child: Happy

Follow up: What do you do that shows you are interested or not in these stories?

Child: We laugh

Interviewer: What kind of songs do your parents sing for you?

Child: My mother likes old songs from her school years.

Follow up: What about your father

Child: No, he does not sing. He only listens to us.

Follow up: Can you give me an example of a prayer your parents pray with you?

Child: We only pray at school and not at home.

Follow up: What kind of play are your parents involved in with you?

Child: We play pretend plays where we cook and stir our food in pots, dress dolls and play as if we wash ourselves and talk to our dolls. We play 'Shipopi rounde rounde'.

They only watch how we play.

Follow up: What about talking?

Child: Hmm. They talk about anything.

Follow up: Can you tell me more?

Child: They talk about my homework, stories and other things.

Follow up: Can you tell me more about this play (Shipopi rounde rounde)?

Child: [Smiling] People stand and then they turn around and they say 'Tebi, Tebi'.

Follow up: Can you tell me more about this pretend play. What roles do you play?

Child: We play mother, father and children. The mother cooks food and washes dishes. The father takes the children to school and looks after the cattle. The children are sent to the shop to buy.

Interviewer: What do you use books, newspapers and magazines in your home for?

Child: My mother newspapers and not magazines.

Follow up: Why does she not read magazines?

Child: We do not have

Interviewer: [Sounds good] Do you have a school or class library?

Child: Hmm, I don't know. I don't know.

Interviewer: What do you use things like pens, pencils and paper in your home for?

Child: I write my homework with a pencil. We are not allowed to write with a pen.

Interviewer: Do your parents attend school activities such as meetings?

Child: Yes, she attends

Follow up: What about your father

Child: Sometimes

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library in this community?

Child: I don't know

Interviewer: Thank you

Child: Hmmm

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Name: Tjipuu Kamapoha (pseudonym)

Gender: Male

Age: 9

Home language: Otjiherero

Lead in questions

Interviewer: Good Afternoon

Child: [speak in a soft voice behind his hands] I'm fine

Interviewer: Who takes care of you?

Child: *I stay with my mother, sisters and my father if he comes*

Interviewer: How many people stay in your home?

Child: [count on his fingers] *We are four*

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Child: *It is comfortable*

Interviewer: What language is mostly spoken at home?

Child: *Otjiherero*

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: What kind of reading and writing homework do your parents help you with?

Child: [look down] *my mother helps only if we get papers from the school*

Follow up: What kind of papers?

Child: *Homework papers where we read a piece in the paper and write a story about it.*

Follow up: [Look at me, boy] What about your father if he is around?

Child: *Sometimes, not always*

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Child: *My mother and my father. I can also read*

Follow up: What kinds of books do they like reading?

Child: *Bible and my homework books*

Follow up: Do they ever read aloud to you?

Child: *My mother buys her own books and read. They do not read to me. Only my sister*

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Child: *Yes, my sister and my mother*

Follow up: What kind of stories does your mother like telling?

Child: *Wolf and the Jackal, Bible stories and other stories*

Follow up: Which other stories?

Child: *Stories about her childhood*

Follow up: Can you share them with me?

Child: [Silence] *how...how they were beaten by their teachers.*

Follow up: Excellent! After listening what are you doing?

Child: I retell and ask questions

Follow up: How do you feel about these stories from your mother?

Child: Very happy

Follow up: What do you do that shows your interest or no interest in these stories?

Child: We laugh and they sometimes scared us

Interviewer: What kind of songs do your parents sing with?

Child: We sing together hymnals songs. They also listen to our school songs.

Follow up: What kind of play are your parents involved in with you?

Child: No, we don't play together; only watch us playing our' play house'.

Follow up: Interesting! Can tell me what you do in this play house?

Child: [playing with his nails....head downwards] We play school at home. We write the things we do at school with our teacher. We tell stories. We recite poems. If it is wrong the teacher beat you. We write birthday cards.

Follow up: And what about talking?

Child: We do not talk.

Interviewer: What do you use books, newspapers and magazines in your home for?

Child: We do not have newspapers.

Follow up: What about magazines?

Child: We have

Follow up: What do your parents use the magazines for?

Child: They read and give us.

Follow up: What do you do with it?

Child: We search for pictures if the teacher asks us to do it.

Follow up: Can you give me examples of pictures you look for in the newspaper?

Child: [Silent...think] leaders in our country and famous people.

Interviewer: What do you use the school or class library for?

Child: No, we don't have

Follow up: Do you think is necessary to have one?

Child: Yes, Hmm.

Follow up: Why do you think so?

Child: [silence] so that I can borrow books and read them

Interviewer: [Excellent!] Is there a public or community library in this place?

Child: No, I don't know

Follow up: Do you know what a library is?

Child: I don't know

Interviewer: What do you use things like pens, pencils and paper in your home for?

Child: We only write with pencils

Interviewer: Is your parent attending school activities such as meetings?

Child: No, they don't attend

Follow up: Why do you think they do not attend?

Child: They say that they are busy

Interviewer: Thank you very much, you are cute.

Child: Yes.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Name: Jaanda Vatji

Gender: Female

Age: 10

Home language: Otjiherero

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Who takes care of you?

Child: [shy] I stay with my mother, sister and my two brothers

Follow up: And father?

Child: He is at the cattle post

Interviewer: How many people stay in your home?

Child: [Silence...count on her fingers] We are four

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Child: It is comfortable

Interviewer: What language is mostly spoken at home?

Child: Otjiherero

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: What kind of reading and writing homework do your parents help you with?

Child: My mother helps me with reading homework.

Follow up: Do your sisters help you and your father if he comes?

Child: My mother and sisters read to me. My father helps if he is around.

Follow up: Can you read?

Child: Not everything

Follow up: What if you cannot do it?

Child: I asked my teacher the next day

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Child: My mother, father and my sisters

Follow up: What kind of books do your parents like reading?

Child: My homework books

Follow up: Do your parents ever read aloud to you?

Child: My mother does.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Child: [very proud] yes, my mother.

Follow up: What kind of stories does your mother like to tell?

Child: Yes, she tells traditional stories at bedtime. We laugh"

Follow up: After listening what are you doing?

Child: I use to retell the story or tell my own story from the school

Follow up: How do you feel about these stories from your mother?

Child: Happy

Follow up: What do you do that shows your interest in these stories?

Child: We laugh

Interviewer: What kind of songs do your parents sing for you?

Child: We sing together and I repeat what she sings. My father likes singing as well.

They sing their old songs from school.

Follow up: What kinds of play are your parents involved in with you?

Child: My mother does not watch me but she just makes porridge while we play.

Follow up: What else is your mother doing when you play?

Child: Yes, my mother shows us how to paste pictures in our play books. She makes our ball when we play and she watches us playing”.

Follow up: What do you use to play?

Child: [Silence] We play school and use coal as our pencils and piece of papers or boxes from home. We also write in the sand. We sing our songs from our teacher. We draw pictures with coal. We also play mummy and daddy, shop and we write money and our names.

Interviewer: Do you do shopping with your mother?

Child: Yes,

Follow up: Are you talking on your way to the shop?

Child: No. we just walk.

Follow up: *Doesn't she tell you anything?*

Child: No.

Interviewer: What do you use books, newspapers and magazines in your home for?

Child: Hmm. There are no newspapers and magazines at our house.

Interviewer: What do you use things like pens, pencils and paper in your home for?

Child: I have only pencils which I write with. If they get finish my mother buys again.

Interviewer: Do you have a school or class library?

Child: [Silence] I don't know

Follow up: Do you know what a library is?

Child: Hmm. No

Follow up: Do you know a place where we keep books for reading?

Child: Hmm! I know it.

Follow up: Can you tell me more what you know about this place?

Child: I saw it in Gobabis when older children borrowed books to read

Interviewer: Do you have a reading corner in your class?

Child: No, we don't have.

Interviewer: Do your parents attend school activities such as meetings?

Child: Yes, sometimes not always

Follow up: Why are they not attending always?

Child: They go with me to Gobabis.

Follow up: What are you doing in Gobabis?

Child: I have TB and she goes with me for medication.

Interviewer: Oh! Sorry. Is there a public or community library nearby where your child can borrow books?

Child: No, I don't know it

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Child: Hmm

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Kove Uazuu

Gender: female

Age: 10

Home language: Otjiherero

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Afternoon

Child: Hmmm

PERSONAL INFORMATION OF INTERVIEWEE

Interviewer: Who takes care of you?

Child: I stay with my mother, father, brother and two sisters

Interviewer: How many people stay in your home?

Child: Workers?

Interviewer: No your family members.

Child: [silence.....counting] We are five

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Child: It is comfortable

Interviewer: What language is mostly spoken at home?

Child: Otjiherero

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: What kind of reading and writing homework do your parents help you with?

Child: My two sisters who are in Grade 10 and 8 at Post 3 help me with reading and writing homework.

Follow up: Is your father helping you if he comes?

Child: My parents do not help me with writing activities. I do it myself and my two sisters who help me. If I don't understand I take it back to the teacher.

Follow up: Can you read?

Child: Yes, school books

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Child: My two sisters, brother, father and mother

Follow up: What kinds of books do they like reading?

Child: Schoolbooks and the Bible

Follow up: Do your parents ever read aloud to you?

Child: Yes my sister likes it

Follow up: How often does she read to you?

Child: If she has time

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Child: Hmm. Yes, my mother and father tell bedtime stories. My father tells stories on hunting and cars. I like it.

Follow up: After listening what are you doing?

Child: I use to retell the story

Follow up: What kind of stories does your mother likes telling?

Child: The story of Wolf and the Jackal and old traditional stories

Follow up: How do you feel about these stories from your parents?

Child: I feel happy and laugh

Follow up: What do you do that shows your interest or no interest in these stories?

Child: I laugh and retell

Interviewer: What kind of songs do your parents sing for you?

Child: [Smiling] We sing together school songs. My mother sings dances and claps hands.

Follow up: What kind of play are your parents involved in with you?

Child: They do not play with us. They are busy with their things... [Silence] they do not talk to us.

Follow up: What about talking?

Child: I do not remember

Interviewer: What do you use books, newspapers and magazines in your home for?

Child: [nodding her head] indicating that they have. They read and give us to cut out pictures and paste them in our pictures books

Follow up: What about newspapers?

Child: We make fire with old newspapers

Follow up: Do you get homework where you have to get it from newspapers and magazines?

Child: [proudly] she gives us.

Follow up: Can you share some with me?

Child: The teacher ask us to come with the pictures of the president and ministers

Interviewer: What do you use the school or class library for?

Child: Hmm. We don't have

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library in this community where you can borrow books?

Child: Maybe it is at those houses.

Follow up: Do you know what a library is?

Child: Hmmm, I was never there. I don't know

Interviewer: What do you use things like pens, pencils and paper in your home for?

Child: I write my homework with my pencil. We do not write with pens in Grade 3.

Interviewer: Is your parent attending school activities such as meetings?

Child: [without hesitation] No, they don't attend.

Follow up: why do you think they are not attending?

Child: I don't know. They say they have problems [laughs] they say that they looking after the cattle

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Child: Hmm.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Nokoo Operi (pseudonym)

Gender: Male

Age: 10

Home language: Otjiherero

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning

Child: morning

Interviewer: Who takes care of you?

Child: I stay with my uncle

Interviewer: How many people stay in your home?

Child: [Proudly] We are six

[Stop, check the tape]

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Child: It is comfortable

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Child: Otjiherero

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: What kind of reading and writing homework do your parents help you with?

Child: My mother likes reading to me. She tells me stories from the books she reads.

Follow up: Can you give me some examples of reading homework she helps you with?

Child: She reads my reading homework and other books. She reads to me and asks me questions.

Follow up: Can you please share some questions she asks with me?

Child: She reads sentences and asks me to repeat.

What about writing?

Child: Yes, I write on a piece of paper or in the sand.

Follow up: What kind of things does your mother writes with you?

Child: She writes spelling and sentences on a piece of paper or in the sand

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Child: My mother and my sister.

Follow up: What kind of books does your mother like reading?

Child: She reads story books in Otjiherero

Follow up: Can you please give examples of things your mother read aloud to you?

Child: She reads stories from my teacher and her own books.

Follow up: How often does she read to you?

Child: Everyday after school

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Child: yes, my mother use to tell bedtime stories

Follow up: How do you feel when she tells you stories?

Child: Happy

Follow up: After listening what are you doing?

Child: I use to listen and retell the story to my mother and sister

Follow up: What kind of stories does your mother likes telling?

Child: Old traditional stories and her personal life stories

Follow up: What do you do that shows your interest in these stories? Or non- interest?

Child: We laugh

Interviewer: What kind of songs do your parents sing for you?

Child: No. They don't sing, but I sing with my sister.

Follow up: What kind of songs do you sing with your sister?

Child: We sing songs from the school.

Follow up: Can you give me examples?

Child: We sing the 'Alphabet' song, 'We are happy to be together' and 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'.

Follow up: What kind of play are your parents involved in with you?

Child: [Silence] We play school. One is a teacher and the others are learners in the classroom listening to the teacher talking. We write homework and tests. We write spelling and we read those words loudly. We write sentences and the teacher asks us to read and gives us marks. The teacher tells us to give it to our parents to see how we perform. The next day somebody else becomes a teacher and teaches the learners. We recite poems loudly and do mathematics.

Follow up: Why do you pretend like your teacher?

Child: We want to teach like her. I want to become a teacher.

Follow up: With whom do you play?

Child: I play with my sister and friends

Follow up: [Hmmm! Interesting] How is your mother involved in this play?

Child: We only show them the marks we get from the tests and what we write.

Follow up: Why do you show your parents?

Child: So that they can help us if it is wrong

Follow up: What about talking with your parent?

Child: My mother does not talk to me. She only sends me.

Follow up: What about praying with your parents?

Child: I do not remember. We do not pray at home.

Interviewer: What do you use books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Child: No we don't have

Interviewer: Do you have a school or class library where you borrow books?

Child: I don't know it

Follow up: Can you tell me what a library is?

Child: I don't know

Interviewer: What do you use things like pens, pencils and paper in your home for?

Child: I write my homework with my pencil on a piece of paper.

Interviewer: Is your parent attending school activities such as meetings, educational programs etc?

Child: Yes, they attend.

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where you can borrow books?

Child: No, I don't know it

Interviewer: Thank you. You are a bright child.

Child: Hmm

APPENDIX N: PILOT STUDY

PILOT STUDY

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name of teacher: Nandii (pseudonym)

Sex: Male

Age: 37

Home Language: Otjiherero

Number of years of teaching experience: 9

Name of School: Omipanda Primary School

Qualification: Higher Education Diploma

Grade teaching: 5 (language)

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning madam [sound of papers]

Mrs Teacher: *Good morning, madam*

Interviewer: Are you ready for the interview?

Mrs Teacher: *I think so.*

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been here?

Teacher: *nine years*

Interviewer: What are your highest teaching qualifications? Can you describe it to me?

Teacher: *Higher Education Diploma*

Interviewer: What do you understand by family literacy?

Teacher: [Silent] *It is when parents read and write to their children or do other literacy activities with their children*

Follow up: Can you give me examples of other literacy activities you are referring to?

Teacher: *Singing, telling stories as well as talking to your child.*

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: What role do you as a teacher play with regard to parental involvement in the development of children's literacy?

Teacher: [Smile] *Hmm. As a language teacher I asked parents to assist me with reading and writing home work. I ask parents to tell stories to their children and support them when playing educational games.*

Follow up: Can you elaborate more on educational games?

Teacher: *These are games such as pretend play where children pretend to be teachers and parents when playing.*

Interviewer: Interesting! How often do you as a teacher meet with parents each year?

Teacher: *Frequently*

Interviewer: Can you elaborate more?

Teacher: *Anytime if I need them I call them to discuss issues that need to be discussed.*

Interviewer: How often to do meet parents on meetings where they come and see their children's books?

Teacher: *They come four times a year.*

Follow up: Do parents know that they can come anytime and talk to teachers/? Do they have this information?

Teacher: *Sure. We informed them early in the year.*

Interviewer: How do you think parents can help their children with the development of literacy at home?

Teacher: *Parents can do simple things such as telling stories, singing with their children, assist with homework, and talk to their children on literacy issues etc.*

Interviewer: You mentioned that parents can talk to their children on literacy issues?

Teacher: *That's right.*

Follow up: What do you refer to?

Teacher: [Smile] *Doing shopping together writing letters, birthday cards and cooking together. There are a lot of things parents can do to develop the literacy of their children.*

Follow up: Do parents read to their children?

Teacher: *Not always. We sit that problem. Parents are ignorant. You will find parents who don't understand but they do not come and ask for help or asking neighbours to help. There is an attitude of it is the teachers responsibility.*

Interviewer: Do you give your learners reading and writing homework?

Teacher: Everyday. It is a must. I follow the curriculum. You know that.

Interviewer: What kind of homework do you set? Can you please describe them to me?

Teacher: I give the simple reading papers and ask them to go and read a paragraph at home and read the next day in the class. They also get homework where they should come with a new story from their parents. I give them homework to write which is done very poorly.

Follow up: Do they do all these activities

Teacher: Not all of them. As I already told you parents are ignorant. You will well find those who do it but still there are those ones.

Interviewer: What about storytelling?

Teacher: Yeah. Parents tell stories or their other siblings

Interviewer: Do you encourage parents to sing to their children? How do parents do this?

Teacher: Sure. I send my children with a song such as Twinkle, Twinkle little star and ask the children to sing with their parents and the parents who knows it to assist their children.

Interviewer: Do you think literacy can be developed through playing?

Teacher: Oh! yeah

Follow up: Can you elaborate more?

Teacher: [Smile] Children talk as they play. Hey write and read to each other. They sing songs and recite poems. These to me are good examples of literacy activities.

Interviewer: What mechanism does the school use to create effective communication channels between the school and the parents?

Teacher: We invite parents to meetings; ask them to take part in fundraising activities.

Teacher: Parents are informed frequently by sending letters, sending messages and announcing over the radio on other school issues but not on literacy development.

Interviewer: How often do you as a teacher do home visits?

Teacher: I really do not do it because I do not have time.

Follow up: Do you think the school is doing enough to support parents in literacy development of their children?

Teacher: *No. I do not think so. The school support parents in other activities but not in literacy development.*

Follow up: What do you think the school should do to support parents in literacy development of their children?

Teacher: *We should allow parents to come and tell stories to the children in classroom. We should allow them to come and share ideas and their experiences with us.*

Interviewer: Are there any ways you as a Grade 3 teacher use to empower parents in the development of their children's literacy?

Teacher: *I only encourage them to tell traditional stories to their children. I send old newspapers and magazines to parents who can read.*

Interviewer: What is the parents' attitude to their children's literacy work?

Teacher: *Parents give the work to the older siblings to help or they send it back to school. I think that we need to educate our parents on this issue.*

Interviewer: Why do they have this attitude? How could this attitude be improved?

Teacher: *We need to talk to them. Education will help them where we try to tell them about the importance of literacy.*

Interviewer: Do parents attend school meetings?

Teacher: *Some not all of them.*

Interviewer: Why do you think parents do not attend?

Teacher: *They do not see it as important and other factors as well. Parents are living under poverty. They do not have money. Some are even illiterate and ignorant.*

Interviewer: How would you describe the availability of literacy resources in this community?

Teacher: *Good question. This environment as you can see it is very poor when it comes to literacy resources. We do not have newspapers, magazines, school books, stationary etc.*

Follow up: What do you think should we do to improve this situation?

Teacher: *Literacy materials should be provided through a library. We need a library and better literacy classes should be introduced. The government should subsidized books and stationary.*

Interviewer: Does your school have a library?

Teacher: Not here, dear

Interviewer: What strategies, if any, do you use to encourage reading for pleasure in your classroom?

Teacher: I read to my learners very slowly. I read books which I know are interested to them I repeat words and sentences by changing my voice.

Interviewer: What do you do if a child did not do his/her homework due to that his/her parents are illiterate and could not assist the child?

Teacher: What can I do rather than doing it I.

Interviewer: Do parents visit the school regularly?

Teacher: Forget about it. They do not come if you do not call them.

Interviewer: One more question. Do you have anything else to say?

Teacher: Ija. We need to treat all schools equally. Rural schools are neglected if you compare it with urban schools. We do not have facilities and qualified teachers.

Interviewer: Thanks, madam

Teacher: Welcome.

TRANSCRIPT OF PILOT INTERVIEW

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Sukona (pseudonym)

Age: 39

Sex: Female

Marital Status: Unmarried

Type of employment/work: Unemployed

Home language: Otjiherero

Qualification: Grade 10

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good afternoon

Sukona: Good afternoon, madam

Interviewer: Are you ready for the interview?

Sukona: Yes.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Interviewer: For how long have you been a resident at this place?

Sukona: I have been here for two years now.

Follow up: Do you have children?

Sukona: Yes, I do.

Interviewer: In which Grades are they?

Sukona: One is in grade three and the other one is in grade two.

Interviewer: How many of you are staying in your home?

Sukona: We are three.

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Sukona: It is not comfortable because is a one bedroom house.

Follow up: Do you have electricity?

Sukona: No, we don't have.

Follow up: If not, what do you use for cooking and light at night?

Sukona: We use wood for cooking and lamp light.

Follow up: Does the child use the lamp light to do homework?

Sukona: It is not good for their eyes; therefore they study during the day.

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Sukona: We speak Otjiherero.

Follow up: Is it the same as the language of instruction of the school?

Sukona: Yes, Otjiherero

QUESTIONS

Follow up: Can you read?

Sukona: Yes, I can read and I did Otjiherero up to Grade 10. I know how to help or teach my young children. When I get hold of a book I read. I search for books to read.

Interviewer: Do you help your girl with reading and writing?

Sukona: Yes, I help him with reading and writing words which they get from school for example: ombwa (dog), otjimbere (ball), ondjatu (bag). All these words begin with the same sound. I teach them how to sound out words.

Follow up: How do you do this?

Sukona: I first teach him the pronunciation of these words and make sure that he notices that the words begin with the same sound and finally I teach him how to write it. I write these words in parts e.g. o/t/j/m/b/e/r/e, o/m/b/w/a and o/n/d/j/a/t/u. I don't know if I have answered your question very well.

Interviewer: Yes, you did. In fact you answered it very well.

Follow up: What kinds of books do you like reading?

Sukona: I can read magazines like 'You' and 'Drum'. I like reading Rebecca Malope and Brenda.

Follow up: Do you ever read aloud to your child?

Sukona: Yes, I do. I first read the book before I share it with her. She sits next to me when I read loudly to her by sharing a good story book with her. I point to the pictures while she watches and listens. I ask her to read a story and ask her about what she has read. I encourage her to read more and more.

Follow up: It sounds very interesting! How often do you read to her?

Sukona: I like reading. I do it frequently. I will say everyday if I finish my work. To me, reading is a habit.

Interviewer: What does your child do that shows his/her interest in reading? Or non-interest?

Sukona: She laughs, listens and asks simple questions. She also point to pictures and says the name of the objects. She sounds out letters for the whole day and talk about the book. Reading aloud to her gives me an indication that she becomes self-confident.

Follow up: Are you responding to her questions?

Sukona: Yes, I do.

Follow up: How do you respond to her questions?

Sukona: In a very polite and encouraging way by giving warm attention to her.

Follow up: What if you don't know the answer to what she is asking?

Sukona: I don't tell her that I don't know I rather try to answer her by asking my colleagues.

Interviewer: Does the teacher give your child reading books to bring home.

Sukona: Yes, my child gets reading homework everyday where I have to read loudly with her and listen to what she reads. The teacher even gave me some ideas on how to teach my child reading. She gives us different strategies to use when teaching our children reading.

Follow up: Could you tell me about your experience of reading from the time you were in school?

Sukona: My first memory of reading was because we had no books at home and both my parents could not read. There were no books at home, parents could not read. The environment did not encourage reading or writing at all. It was in a rural area where there was no electricity for you to read or watch television. My reading habit just develops when I went to an urban school. When I was in grade 8 I could read a book daily.

Follow up: Do you remember your parents sharing rhymes, songs or stories with you?

Sukona: Yes, stories.

Follow up: How did you feel when your parents told you stories?

Sukona: Very excited as to what was going to happen next. A sense of closeness, I could feel it.

Follow up: Which one of your parent told stories?

Sukona: Definitely, my mother.

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Sukona: Yes, always me.

Follow up: In which language do you tell these old stories?

Sukona: Otjiherero and sometimes in English

Follow up: What kind of stories do you like to tell?

Sukona: Stories about the Jackal and the Wolf, stories from magazines, newspapers and my favourite romantic stories.

Follow up: Can you tell me one of these stories?

Sukona: Later. [Not comfortable].

Follow up: What does your child do that shows his/her interest in these stories? Or non-interest?

Sukona: She looks at me, asks me simple questions and smiles. She do this because I select books that are at her interest level e.g. cooking, the story of Pinocchio etc.

Follow up: Why do you think we should tell stories?

Sukona: Children will learn from it about things in other countries as well. They feel happy and we come together as a family.

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Sukona: I'm the only one and those who attend school.

Interviewer: Are you as a parent involved in developing your children's literacy e.g. playing and talking, with your child?

Sukona: Yes, I do. We talk every day about issues affecting our society such as poverty, crime etc.

Follow up: If so, how are you involved? If not, why not?

Sukona: I share my earliest childhood memories with her when my grandmother reading stories to me by the fire.

Follow up: Do you pray as a family?

Sukona: Oh! Yeah! Bedtime!

Interviewer: Have you ever attended literacy workshops or training?

Sukona: Not literacy as such but a workshop on the role of schoolboard in education.

Follow up: Can you tell me more?

Sukona: It is a workshop where we were told on how to develop schoolfees and discipline learners but not specific on reading and writing.

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Sukona: Yes, I use to collect and I observed that if I bring books to my children, they read. I usually read magazines because of crosswords puzzles, nothing else.

Follow up: Do you encourage your children to read them?

Sukona: Yes, that's why I collect all these books and newspapers. I believe that reading is significant in the child's life. For the young one their understanding is very limited.

Follow up: Can you child read them?

Sukona: Yes, surely by surely. I take time to make sure that we read together.

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Sukona: Yes, I buy and send it to school so that they can use it at school. I do have some which we use at home. The problem is just that stationeries are getting lost and now you cannot even have your own at home.

Interviewer: How often do you attend school activities such as meetings, educational programmes etc.?

Sukona: Frequently. I never missed a school meeting.

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where you child can borrow books?

Sukona: No. we don't have.

Follow up: Do you think it's necessary to have one?

Sukona: Yes, it very important to have one because as apparent I will go and relax by reading a novel. Children and parents should know the importance of the library. We should be taught on how we can develop love for books and practice readings skills. We lack the reading skills.

Interviewer: Do you experience any problems in helping your child to read and write?

Sukona: Yes, I do. Our level is not the same. Or pronunciation is not the same. Sometimes I'm afraid to say word to them, I'm not confident enough. I want to be my children's role model that is why I read to them. I want to know reading properly.

Follow up: Can you tell me about these problems?

Sukona: She is too shy to speak. She has a pronunciation problem. She likes reading but she needs practice on a daily basis if one could have enough time.

Follow up: What are the contributing factors?

Sukona: The environment in which they live does not encourage reading. Children just know that after school we should go and play after finishing the domestic chores.

Follow up: How can this be improved?

Sukona: Electricity is the first thing that needs to be improved for our children to read. We need a community library to improve our reading skills. We need newspapers on a daily basis so that we can at least tell our children about the happenings.

Interviewer: Do you think a parent should encourage their children to read and write?

Sukona: Sure

Follow up: How do you think they should do this?

Sukona: Yes, we should be encouraged because some parents have a negative attitude about education. They are ignorant; they don't come to meetings or school activities. They should be given books where they should sign when they help children with their homework. They should not send the homework back to school. They should try their best. Some of the parents do have the interest but poverty is the main problem. There are some other parents who have a distance problem and this prevent them for attending meetings. Some parents are too poor to afford school fees, and to provide stationeries to their children. There is communication gab between our parents and teachers because they can speak English while parents can only speak Otjiherero.

Follow up: Its sounds very interesting.

Follow up: Why do they may be speak English?

Sukona: Yes, they are educated.

Follow up: Do you have anything else to say?

Sukona: Well, hmmm [pause] I want to say something about the important of education. Education is the key to success. My mother use to emphasized on the important of education. I regret why I failed my Grade 10 because if you are educated all doors will be open to you. We as parents should develop a culture of reading, how? I don't know but we should do it. We should be self-confident when reading aloud to our children.

Thank you very much for the enriching discussion.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Muroua Sukona (pseudonym)

Gender: Male

Age: 10

Grade 3

Home language: Otjiherero

LEAD IN QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Good morning

Child: morning

Interviewer: Who takes care of you?

Child: My mother

Interviewer: In which Grade are you?

Child: I'm in Grade 3

Interviewer: How many of you are staying in your home?

Child: [Proudly] We are three

[Stop, check the tape]

Follow up: Is it comfortable or disturbing for learning?

Child: It is comfortable

Interviewer: What language is spoken mostly at home?

Child: Otjiherero

PERCEPTUAL QUESTIONS

Interviewer: Do your parents help you with reading and writing homework?

Child: My mother helps me with my homework

Interviewer: How many of your family members can read?

Child: My mother, my brother and me

Follow up: What kind of books does your mother like reading?

Child: Story books in Otjiherero from school and magazines

Follow up: Do your mother ever read aloud to you?

Child: She like reading to me

Interviewer: Is there anyone in your home who likes telling stories?

Child: yes, my mother tell bedtime stories and my brother

Follow up: How do you feel?

Child: very Happy

Follow up: After listening what are you doing?

Child: I retell the story and tell my teacher

Follow up: What kind of stories does your mother likes telling?

Child: old traditional stories

Interviewer: Is your mother singing songs for you?

Child: She listens to my songs from school. She does not sing

Follow up: Is your parent playing and talking with you?

Child: My mother helps me when I play school. She marks my papers if I write something.

Follow up: How do you play the 'school'?

Child: I sit with my brother I do what we have done at school and give it to our mother to mark and give us marks.

Follow up: Why do you do this?

Child: We want to learn

Follow up: How do you feel about these stories from your mother?

Child: Happy

Follow up: What do you do that shows your interest in these stories?

Child: We listen and laugh

Interviewer: Do you have any books, newspapers and magazines in your home?

Child: My mother buys

Interviewer: Do you have a school or class library?

Child: I don't know it

Interviewer: Do you have things like pens, pencils and paper in your home?

Child: Yes, I have

Follow up: Where do you keep them?

Child: I keep it at school

Interviewer: Does your mother attend school activities such as meetings, educational programs etc?

Child: Yes, they attend.

Interviewer: Is there a public or community library nearby where you can borrow books?

Child: No, I don't know it

Interviewer: Thank you.

Child: hmmm

