

**Acquiring Reading Skills in English as Second Language:
Listening to the Voice of Grade 1 Teachers in South Africa****Anna J. Hugo***Department Language, Arts and Culture Education, College of Education,
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Fax: 27 12 664 33 74, E-mail: hugoaj@unisa.ac.za***KEYWORDS** English as Second Language. Reading Skills. Reading Problems. Grade 1 Teachers

ABSTRACT The research discussed in this article investigated the acquisition of reading skills by Grade 1 learners who are English Second Language (ESL) speakers in South African classrooms. A questionnaire was used for data collection and both quantitative and qualitative data were obtained. Issues that arose from the quantitative data were the class size, the number of ESL learners in a class and the variety in competence in English of the ESL learners. From the qualitative data the following themes which influenced the acquisition of reading by ESL learners became evident: a lack of vocabulary influences comprehension, the influence of the sound system of the English language, auditory perception, parents and the home environment and the socio-economic and socio-cultural background of learners.