

**Investigation of Grade 10 Learners' Essay Writing in English First Additional
Language in Eensaam Circuit, Sekhukhune South District, Limpopo Province,
South Africa**

By

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DECLARATION

I, **Matome Peter Letsoalo**, declare that this work is mine, original and has not been previously submitted in any form by myself or anyone else in this university or any other educational institution for any degree or examination purpose.

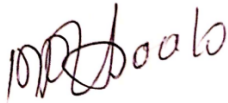
All sources used in this study have been acknowledged.

MP Letsoalo

01/11/2024

Signature

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MP Letsoalo', is written over the printed name 'MP Letsoalo'.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, Matshepo Ruth Letsoalo, my daughter, Dimphe Dorah Letsoalo and my son, Matome Letsoalo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My heartfelt gratitude is extended to the following people:

My supervisor, Prof TW Molotja for the excellent guidance and mentorship he has given me throughout this difficult study. To my Lord and Creator, I would like to say, "With you, nothing is impossible indeed".

ABSTRACT

This study reflects on the experiences of Grade 10 learners' essay writing in English First Additional Language in Eensaam Circuit, Sekhukhune South District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Since the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies that teachers use to improve essay writing, a qualitative methodology was used. It is within this methodology that a case study was adopted, whereby two methods of data collection were used, namely: interviews and observation. Two schools were purposively selected as sites for the study. The interviewed participants were the Departmental Head, Senior education specialist, teachers and learners. Learners in grade 10 are not performing exceptionally well in essay writing and this results in high failure rate in English first Additional language. The study discussed the contributory factors to the findings and, therefore, recommends that the Department of Education should provide Grade 10 English FAL teachers with in-service training and support programs. The programmes should aim at equipping teachers with skills to use when teaching essay writing in Grade 10. The Department of Education should also provide materials and strategies that will help all learners develop writing skills.

Keywords: Qualitative Study, Essay Writing, Purposive Sampling, In-service Training

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE: Advanced Certificate in Education

ANA: Annual National Assessment

BA: Bachelor of Arts

B Ed Honour: Bachelor in Education (Honours)

FAL: First Additional Language

HL: Home Language

LOLT: Language of Learning and Teaching

PTD: Primary Teachers Diploma

SGB: School Governing Body

SMT: School Management Team

UL: University of Limpopo

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

ASEAN: Association of Southeast Asian Nations

DBE: Department of Basic Education

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

DAaR: Drop All and Read campaign

NRS: National Reading Strategy

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION.

English language plays a central role in the South African education system (Rao, 2019). This language was predominantly used in most South African public schools as a Language of Learning and Teaching, and was also learned as a First Language or a First Additional Language. English is dominantly used as a medium of communication in most South African public domains. Thus, the need to become fluent in English FAL was essential for gaining meaningful access to education, the labour market and broader social functions. The central goal of gaining proficiency in English FAL globally was to develop effective writing and communicative abilities of EFAL learners to enhance their academic and professional prospects. Most countries are keen to offer primary and tertiary educational courses in English, and this serves dual purposes: making their education system competitive globally and attracting foreign learners (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An & Dearden, 2018). The goal is to provide content and language knowledge simultaneously for learners to be able to convey and interpret messages in English through written and spoken modalities (Mohammed, 2020). Thus, it remained a challenge and a concern for this study that the level of proficiency among English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners are far from satisfactory.

In South Africa, majority of the population speak indigenous languages as their Home Languages i.e., Sepedi, Tshivenda, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele and Xitsonga (Mkhize & Balfour, 2017). However, English remains the dominant language in schools, city centres and other economic sectors. Although English language remains dominant, most people living in rural areas have limited exposure to the language because of the prevalence of Sepedi and isiNdebele as the media of communication (De Wilde, Brysbaert & Eyckmans, 2020). Thus, learners of today are exposed to spoken English mostly through television, digital devices and in classroom. In relation to the above view, it was necessary for me to indicate the background of the school at

which I teach. It is a previously deprived and under resourced school, hence, the limitations of learners' improvement in EFAL fluency and proficiency. English is not used daily in the communities to which the studied learners belonged, and learners had no exposure to print media, technology and libraries. Furthermore, learners had limited print resources such as magazines and extensive reading books provided by their schools. Thus, the community where I teach is consistent with the characteristics of the poorly resourced and historically disadvantaged African societies. Hence, learners did not have the capacity to acquire fluency and proficiency in EFAL writing skills because English was not the traditional medium of communication in their homes.

According to Thobejane (2018), Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the learning and mastering of a second language by someone who already has proficiency in their First Language. Relatively, studies revealed that the interference of Home Language is one of the major challenges that affect learner's development of EFAL skills. Thus, this study sought to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 10 EFAL learners in using English as a Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). According to Sun (2019), the ontological belief is that language has an intersubjective nature as a social system through which we organise and produce social reality (language products) via speaking and writing. It is a process of dialogism which conceptualises knowledge as a multi voiced conversational turn in which people produce it together rather than an individual possession. This study explored experiences of isiNdebele and Sepedi First Language learners to examine the common challenges they encountered regarding the use of EFAL as a LoLT. It was necessary to investigate the causes of the challenges that learners experienced to counteractive procedures that could elevate learners' essays writing in EFAL. The researcher anticipated that the study would help to prepare all learners for the future by advocating for the provision of quality education.

There were numerous of factors that were found to contribute to learners' lack of confidence when speaking English in an EFAL classroom. It was observed by the researcher that most learners lacked confidence when it came to participating in both the formal and informal oral activities. Their lack of confidence made them to be more reluctant to take part in any activity that sought to develop their oral competency. Some

learners incline to inform the educator that they refuse to participate. Therefore, they prefer not being allocated marks over participating in oral activities.

The researcher is an English educator who is responsible for teaching English from Grade 08 to 12 at the sampled school. During English lessons, the researcher encountered problems with learners' reluctance to partake in oral activities. Most learners complained about struggling with lack of confidence, which caused them to not be able to speak fluently, coherently, appropriately and confidently. This prompted the researcher to investigate the factors causing the lack of confidence when speaking English in an EFAL classroom. Learning a second language can be a daunting process because it involved a lot of practice, attention and exploration of strategies that could be implemented to help enhance the speaking competence of learners in Grade 10.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM.

Many learners in grade 10 are faced with the challenge of writing coherently in English First Additional Language. In one study on Australian EAL doctoral students in various disciplines, Ma (2021) found that while many participants encountered linguistic challenges and socio-cultural challenges, some participants thought that native speakers also faced challenges in academic writing. The problem that arose was that learners were not conversant with English which had become a key medium of instruction in South Africa. Learners in Sekhukhune South District, rural villages, struggled with knowledge and ability to write coherently in EFAL. Hidayati (2018) attest that many EFL teachers found that teaching writing was difficult (Thuy, 2009). This was said that there were challenges of teaching writing to EFL learners. Indeed, teaching English writing skills involves developing linguistic and communicative competence of the learner, which was quite a challenging task in this study. This challenge impeded learners to succeed in their other learning areas. The identified problems necessitated a study of this nature as it sought to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 10 learners in rural village regarding coherent essays writing in English First Additional Language, Limpopo Province.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW.

Several studies have been devoted to explaining the internationalisation of English language as a medium of instruction in schools, and a medium of communication in business and various activities across the globe (Tang, 2020). English has become a tool of internationalised education systems of various countries. Countries are keen to offer primary and tertiary educational courses in English for dual purposes; making their education systems competitive globally and to attract foreign learners (Macaro et al., 2018). The most striking example is that of the adoption of English as the official language and medium of communication in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This policy's thrust sought to add value to the quality of this region's education system. Therefore, various scholars had appropriated the global use of the English language in various ways.

Mohammed (2020) argues that English language has become a global tool for economic success. The argument advanced was that the language has led to developmental courses in economic and business sectors. Through the use of English, most people developed cognitive, aptitude and the critical professional skills necessary for the contemporary technological age. However, the globalisation of English language had also led to social class inequalities (Ibrahim, 2016). As a social construction, societies had been increasingly judged on their ability to speak and use English fluently, thus creating binaries between those that are proficient in the language and those that are not. The learners seem to have a challenge in responding to essay writing question in English FAL paper three. Other cultural studies locate the global usage of English as a tool for cross-cultural communication. For example, the study of Liu, Thurlow, Press and Lickteig (2018) on English language, depicted its developmental trajectory through the ages. The globe was made up of various and distinct cultures. These differences had proven a barrier over time. However, Mohammed (2020) cautioned against what was termed a 'force behind cultural imperialism'. English has been instrumentally used to submerge other cultures over time.

According to Hollebeke, Van Oss, Struys, Van Avermaet and Agirdag (2022), Spolsky's language framework had four determined constructs: (a) national or ethnic ideology, (b) English as a global language, (c) nation's sociolinguistic stated, and (d)

improved link between linguistic rights and civil and human rights frameworks. In terms of national or ethnic ideology, this refers to the culmination of beliefs and values that underpin a language policy. In the South African context, the colonial history of apartheid rendered English as an official language to a variety of other languages such as Afrikaans and native languages. Regarding the global role of English language, Spolsky asserts that this was “tidal wave of English that is moving into almost every sociolinguistic repertoire” (Spolsky, 2020, p.12; Tang, 2020). English has assumed a global developmental trajectory in every sector.

Spolsky’s third construct is named the nation’s sociolinguistic state. This refers to an evaluation of the number of languages spoken, the people that speak those languages and the communicative valued of these languages spoken in a specific society or nation. This construct speaks to the perceptions, values and beliefs prescribed to native languages. These could be influenced by political and cultural formations of societies. In the context of South Africa, there has been a proliferation of westernised cultures that inclined to value English and Afrikaans known as ‘white languages’ and devalue African languages. Thus, most families tend to send their children to ‘A schools’ that are private and known for teaching Cambridge, French and Dutch syllabuses (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2013). This is in contrast with public schools that promoted the use of English on a minimal scale, with the unofficial use of native languages through-out. The last construct focuses on the growing interest in linking linguistic rights as an integral part of civil and human rights. Spolsky and Tang (2020) claim that there is a global quest for linguistic pluralism and an acceptance of the need to recognise the rights of individuals and groups to continue to use their languages. Therefore, language is appropriated as an essential human rights component.

Garcia (2020) identified four major challenges in the implementation of English as the medium of instruction or as First Additional Language in schools. These challenges include linguistic issues, cultural impediments, structural limitations and identity-based complications. In terms of linguistic challenges, learners often struggle with the transition from their native to the adoption of an additional language in school. Studies have demonstrated that this often occurs because the additional language is not used in the homestead or society where the learner emerges. This has further been attributed to several factors such as language as an important aspect of one’s cultural identity (Shahrebabaki, 2018). The English language was an impediment in African

schools. The case study of the Zambian education system demonstrates the complexities of a multilingual approach in schooling (Maodi, 2018). The Bemba language is said to be used in relation to orthography, yet the English language was used asymmetrically because of its unreliability to the spellings and meanings of certain things. In Ethiopia, the law dictates the use of Amharic as a medium of instruction at primary level (Tarekegn, 2018). However, in all these case studies, it has been demonstrated that the adoption of English language is problematic in schools, owing to the identity dimensions of the Amharic and Bemba languages.

Other scholars address that linguistic challenges are related to language issues faced by both scholars and teachers in the transition to the use of English as an additional language. These challenges are often related to the comprehension of the accent of English native speaking teachers by non-native speaking English learners (Liu et al., 2018). In some instances, linguistic issues are linked to the failure to comprehend content delivered in English due to lack of English proficiency. The cultural component is also linked to the challenges of implementing English as an additional language. Thus, the notion of cultural anxiety is predominant in the acceptability of the English language. Cultural anxiety was tied to historical processes such as colonialism that led to the cultural subjugation of local languages. Discussions around the use of English as an additional language have taken on a superiority complex vis-à-vis inferiority complex dimensions, where the former is regarded as superior to local languages. In South Africa, English was considered as an official language by the white minority and apartheid government (Steyn, 2017). This was pushed with separate development which took on identity dimensions. The majority of South Africans were forced to use English in schools instead of their native languages.

Structural limitations relate to the policy and programmes in place to implement English as First Additional Language. Gorter and Cenoz (2017) attest to the fact that comparison is placed in the context of the changing views about the use of languages in education where a shift can be observed away from an emphasis on separating languages to approaches that more closely suit daily practices of multilinguals. These could take in the form of the number of English as First Additional Language courses, resources and the availability of teaching and supporting staff. Some of the issues identified related to the capacity of teachers, including their confidence in teaching the language and preparedness as well. Some teachers may lack confidence because of

the anxiety of using English as a medium of instruction in the class. This was prevalent in rural Africa where most teachers did not possess the necessary skills to teach English. Identity based complications are focused on the perceptions of the use of English at institutional levels. This encompasses the policies and mechanisms outside the scope of teacher-learner.

Different scholars have attempted to unpack the concept of essay writing (Hassan & Dweik, 2021; Qarqez & Abo-Rashid, 2017; Oakhill & Elbro, 2014). Therefore, essay writing is presented as a process that is underpinned by cognitive abilities and skills. Consequently, there is a link between understanding a text and decoding words found in that text by a reader. Other scholars such as Oakhill and Elbro (2014) argue that the concept of essay writing is associated with adequate comprehension of written texts. As such, writing involves two critical components: prior knowledge and comprehension. Prior knowledge is a process which enables learners to develop and enhance their comprehension competencies. On the other hand, comprehension is a process in which learners cultivate the meanings of sentences or words in a text.

According to Makhubele (2015), a teacher-based approach is a method of teaching and learning in which classroom activities are centred around the teacher. Though this approach is traditional, it includes the proactive role of the teacher and the less active role of the learner in which learners are receptive and passive. In this approach, the teacher is the source of knowledge and the learner absorbs knowledge. This preference also twigs from limited mother-tongue resources, teacher training and language proficiency (Terra, 2018). Therefore, the methods are referred to as tools for managing the classroom. The challenge with this type of method was in its top-down approach that assumes that the teacher knows the content, approach and tools needed to achieve essay writing among learners. This type of method is imposed on learners as it does not identify and address their individual needs.

Learner-based methods are also known as child-focused learning. These are approaches that are focused on the educational challenges and needs of a learner (Cade, Wardle & Otter, 2022). The goal that all children should be ready to learn when they enter school has resulted in educational changes designed to address the academic success of young children, particularly the disadvantaged children through quality early care and learning. In this approach, the focus is on the learning style and

interests of a learner, while at the same, looking at time the teacher spends facilitating the process. This approach centralises the voice of the learner. Therefore, the learner is proactively involved in the discovery of writing essay processes from an independent approach through this method.

There are variety of approaches to essay writing that are prescribed in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS, 2012). One of the main focuses is the successful implementation of essay writing techniques in South African schools. The *text-based approach* is suggested by the CAPS as an approach that should be utilised in teaching and learning, and its outcomes could improve learners' communicative competencies. According to Collerson (2019) and Thobejane (2018), this approach entails learning to write while paying attention to texts and analysing them to cultivate an understanding of how they are formed and their subsequent effect. Most learners are unable to communicate effectively in English, particularly through text-based approaches such as reading and writing. Therefore, scholars such as Wessels (2016) assert that English language and its communication skills should be taught at foundational levels. However, in most South African schools, learners adopt English as a First Additional Language in the early phases of education, yet the problems of essay writing persist.

The text-based approach places the teacher as an authoritative guide that scaffolds the learning and teaching processes of learners towards maximised potential. Alghamdy (2024) indicates that English teachers play an essential role in increasing dialogic interaction among their English language learners in terms of essay writing. The teacher is involved in a rigorous process in which they provide learners with models of discussing and analysing language structures. Scaffolding is essential for language acquisition and is applicable in teaching essay writing.

The communicative approach is grounded in the assumption that successful language learning is attained by transmitting actual meanings (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). When communication is involved in the teaching and learning processes, the learners' natural methods of language acquisition and essay writing would be utilised to enable them to utilise the language. This approach is hinged on specific communicative tools that learners must be aware of. According to Brow (2020) and Thobejane (2018), this approach focuses on grammatical structure application and the subsequent functions

conveyed. The main goal of learning a language is not only to attain grammatical competence, but also the communicative proficiencies. Therefore, activities should allow learners to participate in essay writing of English through interaction, collaboration and information sharing.

4. ROLE OF THEORY

The social constructivism theory emphasises the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society, and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 2017). This theory is closely related to many other contemporary theories such as the developmental theories of Vygotsky and Bruner (year) and Bandura's social cognitive theory of 1977. The social constructivist theory guided this study with its tenets of scaffolding and learning in peers or groups among learners.

The researcher chose this theory because the study involved an exploration of challenges experienced by Grade 10 learners in using English as a Language of Learning and Teaching in Eensaam Circuit. This theory helped the researcher to explore specific assumptions about realities, knowledge and learning of both the teachers and learners of the sampled secondary schools regarding the development of writing skills.

The behaviourist theory posits that language acquisition is how people develop abilities to comprehend and utilise a language. Therefore, followers of the theory such as Skinner (1953) contend that the acquisition and comprehension of sounds and words are similar to any type of cognitive behaviour. The main notion in the behaviourist theory is the 'stimulus-response' as a critical learning component. Language acquisition often happens when the learner studies, internalises and reproduces language patterns and forms that are modelled by the individuals who speak to them (Dastpak, Behjat & Taghinezhad, 2017). For infants, language is developed through imitation of how their caregivers or those around them speak. Consequently, language acquisition comes naturally.

Learners are exposed to language and information as they interacted with teachers daily. Hence, the behaviourists established a link between language and human

behaviour. This implies that caregivers and other role models such as teachers must be involved in fostering positive and effective behaviour such as introducing effective reading comprehension mechanisms. It was in line with the above arguments that this study used the behaviourist theory in unpacking how teacher competencies, as forms of behaviours, could be instrumental in determining the extent to which learners attain reading comprehension. According to Soto, Gutiérrez de Blume, Jacovina, McNamara, Benson and Riffo (2019), learners' reading comprehension accuracy is related to their performance at different levels of the text. Learners' text-based question performance, which relies on a superficial understanding of texts, is positively related to reading comprehension accuracy for text-based questions, and inference-based question performance. This requires a deeper understanding of the text because it necessitates linking what one reads with prior knowledge of the topic, and is positively related to reading comprehension accuracy for inference-based questions.

5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Grade 10 learners in English FAL essay writing in Eensaam Circuit, Sekhukhune South District, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the experiences of Grade 10 learners in English FAL essay writing in Eensaam Circuit, Sekhukhune South District, Limpopo Province, South Africa?

5.2 SUB QUESTIONS

- Which skills do learners possess when writing essays in English First Additional Language?
- What strategies do teachers employ in a classroom to enhance the competence of learners in writing essays in English First Additional Language classrooms?

- How do educators approach the implementation of the writing process in EFAL classrooms?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 APPROACH

Research methodology is how a researcher systematically solves a research problem (Mouton, 2001). Research methodology may also be understood as a science of studying how research was done scientifically. In it, we study the various steps that were generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods/techniques but also the methodology (Bernard, Richard & Mensing, 2016). The use of a qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. For instance, when the interest is in investigating the reasons for human behaviour (i.e., why people think or do certain things), we quite often talk of 'Motivation Research', an important type of qualitative research.

Qualitative research is important in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. Through such research, researchers could analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which made people like or dislike a particular thing. In this study, qualitative research was capable of capturing attitudes as they changed. As opinions could change over the course of a conversation, the qualitative methodology was able to help researcher to capture them in this study. This method is not bound by limitations in the same way that quantitative method is, and it allows for a great flexibility. Hence, the current researcher was able to use the qualitative methodology to gather all the information required using data collection methods such as interviews and observations (Bouzir, Berkouk, Eisenman, Schwela, Azab, Gomma & Boucherit, 2024).

6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design employed for this study was the qualitative paradigm. According to Schurink, De Vos, Strydom, Fouched and Delpport (2005), "qualitative research is

aimed at understanding social life and the meaning people attach to everyday life. It was regarded as a subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of the insider.” Since the study focused on people who have different thoughts and sights, this design helped the researcher to remain objective, rather than subjective. Learners and teachers form part of the society, and this design helped the researcher to objectively interpret their knowledge and everyday experiences of using EFAL at schools as well as the challenges thereof.

6.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study adopted the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is defined as an approach that is aligned with the thought of the world from subjective experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2007). The researcher used the interpretive paradigm because it supported the use of observations to collect information about events. This paradigm allowed the researcher to interpret meanings of the information by drawing inferences. Furthermore, the paradigm helped in providing the study with expanding views to look into sensations because it did not only describe objects, humans and events, but helped the researcher to deeply understand them in a social context. This paradigm was relevant for this study because it allowed the researcher to conduct interactive observations and interviews. Thus, the researcher was able to investigate the participants’ thoughts, values, perceptions, feelings and prejudices (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007).

6.4 POPULATION

McMillan and Schumacher (2006) define population as a group of individuals, events or objects that conform to a certain criterion which makes them the focus of a study. The population of this study consisted of 10 high schools from Eensaam Circuit, under the Sekhukhune South District in Limpopo Province. Eensaam Circuit comprises of 10 high schools — all of which are quintile 2 schools. The average enrolment of these schools ranged from a minimum of 110 learners to 500 learners. The selected two schools had 670 and 145 learners respectively. The average number of teachers from each school ranged from a minimum of 4 educators to a maximum of 27 educators; this was determined by the enrolment of learners.

6.5 SAMPLING

The preferred sampling method was the purposive sampling because the researcher already knew who will take part in the research. The study sampled ten Grade 10 EFAL learners, (five from each of the two sampled schools who obtained 30% to 40% in English FAL), two FET English teachers from each school who teach grade 10, and one English FAL Departmental Head in each school who are supervising grade 10. The study also sampled one English FAL curriculum advisor under the Sekhukhune South District for interviews who is supporting grade 10. The interviews and lesson observations ensured triangulation as they were conducted with different participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006; Creswell, 2014). The Grade 10 learners who were sampled were the ones who did not obtain 30% to 40% in English FAL at the sampled schools.

6.6 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection can be defined as the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses and evaluating outcomes (Xuan, Williams & Peat, 2020). Qualitative studies use different types of instruments such as interviews and observations as data collection tools. Therefore, this study utilised qualitative interviews, observations and documents analysis.

6.6.1 INTERVIEWS.

Interviews are defined as one-on-one sessions between the researcher and participants to extract data for a study. There are different types of interviews such as structured, semi-structured and open-ended interviews (Mouton, 2001; Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). On one hand, the structured interviews follow a structured guideline in which the interview is conducted based on questions. The researcher does not probe or ask questions outside the interview guide. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews consist of the questions prescribed and allow for some degree of probing and flexibility. However, the open-ended interviews are flexible in that the researcher does not follow any structured process. Thus, this study utilised semi-structured interviews to collect data. Educators were interviewed on the approaches they use in

developing learners' essay writing skills. Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility and probing at the same time. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to gain in-depth insights on the challenges faced by learners regarding their essay writing in EFAL. Learners were interviewed on the challenges they encounter when writing essays in EFAL.

6.6.2 OBSERVATIONS

Observations focus on the researcher's ability to utilise his or her sense when analysing people in their natural settings (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016). There are different types of observations such as participant observations, structured observations and naturalistic observations. In qualitative studies, participant observations are commonly used when a researcher enters a social group and becomes a part of the group to gain in-depth knowledge about their lives. In this study, the researcher utilised naturalistic observations as a method of collecting data. Based on the researcher's professional background in education, learners were observed on how they approached essay writing and how educators shaped up their development of essay writing skills in EFAL. This was done in lessons which were presented by educators in their EFAL essay writing classrooms.

6.6.3 DOCUMENTS

Document analysis refers to the analysis of documents that contain information relating to the topic and questions of the study. This data collection method was used to investigate, categorise and analyse physical resources, particularly written documents (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016). Learners' preliminary written essays were marked and analysed. This was done prior to the lesson observations by the researcher. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement guided the researcher on the expectations regarding the development of writing skills Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2012), Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents for Further Education and Training (FET).

6.7 DATA ANALYSIS.

This study relied on a qualitative thematic analysis approach in the analysis of data. Qualitative thematic analysis was utilised to help the researcher with establishing

patterns found in the collected data. Thematic analysis refers to a description and interpretation of meanings found in data. It is important in discovering a comprehensive analysis of people's experiences in the context of an issue (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016). Therefore, thematic analysis is set out to establish patterns in behaviours or views on a subject matter. In the context of this study, thematic analysis will aid the researcher in unpacking patterns related to perceptions and challenges around the adoption of English as a First Additional Language in the sample of population selected. The process of thematic analysis will involve stages outlined below:

6.7.1 ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM INTERVIEWS

The inductive method of analysing data through interviews was used in this study. as Thematic content analysis was one most trustworthy method that increased the traceability and verification of this study's analysis. The transcripts were done and read critically for the researcher to gain deep insights of the participants' attributes. Thus, the researcher made notes based on the interview findings. The interpretation of transcripts involved labelling relevant words, phrases and sentences codes. The codes helped in identifying qualitative data (Braun, Clarke & Weate, 2016). The study followed the steps below to implement thematic data analysis method:

Familiarising and coding data, this is the initial stage of data analysis where the researcher becomes intimately familiar with the collected data. The process involves a thorough reading and re-reading of data and making notes about specific details that may interest the study. This process includes evaluating and analysing data, looking for ideas and topics that will help in addressing research questions. Questions such as 'What implications does this account have on research findings? What meaning was derived from this data? In terms of coding, this was about theme development. Coding is significant for splitting enormous amounts of data into small and practicable chunks. Coding is subject to numerous approaches and differs depending on questions of the research.

Conceptualising data is a process of aligning data with critical themes that the researcher will use in the published content and created categories. The researcher may eliminate certain codes rather than using all the created codes.

Segmentation is used to allow the researcher to establish bulk of data cohesively. Data is labelled from different categories, then the connection between different data categories is later described in the process.

6.7.2 DOCUMENTS

Armstrong (2021) lamented that documents analysis require repeated review, examination and interpretation of the data collected to gain meaningful and empirical knowledge of the construct being researched. The documents used in this study were coded deductively. The codes were compared, and the best coding was used as it was verified. Data was paraphrased, summarised and intersected according to codes and patterns between the reviewed documents (Mackieson, Shlonsky & Connolly, 2019). The last step involved data interpretations as the researcher summed up the findings.

6.8 QUALITY CRITERIA

When investigating the phenomenon of this study, it was important to ensure that the method used for data collection and analysis were valid and reliable. Thus, for this study, reliability and validity were checked by using strategies for trustworthiness which included credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

CREDIBILITY

Credibility refers to confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. It establishes whether the research findings represent believable information drawn from the participants' original data, and whether there was correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Creswell, 2007). The current researcher recorded the information given by participants during interviews.

TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability aims to support reviewed authors in a systematic and transparent manner, considering transferability of the findings from the beginning of the review process. It does this by providing review authors with structured guidance on how to collaborate with stakeholders to identify transferability factors, and how to assess the transferability of the review findings to the review context or other local contexts (Munthe-Kaas, Nkleby, Lewin & Glenton, 2020). The researcher facilitated the transferability judgment by a potential user through thick description. The results from learners, educators and Departmental Heads were collected through interviews from different schools and were compared to verify their applicability to different contexts.

DEPENDABILITY

Dependability is the stability of findings over time. It involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study (Hayashi, Abib & Hoppen, 2019). The researcher depended on the data provided by participants from sampled schools and did not add false information to favour certain desired outcomes.

CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability is the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers. Confirmability is concerned with establishing confirmable data. Thus, the interpretations of the findings were not fabrications of the inquirer's imagination, but were clearly derived from the collected data (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen & Elo, 2020). The researcher confirmed the data from respondents through the recordings. Confirmability focused on whether the results of the research could be confirmed by another. This was ensured through the triangulation method. For instance, the researcher used different forms of triangulation such as methodological triangulation i.e., data collection instruments, such as interviews, observations and document analysis to ensure confirmability (Lemon & Hayes, 2020).

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

- The significance of the study was to provide invaluable insights into the teaching and learning of writing skills in English First Additional Language in rural areas.
- The findings of this study shed light on the relationship between the learners' proficiency and the rural cultural variables, and may help to provide solutions for better teaching.
- These findings were helpful guide to teachers and educational authorities with regard to strategies, kinds of learning activities and appropriate teaching materials, especially in rural schools.
- The recommendations of this study help rural learners to attain higher proficiency in English.
- Curriculum planners will benefit from this study as they use the empirical data as a basis for future planning and organising appropriate materials for South African learners in different learning environments.

8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Roth and Von Unger (2018) claim that ethics in research focus on the methods and approaches utilised to attain the quality of research. Ethically, researchers were expected to produce quality assured studies that are not biased or plagiarised. This meant that the study should originally be developed with proper acknowledgement of other sources. In this regard, before commencing this study, the researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the Research Unit at the University of Limpopo. This facilitated the commencement of data collection. Prior to data collection with participants, the researcher gave an overview of the study to participants for them to make informed consent regarding the nature, aims and expectations of the study. The conduct of the researcher was professional and non-judgemental to the research subjects.

8.1. CONSENT AND PERMISSION

Researcher asked permission from the district manager and school principals of the two sampled schools before conducting the study. As this study involved learners, teachers and DH, the ethical concerns that pertained to the researcher dealing with children below the age of 18 were considered (Hokke Hackworth, Quin, Bennetts, Win, Nicholson, Zion, Lucke, Keyzer & Crawford, 2018). Appendix G was utilised in obtaining permission.

8.2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality was practised throughout the study. The researcher used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. The participants were protected from harm (Mukungu, 2017). No personal information of the participants was shared publicly, unless adults who persisted that their real names be used as a way of taking pride of the contribution made during the study.

8.3. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

The participants took part in the research without force. The researcher did not compel participants to participate in this study. Therefore, they participated voluntarily with the knowledge that they can withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher issued the participants with consent forms to sign.

9. CONCLUSION

This chapter gave a summary of the whole study focussing on the background to the study, the problem statement, the methodology, significance of the study and the ethical considerations. The following chapter focusses on the literature and the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on an extensive review of literature regarding the challenges experienced by Grade 10 learners when writing essays in English FAL. The study outlined literature from other authors who have confronted the same research problem. English is used in the world as a *lingua-franca* among people from different cultures, ethnic and social backgrounds (Dewi, 2015). The skill to learn writing effectively in public schools is one of the vibrant skills among English learners. Writing is a major component in the teaching of English. The teaching of writing has been conducted in the early years where learners start to learn how to form letters correctly.

There are many concerns that could lead to major shortcomings in learners' academic performance if they have a weak foundation in writing. Writing is not only vital to develop their academic performance, but also contributes to their social and emotional development. Moreover, in this competitive world, writing is also one of the skills that is necessary to gleam. The learners' inability to write well may affect their chances of securing jobs in the future (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). However, teaching writing has become difficult because of the challenges faced by the learners in learning essay writing skills (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). Some of the challenges faced by the EFAL learners are lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, poor spelling, social media language and lack of exposure to books and reading materials.

This chapter commences with a conceptualisation of second language acquisition because it vital to provide a background on the importance of unpacking writing and introducing it to learners to eliminate problems of mastering a new language (Lardiere, 2017). The subsequent section will evaluate the theoretical frameworks informing this study. The chapter will also proceed to evaluate themes that enrich the study such as a conceptual approach to writing essay and strategies for effective writing in South African schools.

2.2 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.

Second Language Acquisition, hereafter referred to as SLA, is described as the learning and mastering of a second language by somebody who already has a first language (Thobejane, 2018). In the context of the study, this relates to the acquisition of the English language by learners who already speak an African home language. Romero and Manjarres (2017) suggest that CA and EA are effective ways to study and understand how the first language (L1) of a learner might have an influence on the learning process in a foreign language. In this particular case study, it was found that the Saudi Arabian learner had a better performance in receptive skills; there were some evidences of U shape learning in this learner. Also, it was noticed that his handwriting and the use of punctuation marks although good, they needed some improvement. Supportive and substantive opportunities for involved talk with content – to explore, challenge, reconsider, and extend ideas in ways that enhance student learning are necessary. This requires learners to extend the world of the text through inferring the possibilities and arguing for more aspects and solutions (Sun, 2019). The acquisition comes in different forms, such as purchasing, adding and investing in assets. Other explanations suggest that this is a form of learning or developing of skills that can be academic, in the form of the acquisition of writing comprehension skills. Therefore, this study utilised the concept of writing as an integral part of second language acquisition skills. There is a bulk of theoretical frameworks that underpin the discussion on second language acquisition. Theories of second language acquisition are pertinent in aiding teachers with tools that can enhance learners' competencies in writing essays.

2.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The study employed the theory of social constructivism because it is a learner-centred philosophy that emphasizes hands-on learning and active participation of learners in lessons. Constructivism is a learning theory that perceives learning as a process of constructing knowledge based on pre-existing experience (Jumaat, Tasir, Halim & Ashari, 2017).

2.3.1 THEORY OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

The theory of Constructivism is a theory of learning that has its roots in both philosophy and psychology. According to Fosnot (1996) and Steffe and Gale (1995), the core of constructivism lies in the idea that learners actively construct their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences. Additionally, constructivism recognizes the active role of learners in creating personal knowledge, the significance of both individual and social experiences in this process, and the fact that the validity of the created knowledge may vary in its representation of reality. The social constructivist theory is relevant to this study as it is learner-centred, as supported by the 2012 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE). This theory emphasises the active participation of learners in their own learning, and acknowledges that knowledge is constructed through active and participative learning. It promotes learning through social interaction, including collaborative learning, where learners can critically and actively engage with one another. For example, learners can assist each other in preparing for an essay writing task by sitting in groups of four, discussing the topic, assigning speaker roles, and helping each other with the task at hand.

2.2 THE USE OF THE LANGUAGE FRAMEWORK POLICY OF SPOLSKY

According to Hollebeke, Van Oss, Struys, Van Avermaet and Agirdag (2022), Spolsky's language framework has four determining constructs: (a) national or ethnic ideology, (b) English as a global language, (c) a nation's sociolinguistic state, and (d) improving the link between linguistic rights and civil and human rights frameworks.

In terms of *national or ethnic ideology*, this refers to the culmination of beliefs and values that underpin a language policy (Han, De Costa & Cui, 2018). In the context of South Africa, the colonial history of apartheid has rendered English an official language over the variety of other languages including Afrikaans and native languages. With regards to the global role of the English language, Spolsky says that this is a "tidal wave of English that is moving into almost every sociolinguistic repertoire" (Spolsky as cited in Tang, 2020). English has assumed a global developmental path in every sector. Arguably, the global role of English shares

overlaps with cultural hegemony and imperialism as English tends to subdue other languages such as IsiXhosa, IsiZulu and Tshivenda in South Africa.

In the Zimbabwean experience, at independence, the Zimbabwean government adopted a language policy framework whose basic tenets mirrored a colonial agenda (Sibanda, 2019). Zimbabwe had been colonised by the English British, and as a result, the colonial language policy dictated the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools, business, church and other facets of social life. Therefore, upon independence in 1980, the Zimbabwean government argued about the colonialist of power that its language policy is "characteristically colonial because it promotes English at the expense of developing indigenous languages" (Sibanda, 2019). Therefore, the English language continued to be a language of power. Subsequently, this led to the adoption of native languages such as Shona and Ndebele as a strategy of retaining national or ethnic ideology (Tang, 2020).

Several studies have been devoted to explaining the *internationalisation of the English language* as a medium of instruction in schools, businesses and various activities across the globe (Tang, 2020). Instrumentally, English has become a tool for internationalising the education systems of various countries. Countries are keen to offer primary and tertiary education courses in English because this serves dual purposes; making their education system competitive globally and attracting foreign learners (Macaro, Curle, Pun, An & Dearden, 2018). The most striking example is the adoption of English as the official language and medium of communication in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This policy's thrust seeks to add value to the quality of this region's education system. Therefore, various scholars have appropriated the global use of the English language in various ways.

Mohammed (2020) argues that the English language has become a global tool for economic success. The argument advanced is that the language has led to developmental trajectories in the economic and business sectors. Through the use of English, most people develop cognitive, aptitude and the much-needed critical professional skills necessary for the contemporary technological age. However, the globalisation of the English language has also led to social class inequalities (Ibrahim, 2016). As a social construction, societies have been increasingly judged on their ability to speak and use English fluently, thus creating binaries between those that are

proficient in the language and those that are not. Other cultural studies locate the global usage of English as a tool for cross-cultural communication. For example, the study of Liu et al. (2018) on English language depicts its developmental trajectory through the ages.

The globe is made up of various and distinct cultures. These differences have proven to be a barrier over time. However, the adoption of the English language has led to cultural assimilation and integration. The authors used the rise of the Chinese state and its adoption of the English language to compete globally as an example. However, Mohammed (2020) cautions against what is termed the 'force behind cultural imperialism', creating awareness to how English has increasingly become used as an instrument to submerge other cultures over time.

Spolsky's third construct is termed the nation's sociolinguistic state. This refers to an evaluation of the number of languages spoken by the people that speak these languages and the communicative value of these languages spoken in a specific society or nation (Ng & Deng, 2017). This construct speaks to the perceptions, values and beliefs prescribed to native languages. These can be influenced by the political and cultural formations of societies. In the case of South Africa, there has been the proliferation of westernised cultures that tend to value English and Afrikaans known as 'white languages' and devalue African languages. Hence, most families tend to send their children to 'A schools' that are private and also known for teaching Cambridge, French and Dutch syllabuses (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2013). This is in contrast with public schools that promote the use of English at a minimal scale, with the unofficial use of native languages throughout.

The last construct focuses on the growing interest in linking linguistic rights as an integral part of civil and human rights. Spolsky says that there is a global quest for "linguistic pluralism and an acceptance of the need to recognize the rights of individuals and groups to continue to use their languages" (Spolsky, n.d; Tang, 2020). Therefore, language is appropriated as an essential human rights component. Post-colonial research has established the link between language and human rights. Like many forms of identity such as race, colour and gender, language is an integral part of human rights because identities are practised and lived beliefs. When one speaks their preferred language, they are subsequently identified with a certain ethnic or

cultural group. Spolsky's fourth construct seeks to safeguard against a monopoly of language because it is an essential feature of human rights.

A nation's sociolinguistic state is linked to politics of dominance, and racial and ethnic discrimination (Byram & Golubeva, 2020). The majority of conflicts that have ensued in Africa are closely related to the dominance of certain languages over others. In African societies such as Rwanda and South Africa, language has been a source of conflict. For example, there is a consensus in South Africa that Nguni languages such as Zulu, Xhosa and Ndebele are more dominant than Bantu languages such as Tshivenda, Xitsonga and Sepedi. Therefore, majority of South Africans tend to prefer the former. Equally, language was a source of political mobilisation and violent acts in Rwanda between Hutus and Tutsis.

2.3 DEMAND ON WRITING SKILLS

Writing is a crucial skill that can benefit all learners for their whole lives. Introducing and practicing writing with attractive activities in schools could increase learners' confidence and stimulate their love for writing in a long run. Writing skills are vital for lower primary learners to continue learning communication and self-expression in all academic areas (Stepney, 2017). As such, writing exercises in schools promote the improvement of penmanship as well as overall academic development through critical thinking. The writing process is also applicable to other areas such as Mathematics and Sciences, where the learned traits of planning, research and review are applied (Lee & Durksen, 2018). Thus, general knowledge and vocabulary are also improved as a subsequent effect.

Writing assists learners with their social development. It connects the learners to be in tune with what happens in the world around them by compelling them to consider the audience and purpose in writing. As learners' progress through their school years, they need to be both literate and computer literate to succeed. While the two skills complement each other, some computer tools such as spelling and grammar checks, can prevent them from developing their writing skills (Manan, 2018). For example, learners who learn to write by using keyboard may face challenges handwriting practices, particularly with spelling and grammar.

2.4 PURPOSE OF LEARNERS' WRITING BY USING DIFFERENT WRITING STRATEGIES

There are various strategies for teaching writing such as pre-writing, writing warm-up, collaborative writing, using sentence starters and guided writing. These strategies of teaching writing cannot be used at the same time as they may have different teaching objectives. Therefore, employing relevant teaching techniques to teach a specific writing skill can help the learners to improve their overall writing skills in English FAL (Ntombela, Ngubane & Govender, 2020). As the learners have interest and become active participants in learning, the learning process fall on the right track. Besides, using various writing strategies makes the learners think creatively as they may use what they know and the combination of opinions and facts to create a new piece of writing. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, this is high level ability (CAPS, 2011).

2.5 CHALLENGES FACED BY LEARNERS IN LEARNING WRITING SKILLS

Each student may face different challenges in learning writing. All learners are special and unique in their own ways. These challenges can somehow pull back the learners from moving forward to produce good pieces of writing. The following paragraphs discuss the challenges faced by learners in writing effectively.

Lack of vocabulary has caused the learners to face challenges in acquiring writing skills (Misbah, 2017). Vocabulary is the fundamental element in constructing sentences, and it is the core of effective writing skills (Asep, 2014). Learners almost use spoken and written words every day to communicate their ideas, beliefs and feelings with people around them. Therefore, good vocabulary list can help learners to speak or write to deliver their thoughts. Usage of electronic dictionary and more reading activities can help learners with limited vocabulary to improve the writing skills.

Grammar plays an important role in writing. It provides information that helps the readers to understand its meaning. It is a structure that conveys the detailed meaning of the writer to the reader. Grammar also explains the forms and structure of words, called morphology and how they are arranged in sentences, i.e., syntax. Learners with

limited knowledge in grammar may face anxiety when required to write grammatically correct sentences. According to Fareed (2016), learners make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, articles, prepositions and basic sentence structures. However, their grammatical skill can be improved through extensive reading activities and grammar related activities.

Poor spelling is another cause of anxiety for learners in learning writing skill (Nyang'au, 2014). Having good spelling skills can lead to positive learning of writing. If the learners struggle with spelling, they may be held back from composing comprehensive texts. Afrin (2016) claims that the learners have the habit of spelling words according to how they pronounce such words in spoken language, and this leads to wrong spelling. The learners will either add or leave letters of the words. For an example "ballon" instead of "balloon." According to Nyang'au (2014), memorisation of spelling can help the learners to acquire good spelling skills.

Learners' readiness is another challenge in learning writing (Foster, 2015). According to Winarso (2016), in order to complete a task successfully, readiness is crucial. The readiness can either be physical readiness or mental preparedness. If this does not occur, learners can have challenges in writing as they will not be mentally prepared to learn in the classroom. It is, therefore, important for learners to be ready before they enter the classroom. According to Foster (2015), motivating and attracting the learners' attention can improve learners' readiness for writing lessons and activities.

Lack of exposure to books and reading materials are other challenges faced at elementary schools regarding the teaching and learning of writing skills (Foster, 2015). According to Fareed (2016), most learners find it very challenging to get enough and significant source of information. Lack of extensive reading deters the learners from producing good sentences or paragraphs. This is because reading and writing are interrelated. If learners do not read books or other reading materials, they might lack ideas and vocabulary for writing. Their brain neurons will be connected to each other to come out with a good writing if they read more and connect the ideas with their prior knowledge. Foster (2015) explained that exposure to different reading materials can help the learners to develop language awareness.

Lastly, lack of motivation is another challenge faced by the learners. If learners are not motivated, they might not be interested to proceed with their learning process. Motivation is important in improving learners' learning results (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017). Teachers could motivate the learners by rewarding them with simple motivational phrases such as, "Good job!", "Good try!", "Keep it up" etc. Positive reward can encourage learners to put more effort in the learning process.

2.6. The classroom and socio-economic environment.

According to Freeman and Freeman (2011), a child has to be exposed to the FAL (L2) environment. This could be done by having print rich classrooms or by exposing learners to appropriate reading materials to enhance their literacy skills. Print rich environment plays an important role in the development of vocabulary and reading skills.

The CAPS document encourages print rich in classrooms for emergent literacy (DBE, 2011). Data from the interviews showed that teachers were aware of the significance of a print rich environment in literacy teaching and learning. However, the observation data show that Mrs Janes' classroom did not have rich print material. Although there were posters on the wall, she did not use them in all the lessons I observed.

In the previous chapter, the school's socio-economic environment is provided. Through my observations, it became apparent that the school was under-resourced and the learners were from low socio-economic backgrounds. As indicated earlier, there was a lack of reading material which prevented learners from reading for enjoyment, both in the HL and FAL. Taylor (2012) claims that learners from disadvantaged environments often lag behind their counterparts with regard to literacy development.

2.7. CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING WRITING SKILLS.

Teaching has always been challenging for teachers. Teaching English at primary level is naturally more different from teaching in other educational levels such as secondary and tertiary. The experienced challenges make the teaching process ineffective. The following paragraphs discuss the challenges faced by teachers.

Nowadays, teachers are having a hard time in motivating the learners. This is not because of the learners' naughtiness, but because learners are not interested in learning how to write effectively (Asep, 2014). The younger generation has the perception that they can do whatever they please since much freedom has been given to them by their parents. When learners choose to become reluctant in learning, it is a sign of lack of motivation (Abrar, 2016).

Having different types of learners in the classroom is another challenge faced by teachers to teach writing. In many elementary classrooms, learners from different levels are placed in the same classroom. Teaching different types of learners can expose teachers to the challenge of having to cater for all their needs simultaneously (Asep, 2014). Different levels of writing ability will require the teachers to use different approaches. As a result, the teachers experience difficulties with planning their lessons and preparing appropriate activities for the learners.

Parental indifference is another challenge faced in schools. Lack of parental support can cause teachers to experience challenges in their attempts to help learners. Learners who perceive lack of warmth and affection from their parents can be drawn back from succeeding in their learning process because of lack of guidance, motivation and support from their parents (Gündoğmuş, 2018).

In addition, lack of professional experience remains an unaddressed challenge faced by teachers (Gündoğmuş, 2018). Teachers' experiences imply their previous experience and training. Thus, it takes time for novice teachers to adapt themselves to their learners' diverse needs. As such, teachers can only prepare appropriate activities if they know well about their learners' proficiency levels and interests. Relatively, longer time is needed for teachers to prepare new teaching materials, appropriate lesson plans, suitable activities, and provide comments or reflections.

According to Anyiendah (2017), lack of learners' interest is another challenge. Developing writing skills is always challenging, however, it is always an interesting task. However, some learners zone out when it comes to writing. Learners lack interest in writing because they need to know many aspects in order to produce a good piece

of work. They need to develop good vocabulary and know punctuations, grammar, spelling and sentence structure in order to produce a good text.

2.8. APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE IN ESSAY WRITING

2.8.1 TEACHER-BASED METHODS

According to Makhubele (2015), a teacher-based approach is a method of teaching and learning in which classroom activities are centred around the teacher. Though this approach is traditional, it includes the proactive role of the teacher and the less active role of the learner in which learners are receptive and passive. In this approach, the teacher is the source of knowledge, and the learner is the recipient of knowledge. Therefore, this method is often referred to as a method of managing the classroom. The challenge with this type of method is in its top-down approach, which assumes that the teacher knows the content, approach and tools needed to achieve essay writing skills. This type of method is imposing as it does not identify and address individual learners' needs.

2.8.2. LEARNER-BASED METHODS.

Learner-based methods are also known as learner-focused learning, these are approaches that are focused on the educational challenges and needs of a learner. In this approach, the focus is on the learning style and interests of a learner, while at the same time, the teacher facilitates the process. This approach centralises the voice of the learner. Therefore, through this method, the learner is proactively involved in the discovery of essay writing processes from an independent position.

There are a variety of approaches to language writing that have been prescribed in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS, 2012). One of the main focuses is the successful essay writing in languages such as English by learners in South African schools. The *text-based approach* is suggested in the CAPS as an approach that should be utilised in teaching and learning, and whose outcomes can improve learners' writing competencies. According to Thobejane (2018), this approach entails writing, paying attention to, and spelling of words used and how they are formed and their subsequent meaning. Most learners are unable to write correctly in English, this

challenge is often fuelled by poor vocabulary, lack of skills in grammar, punctuations and syntax. Therefore, scholars such as Wessels (2016) claim that English communication skills should be taught at the foundation levels. However, in most South African schools, learners adopt English as a First Additional Language in the early phases of education, hence the problems of writing essays persist.

The approach of teacher centred places the role of the teacher as an authoritative guide that scaffolds the learning and teaching processes of learners towards maximised potential. In terms of English essay writing, the teacher is involved in a rigorous process during which the teacher provides learners with models to discuss and analyse language structures. Scaffolding is essential for language acquisition, especially in writing. Therefore, the teacher should be engaged in extensive scaffolding such that learners can cultivate and comprehend essay writing skills in English.

The communicative approach is grounded in the assumption that successful language learning is attained by transmitting actual meanings (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). When communication is involved in the teaching and learning processes, the learners' natural methods of language acquisition and reading comprehension will be utilised, thus permitting learners to utilise the language. This approach is hinged on specific communicative tools that learners should be aware of. Brown (year); Thobejane (2018) indicates that this approach focuses on grammatical structure application and the subsequent functions conveyed. The main goal of the language is not only to attain grammar competencies but communicative proficiencies. Therefore, classroom activities should allow learners to participate in reading comprehension process that allows for interaction, collaboration and information sharing.

2.9. CHALLENGES IN THE USE OF ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS.

Garcia (2020) identifies four major challenges in the implementation of English as the medium of instruction or as the First Additional Language in schools. These challenges include linguistic issues, cultural impediments, structural limitations and identity-based complications. In terms of linguistic challenges, learners often struggle with the transition from their native to the adoption of an additional language in school. Studies

have demonstrated that this often occurs because the additional language is not used in the homestead or society where the learner emerges. This has been attributed to several factors such as language as an important aspect of one's cultural identity (Shahrebabaki, 2018).

The Bemba language is said to be used for orthography, yet the English language is used asymmetrical because of its unreliability in the spelling and meaning of certain things. In Ethiopia, the law dictates the use of Amharic as a medium of instruction at the primary level (Tarekegn, 2018). However, in all these case studies, it has been demonstrated that the adoption of the English language is problematic in schools, owing to the identical dimensions of the Amharic and Bemba languages.

Other scholars opine those linguistic challenges are related to language issues faced by both scholars and teachers in the transition to the use of English as an additional language. These challenges are often related to the comprehension of the accent of English native-speaking teachers by non-native speaking English learners (Liu, Thurlow, Press & Lickteig, 2018). In some instances, linguistic issues are linked to the failure to comprehend content delivered in English because of lack of English proficiency. The cultural component is also linked to the challenges in the implementation of English as an additional language. The notion of cultural anxiety is predominant in the acceptability of the English language. Cultural anxiety is tied to historical processes such as colonialism that led to the cultural subjugation of local languages. Discussions around the use of English as an additional language have taken on a superiority complex vis-à-vis inferiority complex dimensions, where the former is regarded as superior to local languages. In South Africa, English was considered an official language by the white minority and apartheid government (Steyn, 2017). This was in tandem with separate development which took on identity dimensions. The majority of South Africans were forced to use English in schools instead of their native languages.

In their contribution to the theme of linguistic challenges, Hassan and Dweik (2021) focused on *vocabulary challenges* that English has presented, that made learners struggle to read and understand texts. This was attributed to the fact that most learners thought reading was just understanding the meaning of words, instead of knowledge of different meanings. Some learners failed to grasp the multiple meanings of the same

words in English vocabulary. For example, the word *bank* has multiple meanings and yet learners always associate it with the common meaning. It was also reported that some learners struggled to differentiate between where and were, they and there and through and throw (Hassan & Dweik, 2021).

Structural limitations relate to the available policy and programs to implement English as the First Additional Language, for example, teaching and learning resources and the availability of teaching and supporting staff. Some of the issues identified relate to the capacity of teachers, including their confidence in teaching the language and preparedness. Some teachers may lack confidence because of the anxiety of using English as a medium of instruction in the class. This is prevalent in rural Africa where most of the teachers do not possess the necessary skills to teach English. The complications of identity based are focused on the perceptions of the use of English at institutional levels. This encompasses the policies and mechanisms outside the scope of teacher-learner.

According to Fesi and Mncube (2021), many factors may pose challenges to learners in reading English FAL comprehension passages. One of such factors is *teacher competencies*. The teacher plays a critical role in the developmental trajectories of education such as educational reforms and the teaching and learning that occurs inside the classroom. To meet these, a teacher must be equipped with the necessary tools that can respond to the social, academic and linguistic needs of all learners (Pearce & Wood, 2019). However, some studies have linked teacher competencies within the framework of teacher development. There is a link between the lack of support from various agencies such as governments, and policies implemented aimed at capacitating teacher competencies. Another dimension of teacher competencies that has been articulated by Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) is the 'focus of instructional attention. This means that most teachers spend more time on mechanical aspects of reading such as decoding rather than on comprehension and meaning. This has been against the conventional wisdom presented by previous studies that establish a link between a learner's comprehension capabilities and teaching and modelling comprehension strategies.

Some authors have argued that teacher predominant are mainly distinct in the township and rural schools. Some of these include inadequate oral proficiency,

problematical utilisation of tenses and concords and the precise translation from the mother tongue into English in an uncoordinated manner. Morrison and Luttenegger (2015) claim that since the majority of English teachers are non-English native speakers, there are critical issues of importance that have to be taken into account to attain an effective learning environment. Some of these issues relate to the teacher's ability to apply four linguistic skills, language culture and the knowledge of reading comprehension of a second language. Much of the available research focuses on the teacher's lack of communication as a major problem in learners' reading comprehension aptitudes.

Studies on pronunciation and grammar have also contributed to the body of knowledge on challenges that contribute to learners' inadequate reading comprehension skills. By definition, pronunciation speaks to the oral usage and articulation of language whilst grammar is about the structural aspects of language. Teacher competencies determine how a learner masters the main four linguistic skills: writing, reading, listening and speaking through pronunciation and grammar (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The majority of teachers face problems such as; differences between the English language and the learner's first language, language form versus function, and exception issues. There is a connection between proper grammar and reading comprehension of English. Therefore, lack of proper grammar results in difficulties in understanding the English language. In terms of English reading comprehension, more focus is on vocabulary and grammar. Therefore, teaching and learning time should be devoted to pronunciation, including the learning of phonetics (Dastpak, Behjat & Taghinezhad, 2017). Pronunciation can enhance a learner's sounds and sound features eloquently. One way of enhancing a learner's reading comprehension is by integrating phonetics into English classes in grade 10. Phonetics activities are aimed at enhancing a learner's memory of sounds.

Another concerning issue is the lack of teachers' understanding of English texts. This is caused by insufficient language proficiency among most teachers in South African schools. This results in a spill-over effect in which the majority of learners fail to read and comprehend English language because their teachers are not capacitated to teach and deliver in the context of word meanings, and understanding of texts.

Teacher competencies are also related to the concept of metacognitive reading strategies. Metacognitive reading strategies are tactics that can be applied by both the teacher and learner before, during and after a reading session to evaluate the learner's reading proficiency (Fesi & Mncube, 2021). Another scholar depicts these as strategies that create an awareness in the reader about their strengths and weaknesses when reading (Babayigit, 2019). The success of metacognitive reading strategies is incumbent on the teacher's competencies in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of such strategies.

Such is noticeable in the unavailability of resources that aid teachers in teaching learners reading. Some of these challenges result from large classes that teachers have to teach. Big sized classrooms are commonplace in rural African educational systems. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education opined that the teacher-learner ratio in either public or rural schools is 1:30 (Fesi & Mncube, 2021). However, other scholars have argued that this is not the case in many public and rural schools. The standard ratio of 1:30 recommended by the Department of Basic Education is not implemented in most of these schools (Miron, Shank & Davidson, 2018). The reasons for the lack of implementation are rooted in the absence of political goodwill, interventions by educational departments and lack of resources such as the availability of classrooms to cater for the majority of learners. Oversized classrooms have the potential of disrupting learning through commotion of classes, chaos and inattentiveness. More often, teachers are consumed by managing learners than teaching and learning, thus creating a potential problem for effective delivery of reading and writing lessons. The challenges of oversized classrooms are captured by Blunden-Greef (2015) who says, for proficiency to be attained, "learners need to practice speech in the classroom which requires added attention". This is not possible because of the multiple responsibilities that the teachers have, which include teaching, learning and enforcing classroom discipline.

Oversized classrooms are also constrained by limited time factors. It has been established that overpopulated classrooms tend to impede the cognitive process of teaching and learning. Teachers struggle to attend to the individual learners' needs because of their large numbers. Miron, Shank and Davidson (2018) conducted interviews with several learners in a project that sought to unpack challenges faced by learners in reading a new language in schools. The results from this study postulated

that most learners indicated limited time prescribed to a given reading task as a challenge. Some of the additional challenges are associated with a lack of proper training of learners to read, memory problems and their psychological and attitudinal sentiments towards a language.

A study conducted in Tanzania by Kambunga (2013) demonstrated challenges with overcrowded classrooms and their proclivity to delivering teaching and learning. The study focused on learners' classrooms that had an average of 100 learners per classroom and identified cognitive-developmental challenges. The conclusion was that oversized classrooms tend to approach teaching and learning from a top-down approach that is generic and does not factor individual learners' challenges. Some of the issues identified were that individual learners have individual or specific challenges that are unique to them. Therefore, some learners are slower than others and by the same token, some learners are faster than others.

Lack of resources has been attributed as a factor that inhibits teaching and learning in Africa, and more so the delivery of English as a medium of instruction in African schools. The most affected are rural and public schools across Africa. Learners should be equipped with adequate and effective reading material that can aid in the development of reading skills. Be that as it may, the majority of rural and public schools in South Africa often fall under Quintile 1, 2 and 3 statuses whose socio-economic profiles do not capacitate such for the benefit of the majority of learners (Pearce & Wood, 2019). Lack of Information and Technology infrastructure, books and other reading materials have rendered the task of reading English among learners difficult.

Socio-economic factors' impact on reading comprehension in English. There is a growing body of literature that finds resonance between socio-economic conditions and a learner's academic achievements that include reading and writing proficiencies in languages (Gobena, 2018; Easmin, Hossain & Das ACMA, 2015). The findings established in these studies point to the correlation between impoverished backgrounds and their negative impact on academic performances among learners. This has been supported by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization report (2010) that as most of the households in poor societies are informally employed, it becomes difficult to utilise English language for both caregivers

and parents. Thus, learners that emerge from these households do not have a proper background for English proficiency.

Majority of learners that adopt English as a First Additional Language come from the township and rural areas that do not have the necessary infrastructure such as libraries and other facilities that can be viewed as additional supporting structures. This is coupled with the fact that their parents and caregivers are not adequately literate and are, therefore, not proactively involved in their learning pursuits (Gobena, 2018). Recently, mastering the English language has been associated with an emerging expression of success and wealth among most of the African middle class.

2.10. ESSAY WRITING IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Over the years, there has been a bulk of literature that explains the macro and micro levels factors that impact on essay writing in South African schools (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016; Blunden-Greef, 2015; Oakhill & Elbro, 2014). The majority of this literature focuses on the broader socio-economic, demographic and geographical issues. Factors such as large sized classrooms, inadequate time and resource management and the teacher's competencies are summarised as micro factors.

According to Moresebetoa (2016), essay writing is about writing methods that can be used to assist learners in writing. Essay writing encompasses factors that enable learners to spell, understand and read texts. Texts differ, some have hidden meanings in the content, and therefore, the role of the teacher is to intervene at times to assist the learner in soliciting meanings from texts. In terms of essay writing, a learner must be able to identify punctuations and words, figure out the meaning of unacquainted words and reflect on what they would have written. By reflecting on what one has read, reading comprehension is attained.

A study on essay writing in South African schools was cited by Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) on the historical experiences of teachers and their ability to deliver essay writing. The study established a link between the early literacy experiences of teachers and their current conceptualisation of essay writing strategies. Therefore, the study drew upon early literacy experiences, their understanding of literacy and the effect on the practices they adopted. In South Africa, majority of teachers are incapacitated in terms of a theoretical approach to write. Therefore, they cannot come up with an

effective writing framework for majority of their learners. This has been worsened by the idea that most teachers have not been able to create an enjoyable mood for learners during writing activities. In addition, teachers lack creative and imaginative ways to approach the teaching of writing in the classroom—all of which can be attributed to lack of specialised training in delivering English language writing lessons.

Nel (2011) among some of the scholars that have studied challenges in essay writing in South Africa, focuses on pre-service teacher training opinions. Nel's study adopted a qualitative approach in which lecturers and learners were utilised as a part of the data collection process. The study concluded that most teachers did not possess the adequate skills and knowledge about the correct principles needed for a learner to grasp essay writing skills. This problem can be linked to preservice training programs that do not adequately address and prepare training teachers with those skills that cultivate essay writing among learners. Therefore, teachers lacked the necessary competencies to administer the skills needed for learners to master the concept of essay writing in most South African schools.

Pretorius and Lephalala (2011) conducted a study on essay writing interventions in poverty-stricken schools that conducted essay writing programs in their local language among Grade Six Northern Sotho learners. The interventions were spread across two schools: during school hours and after school hours. According to the authors, the essay writing interventions took the form of assisting learners with identifying key elements of a story, the utilisation of a few effective writing tools, asking questions that engaged with the text, and encouraging learners to write and read parts of the texts written for clarity. Another similar study was conducted in the Free State Province by Fesi and Mncube (2021) in which the focus was on the essay writing interventions. The study consisted of a sample of learners between the Grades of four and six, and evaluated their essay writing abilities of the English language. The study included strategies such as developing sight words, vocabulary, spelling and word recognition, summarising, retelling stories, and the use of contextual clues in the English language.

2.11. INSUFFICIENT CURRICULUM COVERAGE

Richards and Rodgers (2014) cite that among some of the issues associated with essay writing in South African schools are learners' inability to utilise English

language in the form of reading, writing clear grammar and communicating with teachers and their peers. Although teaching and learning is the overall objective, most learners have not been able to grasp English language as a medium of instruction in most of the subjects taught in schools. It has been noted that there is not much time and attention devoted to the acquisition of skills in reading and writing in English in the South African curriculum (Pretorius & Lephala, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Thobejane, 2018). This gap informs a study of this nature, in that the South African schools' curriculum should create enough time for writing. This is based on the assumption that reading is the foundation of all linguistic competencies such as writing. Thus, for a learner to master writing skills, they should be competent in reading first.

2.11.1. INSUFFICIENT EARLY ESSAY WRITING LEARNING

Essay writing is best attained when teaching and learning to read and write begins in the infancy, this is a stage in which the majority of the elementary skills are attainable. An absence of these elementary skills can lead to poor performance and school absenteeism (Fesi & Mncube, 2021). Therefore, literature has demonstrated that majority of South African learners from Grade four and upwards cannot read and write adequately. This can be attributed to insufficient early reading and essay writing skills in the elementary phases. One of the major challenges established is the lack of mastering writing skills in a learner's mother tongue at foundational phases. Thobejane (2018) argues that learners should master essay writing skills in their mother tongue first to make it easier to apply the same skills in the English language. Therefore, the introduction of the First Additional Language in Grade three is too late for learners to master English essay writing skills. The process of switching to English at a later stage in a learner's academic journey further complicates the matter, particularly when the foundation to master such has not been properly built. Studies have demonstrated that every child is born with innate linguistic competencies that permit bilingualism or multilingualism, this implies that every child has the potential to master two or more languages at the same time. As natural linguistic competencies occur before the age of nine, fundamental reading and writing comprehension skills can take hold.

2.11.2. LACK OF SKILLS AND MOTIVATION

Some studies have demonstrated the psychological link between lack of motivation and a learner's inability to comprehensively write the English language in and outside

the classroom (Nel, 2011; Morrison & Luttenegger, 2015; Oakhill & Elbro, 2014). Most learners do not receive psychological support from both parents and teachers, and therefore fail to confront various educational challenges on their own. Since some studies have established a link between English proficiency and a learner's background, majority of learners who are not fluent in writing English are mainly from poor backgrounds in which there is absent psychological and motivational support. An explanation for this can be found in the poor academic backgrounds of caregivers and parents of the learners. Most learners' parents are not educated (Morrison & Luttenegger, 2015), therefore, the only time a learner reads and writes in English is in the classroom with the teacher. It can be concluded that a learner that utilises English as a first language is at an advantage over the one that learns English in the classroom as a secondary language.

Scholars such as Thobejane (2018), advance the argument that successful reading comprehension of the English language by a learner depends largely on motivation. When learners are motivated, a psychological space for the germination of ideas and the acquisition of skills is created. This argument is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) template of learning which stresses the naturalistic approach to the acquisition of skills. According to the theory, the positive social interaction fostered by a learner makes it possible for them to master new language skills, such as reading and writing comprehension. Therefore, in circumstances of countries like South Africa, where cultural-linguistic factors determine reading comprehension of English, learners must get motivation from parents and teachers to master English language proficiency.

2.12. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills are a set of skills and tools in which learners can convey their views and understanding of teaching and learn through reading and writing (Moresebetoa, 2016). As has been articulated earlier, most learners come to school endowed with reading and writing skills. Such skills create a platform upon which their reading comprehension of the English language is built. It is arguable that when learners are exposed to reading and writing, language can be developed to communicate effectively with other people in their surroundings. Scholars have often

argued about the need for children to develop language knowledge tenets such as rules for appropriate use of language, vocabulary and grammar (Qarqez & Abo-Rashid, 2017). Therefore, teachers are involved in the scaffolding process that requires learners to develop effective communication skills that can separate between everyday language utilised outside the classroom and textbook and classroom language. Majority of learners are exposed to 'informal' language as a result of their social interaction with the outside world (Moresebetoa, 2016). Consequently, learners must be exposed to proper academic formal language. It has been established that there is a link between language proficiency such as essay writing and good academic performance.

The concept of essay writing has been conceptualised as a form of the communication process. There are various reasons associated with essay writing. Some of these reasons include formal assessments, knowledge production and pleasure. Essay writing is a form of communication process because it involves the activity of writing and relaying one's understanding of information, by remembering letters in a word. When learners engage in information verbally, they should be able to communicate their understanding of the information to their peers in the classroom.

2.13. LEARNERS ASSESSMENTS.

The learners are assessment formally or informally in classrooms in order to assess their understanding of the content taught.

2.13.1. CURRICULUM

Walker and Soltis (1997) describe curriculum as a document that outlines structured philosophies, goals and objectives of a specific academic objective. Consequently, the main goal of the curriculum is to attain academic performance that includes the reading and writing of learners. The historical development of the South African curriculum has undergone various modifications that do not address the challenges of essay writing. Rather, these changes have resulted in low proficiencies of languages. Challenges to the implementation of the curriculum have been highlighted earlier in this study and

include, for example, oversized classrooms in which teachers fail to manage the individual demands of learners and thus fail to meet the objectives of the curriculum.

The South African Annual National Assessment (ANA) indicates a gap between curriculum objectives and results thereof among learners in terms of their reading and writing competencies (Moresebetoa, 2016). The ANA has published statistical data which suggests that a national average literacy in English is slightly below 35%. Other statistical data suggests that grades between six and eight are below 28% performance in reading and writing English. The overall performance of learners in a language is above 35% (Moresebetoa, 2016). Relatively, the overall performance of learners in grade ten, in Eensaam Circuit, Limpopo Province is not pleasing as well. Therefore, the Department of Basic Education introduced a variety of initiatives such as the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC), Drop All Read campaign (DAaR) and the National Reading Strategy (NRS) to meet the curriculum objectives of overcoming challenges associated with reading and writing (Department of Basic Education, 2015). As such, the ANA became an integral framework of FFLC aimed at the acquisition of reading and writing skills of learners in South African schools.

The core objective of the DAaR strategy is to enhance the reading comprehension competencies of learners in South Africa. This can be attained through supporting teachers in developing their teaching and learning materials in English classrooms. This strategy is flexible because it does not limit the teacher to prescribed textbooks but adopts an interactive approach in which teachers adopt a teaching strategy that is suitable for addressing the individual needs of a learner. Available literature points to the success of the DAaR strategy that its flexibility has been utilised in rural and township schools with a success rate because it can respond to the needs in these areas.

2.13.2. CODE-SWITCHING AND ESSAY WRITING

According to Shartiely (2016), code-switching is a common linguistic practice that occurs when a speaker alternates between one or two languages in a singular conversation. In schools, code-switching of languages is useful for enhancing reading and writing objectives. Code-switching is also meant to overcome challenges that are associated with language comprehension. Most learners receive teaching in an alien language, particularly in rural and township schools. Therefore, code-switching is

essential for explaining a variety of concepts to them. For example, in the context of the study, the teacher switches to Sepedi as it is the mainstream language spoken in Eensaam Circuit, Limpopo Province. Further, code-switching is important in aiding the flow of information as it is participative, allowing learners opportunities to participate during the delivery of pedagogy. Given the socio-economic disparities in the South African education system, code-switching is effective for rural-based learners. It is an effective way through which teachers transfer essay writing skills to learners, thereby creating an effective environment for teaching and learning.

2.14. TEACHING STRATEGIES AND LEARNING MATERIALS FOR ENGLISH

2.14.1. THE NATURE OF WRITING.

According to Makhubele (2015), writing is made up of key processes: pre-writing, planning and outlining, draft, redrafting and revising lastly editing and proofreading. Comprehension is the process in which there is a lot of linguistic and cognitive engagement that occurs in areas of syntax, vocabulary and intelligence to extract meaning from what learners write. On the other hand, decoding is the ability of a learner to demonstrate their knowledge of letter-sound relationships, and letter patterns to better pronounce written words.

There are various methods of writing involved in learning and teaching writing in the classroom. To attain an essay writing strategy of English, teachers are expected to be conversant with the main and key concepts that contribute to reading proficiency in the English language (Fesi & Mncube, 2021). Though it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure the reading material responds to a learner's individual, social and academic needs, the reading material should be relevant enough to meet the teacher's teaching and learning objectives. Technology-based materials such as visual information are said to be beneficial in achieving the essay writing skills in schools today. Therefore, English teachers ought to adopt teaching strategies that aid in essay writing of the subject. There are various strategies that can be used to achieve essay writing of the English language including prepared and unprepared reading, repeated writing and independent reading.

South African educational initiative, CAPS, regards independent reading as an initiative through which a learner demonstrates what the teacher has been delivering.

Consequently, CAPS encourages the independent writing of a variety of texts to cultivate the learner's competencies in reading different materials. Another strategy utilised is the concept of dictation unprepared or prepared texts. Scholars articulate that the concept of dictation aids learners in familiarising themselves with what they read, write and hear (Hassan & Dweik, 2021). Dictation has a psychological effect; when a learner thinks of words, they become intimately connected to the texts, familiarise themselves with the background of the text and build on their vocabulary at the same time. The logic of dictation is to develop problem-solving skills resulting from difficult words. Thus, learners learn difficult words they cannot read and pronounce and, in the process, learn to write (Gobena, 2018). Dictation is part of a proactive and interactive process that is needed to enhance a learner's essay writing.

It is instructive to note that the role of the teacher is important in the strategy of reading aloud. When a teacher demonstrates reading comprehension by reading aloud, they demonstrate ways in which words should be read, and thus, model fluency among learners. By demonstrating the fluency of words and letters, the teacher also demonstrates how a learner can confront difficult pronunciations, words and phrases during unprepared or prepared assessments. Another component is repeated writing. It is often argued that repetition leads to perfection (Moresebetoa, 2016). Consequently, learners conduct repeated writing intending to master fluency and proficiency in the English language. Furthermore, repeated writing is focused on identifying a learners' weaknesses, and attending to and perfecting these weaknesses. Repeated writing has psychological rewards in that, when a learner repeatedly reads the same difficult passage in a text, he or she ends up losing the fear of failure. The more a learner familiarises with a text, the more it is likely for them to develop proficiency in that text.

Shared writing is another strategy that encourages interactive teaching and learning. This is achieved through the acquisition of new skills and the reinforcement of those already acquired. Regarding this approach, the teacher instructs the entire class from writing a text that is accessible to all learners. This can be in the form of a poster, big book or chart (CAPS 2011).

2.15. WRITING STEPS

Writing processes primarily consist of planning, carrying out, and evaluating. The processes for writing an essay for EFAL are similar in that learners must prepare, write and edit their essays to generate texts with few errors. Department of Basic Education (2011) states that the three components of writing and presenting are as follows: applying the writing process, where content and planning are the primary focus and account for thirty marks; learning and applying the knowledge of the structure and characteristics of various text kinds, with a primary focus on language and style that emphasizes the use of literal and metaphorical language.

The editing portion is worth fifteen marks, whereas the study and application of punctuation, paragraph structure and understanding is worth five marks. Working through the process writing should be a part of writing training. However, not every stage of the writing process can be applied to every situation. For instance, learners will not need to thoroughly analyse the text's structure or linguistic elements if they are producing a text type that they are acquainted with. There may be times when learners produce texts without drafts to prepare for an exam, or when professors are required to concentrate on sentence structure or paragraph composition. Writing, according to Silvia (2018), entails beginning, moving through and concluding a very difficult set of duties.

Depending on the stage and phase of the process, one may need to engage many skills and orientations simultaneously. Just as writing entails beginning and ending, listening too necessitates certain types of orientation. While listening is led by the voices of others, it also requires confidence and a desire to express one's own voice, viewpoints and interpretations. According to Arbogast (2016), the idea of the writing process provides the instructor with a framework for demonstrating to the class how to approach writing and provides learners with a conceptual knowledge that, although writing requires time, it does so in a stilted manner.

2.15.1. BRAINSTORMING

According to Black (2017), brainstorming is a process in which individuals generate ideas by offering instances to back their claims, coming up with fresh concepts, or throwing forth ideas for a general debate. Group and solitary brainstorming are both possible. For instance, learners might divide into three groups and select a subject. Members of the group take turns in discussing the subject for five minutes each. Ideas may be noted by one group member. The learner who recorded can come to class and report. Brainstorming, according to Siddiqui (2020), is the process of generating words, sentences and ideas without regard to their appropriateness, correctness or order. It can be completed on paper by an individual, in a group, or loudly in class.

Only the thoughts presented elicit a response from the reader. It is easier for the writer to record impromptu ideas utilizing important terms and phrases when they have brainstormed ideas for the issue under discussion. This helps the student to organize their work and create flow charts, mind maps, and plot lines. According to Bean and Melzer (2021), analysing the instruction and brainstorming ideas should show how to build the paper's content as a logical debate by thinking about how it may fit into one of several traditional structural models. For instance, Black (2017) note that the use of cubes to develop novel ideas to a topic is another form of brainstorming. Questions can be written on both sides of a cube.

The reader reacts only to the concepts that are conveyed. Idea generation for the issue might involve describing or contracting it, analysing it, arguing for or against it, and finally applying it. Each of the aforementioned viewpoints should be used by the writer while approaching their subject. According to Dennett (2017), when someone brainstorms a topic, they should put their decision in the centre or at the top of the paper. If you are writing an argumentative essay, you should jot down any thoughts you have to ensure that you have facts to back up your claims. The sequence in which one presents their writing is a crucial decision for writers. Hence, the author ought to tackle their subject from every angle mentioned above. When brainstorming ideas, Dennett (2017) contend that the topic of choice should be written at the top or in the centre of the page. If the writer is preparing an argumentative essay, they should jot down thoughts as they occur to ensure that the essay includes facts to back up their

claims. Additionally, it is crucial for the writer to number their points on their mind map and choose the sequence in which they will be presented. The writer should, therefore, write an introduction paragraph covering the entire subject.

2.15.2. MAPPING THE MIND

During the prewriting stage, creating a mental map, often referred to as clustering, is another useful tactic. It is important for writers to meticulously design the appearance of their publications. A mind-map, according to Buzan (2024), is a subject or issue in which important terms and concepts are arranged visually. Buzan (2024), also suggests that authors utilise the mind map as a guide while drafting their initial draft, then revise it to make it better. The mind map makes ideas, phrases, symbols, and thoughts visible. This can assist in controlling the EFAL authoring process. According to Buzan (2024), a learner can also utilise a mind map which consists of headers, phrases and diagrams. If not, the author can decide to switch topics early on. The mind map aids learners in maintaining concentration on their ideas and thoughts. It puts the author's ideas in a logical and chronological sequence.

Another useful tactic in the pre-writing stage is creating a thought map. When writing an essay map, the writer centres the topic and places pertinent ideas all around it. The theme is supported by these words or phrases, and an essay is often constructed from the paragraphs (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017). Since writing requires thinking, writing, reviewing, erasing, reducing words, or other processes, the mind-map serves as the outline for an essay. It is modified or altered during the preparation stage of the final article or revising and altering the language. It is thought that after coming up with a variety of thoughts for the assigned topic, a student writer might consider the essay's structure. According to Buzan (2024), it is critical to prepare how to connect the topic, primary and auxiliary ideas, phrases and paragraphs using a mind map. One may write a first draft of their work using a mind map, then revise it to make it better. Black (2017) claims that thought mapping is a less organised method of listing. The main thought is put in the centre, and then similar ideas are grouped and circled and connected by lines. The cluster of ideas that develops the topic is selected.

2.15.3.LISTING

According to Black (2017), the writer starts by writing the topic at the top of a blank piece of paper and then jots down any thought that occurs to them. It is suggested that the writer should not edit, correct, or alter anything they have written. It is crucial to continue writing for 10 minutes to generate further ideas. For many people, writing generally facilitates their thought processes. Examining the writer's list and determining whether themes are linked is crucial. Each topic should have a previously defined framework, and the themes should be arranged in the proper sequence. Hyland (2019) states that lists are often disregarded when writing in a second language. Most writers make lists to aid their memories. Some examples of lists that they make are lists of things to accomplish the next day, lists of people to invite to a party, and lists of tasks to do when shopping. A lot of intellectual endeavours start with lists. Additionally, creating a grocery list is a routine chore that may be turned into an essay-writing exercise. For instance, you may ask the pupils to write a list of items they wish to purchase the next day on the board. Should they designate a single individual to procure those products, it is advisable for them to consolidate the food, clothing, toiletries and housekeeping supplies into one group.

2.15.4.ORGANIZING

Some teachers believe that organising one's thoughts before writing is a crucial first step. Getie (2020) contends that ESL learners should be taught the importance of selecting appropriate phrases while drafting essays. These words, which convey the author's views, ought to be used in coherent sentences that are arranged into paragraphs. Planning therefore comes in handy while writing an essay. Additionally, preparation allows the writer to save time while still producing a high-quality final output (Silvia, 2018). It enables the writer to allocate their time wisely between other tasks, such proofreading and editing. Planning displays the processes of process writing (Altshuler, 2019). An academic essay requires continuous planning. Many authors, according to Altshuler (2019), draft a point-form synopsis of the major concepts and auxiliary ideas they wish to include in their essays.

2.15.5. GETTING STARTED

This is the stage in which writing is to get started and it is necessary to constantly support and encourage learners when they begin writing. There are several approaches to this. Welty (2020) describes "Getting started" as how one begins to write. To begin, the teacher may bring pictures into the classroom and allow learners to work in groups to answer questions. For instance, learners can estimate an individual's age, determine if they are married or single, characterise their look, etc. Written responses are provided to each of these queries. According to Lehrer (2018), authors need to be knowledgeable about the subject. They ought to be able to arrange facts and supporting details in an orderly academic essay. According to Lehrer (2018), plot lines allow writers to arrange their work either vertically or horizontally. A flow chart is a graphic that illustrates the many phases of a difficult task. It aids learners in properly organising their work, adhering to a timeline, and include all required components. This therefore promotes creative thinking. Working through the writing process is part of teaching writing. For instance, learners will not need to thoroughly analyse linguistic aspects if they are producing a text they are acquainted with. There may be times when learners compose texts without drafts or when professors need to concentrate on sentence structure or paragraph composition.

2.15.6.DRAFTING

It is certain that the student will write the essay before a teacher begins to supervise the writing process. After a topic has been discussed, pondered through and information obtained, the ideas are written down. According to Bean and Melzer (2021), organising what to write occurs before writing the first draft. The writer is prepared to begin writing the first draft after planning. Since editing comes after this stage, the writer should be at ease and comfortable when presenting a first draft in an engaging manner and not worry about making mistakes. According to Altshuler (2019), an introduction should grab the reader's interest and entice them to continue reading not because they must, but because they want to.

An essay's initial paragraph is known as the first introduction. The readers' attention should be piqued by the second opening paragraph. The opening few phrases of the third introduction paragraph ought to pique the reader's curiosity. Anecdote and tale are introduced in the fourth paragraph, which will successfully grab readers' attention. For an academic essay, the fifth opening paragraph is an excellent place to start. It draws readers in by putting an intriguing topic in plain sight. It provides the topic's historical background and lets readers know what to anticipate from the remaining content (Altshuler, 2019). Rough work is done at the drafting stage. The learner writer may have the following thoughts: This is what the learner considers to be flawed, but they will keep doing it until they give a coherent, well-organised argument.

It is only the initial draft when learners merely write to lay the groundwork for their future writing. According to Silvia (2018), the writer must prepare what they are going to write. When planning, a mind map is a helpful tool to employ. The final draft is the product of writing using a mind map as a guide. Even seasoned authors revise and modify their work since experience is the best instructor. The first draft aids in the writer's style development and ensures that the major and supporting ideas are presented in a logical and grammatically correct manner. Black (2017) states that the subject and controlling concept should be combined to form a topic sentence in the initial draft of any paragraph. After writing a sentence for each of the individual concepts, one will have a first draft, or rough draft, of a paragraph when the subject sentence and the supporting sentences are matched. Even experienced writers struggle to produce flawless paragraphs on their first attempt. There are usually some rough places to work out, which is why it is referred to as the first draft or rough draft. In order to make the initial draft of a work better, it is necessary to update it by providing answers to questions like: is the topic or issue evident? Will the main concept sufficiently explore the topic? Do my supporting sentences provide precise information, instances and facts? Is there any existence of diversity of sentences? Nonetheless, a learner's confidence can be severely impacted by negative remarks on a draft, which can also have an influence on the learner-teacher relationship (Zhu & Carless, 2018). Generally, teachers worry that being overly critical may demotivate learners, yet a gentle approach might not guide them in the right direction. This could be the case because learners concentrate more on sentence-level issues than on concepts and structure, which could lead to comments that are imprecise and useless.

According to Zhu and Carless (2018), learners prefer their instructors' comments above those of their peers, probably because they view their teachers as the ultimate arbiter. Because of this, learners have to follow very specific guidelines with reference to the procedure (Suskie, 2018).

2.15.7. STAGE OF REVISION

Checking one's thoughts rather than one's grammar is the goal of revision. One step in the writing process is revision. Editing requires a lot of labour. Upon revision, the writer should determine whether every sentence is related to the primary topic, whether there are any unnecessary sentences in the paragraphs, whether the writer has covered what they intended to cover, and if they need to add anything further (Hyland, 2019). Revision is a procedure that aids in the generation of new ideas. As explained by Hyland (2019), writing an excellent paper requires planning and execution. It is a methodical procedure that involves going through several phases with your paper, from prewriting to the final manuscript. In the first step, one gathers raw material by writing down their initial thoughts and opinions regarding the topic. This may be accomplished by list-making, free-writing, brainstorming, and scratching down outlines.

In the second stage, the writer goes through two, three, or four rough revisions of their work, shaping, adding to, and sometimes subtracting from their original material. The author strives to ensure that the main idea of their article is understood. The writer edits and proofreads at the final step. The next to last draft is edited by the writer who carefully reviews it to ensure that sentence construction, punctuation, grammar and language use are done correctly. The final copy is then proofread for any typographical errors. Some individuals put off critical tasks like editing and proofreading because they have put so much effort into the earlier phases.

2.15.8 EDITING REVISION

Grammar and style corrections are made during editing. This entails editing written work for grammatical errors. Hyland (2019) suggests that it is always best to rewrite first and then edit because this saves time. It is hard to comprehend paragraphs while reading unedited material. One tool for double checking is an editing checklist. The following queries may be used as tactics to control the writing process and ensure quality work: Do all verbs have a subject and an agreement? Is there a subject and a

verb in every sentence? Do all of the verbs have the proper tense? Are all of the verbs in their proper tenses? Does each sentence include the appropriate punctuation at the end? Are all the words spelled correctly? (Hyland, 2019). Grammar and style corrections are made during editing. This indicates that editing lends a work of writing an academic quality. The key points on the aforementioned checklist are crucial resources for learner writers to write well. Learner writers require assistance from peer reviewers even if they are capable of handling much of their own editing (Bean & Melzer, 2021).

Do not let a last-minute shortcut ruin all of your hard work. According to Bean and Melzer (2021), the first step in revising written work is ensuring that sentences have different structures. Writing becomes more interesting and creative when paragraph beginnings are varied, which is made possible by the various sentence forms. Bean and Melzer (2021) augment that editing is crucial for revision because it helps pupils become more critical thinkers and increase their cognitive awareness. The benefit of editing is that the instructor may provide insightful commentary, such as modifying the text's meaning when it becomes apparent that its original meaning is insufficient. Teachers also advise learners to make sure that well-formed sentences are easier to understand by removing, rearranging, and restating them as well as fixing any diction, transcribing, or syntax faults that could be obfuscating the message.

Hyland (2019) regards editing as the act of refining and enhancing the words and phrases of a written document. The writer proofreads for correct grammar, clear diction, strong sentence structure and punctuation during the editing process. People frequently find it difficult to extensively revise and proofread a document (Bean & Melzer, 2021). Most individuals write with such intensity that it hurts for them to glance at the document again. It is crucial that someone makes the effort to edit and proofread. One's paper will improve, and they will develop the habit of continuously applying the sentence skills when they get rid of their blunders. Bean and Melzer (2021) state that correction is the act of revising, polishing and making clear a written text's general structure as well as checking that its content meets readers' requirements and expectations. A writer who revises their work ensures that the essay fulfils the demands and expectations of the readers. Verifying that phrases and paragraphs are cohesively connected is also crucial. It is crucial for writers to review and edit their writing style throughout the revision phase, ensuring that sentences are

structured differently and that their voice and tone, including how they approach the subject, are conveyed to the reader.

2.15.9 GRAMMAR CORRECTION.

Grammar is the study of the structure, function and rules governing the arrangement of words in sentences. Spelling and grammar mistakes take away an essay's power. Thus, checking for grammatical faults is crucial when revising and editing an academic essay. This is because, if a writer's paper is riddled with errors, readers are unlikely to take the writer's thoughts seriously. According to Altshuler (2019), a writer must constantly ensure that the verbs agree with their subjects, the pronouns clearly relate to the appropriate nouns, the case of one's pronouns is accurate, and the verb tense is correct. When there is subject-verb agreement, plural subjects take plural verbs, and singular subjects take singular verbs. Because "My books are out of print." or "One of my books is out of print." are two examples. A collective noun is one that denotes a group, such an audience, family, team, symphony or class. Typically, a single verb is taken by a collective noun. The press, for instance, is not invited. The writer uses the verb's plural form when the collective noun emphasises individual members rather than functioning as a whole, as in the sentence the press is arguing about who will get the interview (Altshuler, 2019).

2.15.10 SENTENCE STRUCTURE EDITING.

A phrase is a communication unit that describes at least one act that is in the verb and one agent that is the subject doing the action (Altshuler, 2019). Learners should constantly examine each phrase for errors like as run-on sentences, sentence fragments, improper parallelism, misplaced or hanging modifiers and wordiness. Learners also inquire about how to start and end sentences or use the pronoun "I" while writing. This brings up the subject of sentence structure and word choice, which is another area of convention and mechanics.

2.15.11 BROKEN SENTENCES.

Because a full sentence has a subject and a verb, a sentence fragment is an unfinished sentence that appears to be a complete one (Altshuler, 2019). A run-on phrase is made up of two entire sentences that are disjointed, either with no

punctuation at all or a comma. Altshuler (2019) refers a run-on phrase as a word or set of words that explain a word in a phrase differently from the word it is meant to describe. A word or set of words that is/are intended to modify a word in a phrase, but the necessary word is lacking, leaving the word hanging, is known as a dangling modifier (Altshuler, 2019). When words or phrases that ought to be equal inside a sentence are not, it is referred to as flawed parallelism. A sentence's balance can be impacted by poor parallelism. Wordiness is when a writer uses more words than necessary to convey the concepts in a phrase. In short, sentence construction errors known as "faulty parallelism" happen when words or phrases that belong together in a sentence are not put together. An incorrect parallelism throws off the sentence's equilibrium.

2.15.12 THE LAST PHASE.

At this point, beginning writers need to be able to state with assurance that their articles and other products are both enjoyable to read and visually appealing. It is expected that the finished product would be devoid of thoughtless errors.

A final version is supposed to be a finished work that is prepared for submission, publication and readership. Most authors want other people to read their finished work, therefore, such writing ought to demonstrate the intricate thinking process that went into producing it. It ought to demonstrate the text's coherence and the logical arrangement of concepts (Black, 2017). According to Bean and Melzer (2021), it is crucial above everything else to demonstrate the text's coherence and the logical arrangement of the concepts (Black, 2017). Most crucially Bean and Melzer (2021) suggest that after using all of the editing strategies, it is vital to rewrite an article cleanly. The last step is essentially the conclusion of an error-free essay writing experience, which is in keeping with the goal of the study on essay writing mistakes of EFAL learners in Limpopo Province. The EFAL learners should aim to achieve this.

2.16 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the review of literature that is pertinent to the title of this study and the subsequent aim and objectives. The chapter began with various theoretical arguments that informed the study. Therefore, the chapter utilised the Behaviourist and Language Framework Policy of Spolsky as templates that guide the inquiry on

essay writing of the English language. The purpose of conducting a literature review was to shed more light on themes such as approaches to language comprehension, an overview and challenges of essay writing in South African schools, and challenges in the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools. The purpose of the literature review was to identify and analyse some of the gaps found in the study on the challenges of essay writing of the English language in South African schools focusing on Grade 10 learners.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the process of data collection, the research design utilised in the study, research instruments and sampling techniques, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis (Togia & Malliari, 2017). The chapter presents the research methodology, paradigm and research design that were employed in this investigation.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN.

The interpretivism paradigm suggests that human belief attribution practices are influenced by a diverse range of normative standards (Curry, 2020). It offers new perspectives of examining specific educational environments to explore, understand and improve teacher practices. Leon-Guerrero (2018) emphasised the importance of not overlooking significant social issues, particularly those stemming from the unintended consequences of human actions. The researcher posits that the reality under study encompasses people's practical experiences transformed into meaningful, justifiable and rational livelihoods. In this study, essay writing errors of Grade 10 EFAL rural learners in the Eensaam circuit are outlined based on a checklist for essay errors, learner interviews and educator interviews. This study adopted a qualitative research approach. A qualitative approach delves into human behaviour within its natural context (Suleiman, Hanafi & Tanslikhan, 2018). It examines the quality of 'social life' concerning essay writing errors of EFAL FET learners in rural areas. This approach situated the study within specific settings and allowed the description of all potential social variables within a study context to establish manageable behaviour.

3.3. SAMPLING AND POPULATION

The study's sample was drawn from a population of EFAL Grade 10 learners and educators in Eensaam Circuit, Sekhukhune South District, focusing on the essay writing errors they make. To ensure a representative sample similar to the target population, a subset of the population that mirrors the entire population's general characteristics was selected. Sampling involved deciding where, and from whom data should be collected to address the research questions. Grade 10 EFAL learners' essays, EFAL learners and educators from School A and School B in Eensaam Circuit, Sekhukhune South District, were chosen as sources of information for this investigation. Thus, the sample consisted of ten learners, five from each school, along with two educators from each school. Additionally, two FET English teachers from each school and one English FAL Head of Department were included. School A and School B School were part of the sampling process. Finally, an English FAL Curriculum advisor from Sekhukhune South District was interviewed. Conducting various interviews and lesson observations ensured triangulation by involving different participants. The study employed purposive sampling and the non-probability technique to select two schools, ten EFAL Grade 10 learners and two educators based on the researcher's judgment of their characteristics to meet the study's objectives. This method allowed the researcher to choose participants from the study population based on their discretion. Therefore, purposive sampling was utilised to select the schools, learners and educators.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION.

Data collection refers to a series of consistent activities aimed at gathering information to address research question at hand (Tracy, 2019). Researchers rely on various methods to gather information, including participation, observation, interviews and document analysis (Flick, 2018). In this study, data was collected from both EFAL Grade 10 learners and educators utilising appendix A and B. According to Vespestad and Clancy (2021), qualitative Content Analysis (CA1) is one of the research methods that can be utilised for data collection. Semi-structured interviews are commonly conducted using methods such as face-to-face conversations, email, video conferences and telephone calls. Researchers can use a set of questions as a guide

while also having the flexibility to ask additional questions for more information (Dadzie, Runeson, Ding & Bondinuba, 2018). Therefore, interviews with learners were conducted, and the learners' responses were obtained in written form. Additionally, interviews with educators focused on the errors made by learners when writing essays using appendix A and B. These interviews were recorded.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

For the focus group interviews, qualitative data analysis was employed when interviewing high school learners from School A and School B. Developing illustrative theories and drawing coherent conclusions based on qualitative data is crucial for data analysis (Lemon & Hayes, 2020). Thus, the face-to-face interviews followed an inductive approach, condensing extensive and diverse raw data into concise or summarised formats (Leavy, 2020). The summarised findings are thus transparent and justifiable.

3.6. QUALITY CRITERIA

The qualitative criteria relevant to this study encompass credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

3.6.1. CREDIBILITY.

Credibility pertains to the accuracy of the data, participant perspectives, and the researcher's interpretation and presentation thereof (Shufutinsky, 2020). To enhance credibility, the researcher described the participants' experiences and validated the research findings with the participants. A qualitative study is deemed credible when individuals who share the same experience immediately recognise the descriptions of human experience (Tenny, Brannan & Brannan, 2017). To ensure credibility in this research report, the researcher demonstrated engagement, employed appropriate observation methods and maintained audit trails. Credibility is defined as the confidence placed in the truthfulness of the research findings; it is considered the most crucial criterion for ensuring rigor and trustworthiness. In this study, credibility was ensured by using peer debriefing, where the qualitative lead researcher (LN) sought guidance and support from the senior researcher (DH) to ensure scholarly rigor (Nyanchoka, Tudur-Smith, Porcher & Hren, 2019). The current researcher established

the rigor of the inquiry through various credibility strategies, including prolonged and diverse field experience, time sampling, reflexivity (field journal), triangulation, member checking, peer examination, interview technique, establishing the authority of the researcher, and maintaining structural coherence. Consequently, the data collected from EFAL Grade 10 learners' written essays, their interview responses, and the educators' interview responses were obtained without any alterations.

3.6.2. TRANSFERABILITY

The concept of transferability in qualitative research pertains to the extent to which the findings can be applied to different contexts and prove valuable to individuals in various settings (Nyanchoka, Tudur-Smith, Porcher & Hren, 2019). For a qualitative study to meet this criterion, the results should hold significance for individuals who were not directly involved in the study, and readers should be able to relate the findings to their own experiences (Wierzbicki, 2018). Furthermore, Wierzbicki (2018) emphasises the importance of providing adequate information about the participants and research context to enable readers to assess the findings' potential fitness or transferability. However, the relevance of transferability as a criterion depends on the aim of the qualitative study and may only be applicable if the research intends to make generalisations about the subject or phenomenon.

Transferability, in this context, referred to the extent to which the results of qualitative research can be applied to other contexts with different participants. According to Haq, Rasheed, Rashid and Akhter (2023), researchers can facilitate the judgment of transferability by potential users through the use of thick description and purposeful sampling. This means that when researchers provide a detailed description of the inquiry and purposefully select participants, they enhance the transferability of the study. Therefore, in the case of this qualitative research, the researcher ensured that the findings would be transferable to other settings or contexts.

3.6.3. DEPENDABILITY

Dependability in qualitative research is closely linked to the clarity and logical connection between the research questions and the research purpose and design (Nyanchoka, Tudur-Smith, Porcher & Hren, 2019). This can be achieved when another

researcher agrees with the decision-making process at each stage of the research. By providing a detailed account of the researcher's process and descriptions, a study can be considered dependable if the findings are replicated with similar participants under similar conditions (Cope, 2014).

In this study, the stability of the researcher's findings over time was evident. To ensure dependability, this study's participants evaluated the findings, interpretations, and recommendations to ensure that the findings are in line with by the data they have provided (Myeni, 2018). Dependability was established through various methods such as an audit trail, a code-recode strategy, stepwise replication, triangulation and peer examination or iterator comparisons (Colemon, 2019).

3.6.4. CONFIRMABILITY.

Confirmability is associated with objectivity or neutrality that seek to ensure that data presentation and interpretations of the findings are not products of the researcher's imagination, but are clearly derived from the data. It ensures that data collection and interpretations are based on the authentic data, not the researcher's hypothesis (Nyanchoka, Tudur-Smith, Porcher & Hren, 2019). The researcher demonstrated confirmability by describing how conclusions and interpretations were reached and by providing examples that directly stemmed from the data (Wierzbicki, 2018). This can also be achieved in qualitative research by including rich quotes from participants that illustrate each emerging theme. In addition, conformability refers to the extent to which the results of an inquiry can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. Studies have suggested that confirmability in qualitative inquiry can be achieved through an audit trail, reflexive journal and triangulation and these were applied in this study.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations mean the moral principles and values that form part of study stages (Johnson, Adkins & Calvin, 2020). Participant must be considered and be protected against harm for their dignity and respect in every step of the research process. These considerations serve as a guide to the researcher to hold his/her principles on the contributions made by the participants to ensure that the findings are truthful and reliable. In this study, the researcher gained approval to conduct the

research from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC), the Director of Sekhukhune South District, and the circuit manager of Eensaam Circuit, as well as the principals of the two selected schools. All details of participants were kept anonymous, and physical data was stored securely. As guided by Nyanchoka, Tudur-Smith, Porcher and Hren (2019), electronic data was stored in a password-protected folder. Consent letters were prepared and given to the parents of EFAL minor learners to sign in accordance with the Children's Act 2018. However, learners of legal age signed for themselves. Educators were also requested provide their consent. Thus, the Grade 10 EFAL teachers were individually invited to take part in the interviews.

The researcher provided a thorough explanation of the study to the participants and ensured that they understand what the study entails. Additionally, the researcher reassured the participants that their privacy and confidentiality would be maintained throughout the study. As such, instead of using participants' real names, the researcher used codes to ensure anonymity. The researcher also prioritised treating the participants with respect and maintaining their dignity throughout the study process.

3.7.1 TRUSTWORTHINESS.

Trustworthiness is introduced by Amakwa (2016) as the concept of incorporating criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability to validity and reliability. According to Nowell and Norris (2017), in order to be considered trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent and thorough manner. As such, to ensure trustworthiness in this study, the researcher recorded, systematized and disclosed the methods of analysis with sufficient details to allow the readers to assess the credibility of all processes undertaken in this study.

3.7.2 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.

Voluntary Participation is regarded as a crucial point in research wherein the validity and reliability of research is ensured (Kilinc & Firat, 2017). Participants were given the freedom to decide on taking part in the study. The participants further had the flexibility to participate in their own environment. Therefore, the heads of institutions were invite to confirm the availability of potential participants. As a result, the researcher had

access to the necessary details of the participants in order to establish a rapport for the upcoming research process. During the preliminary meetings with participants, the informed consent letter was clearly read and explained to the participant, particularly on the aims of the study and voluntary participation. Thus, individuals were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they so wish.

3.7.3 MAINTAINING PRIVACY, ANONYMITY, AND CONFIDENTIALITY.

Maintaining privacy, anonymity and confidentiality is of utmost importance in research (Kang & Hwang, 2023). These ethical practices aim to protect the privacy of human subjects throughout the data collection, analysis and reporting phases. Confidentiality involves separating or modifying any personal and identifying information provided by participants to ensure their anonymity. Moser and Korstjens (2018) explain that the researcher collects information from participants, which then becomes the data to be analysed.

In a confidential study, as explored by Coffelt (2017), the researcher is aware of the participants' identity, particularly during interviews. The interviewer may know the participants' names, addresses or other identifying information. It is therefore the researcher's responsibility to safeguard the participants from any potential harm by altering or removing any personal and identifying details that may be disclosed during the interview. In this study, pseudonyms were assigned to participants to maintain their anonymity.

3.7.4 PREVENTION OF HARM.

It is the ethical duty of the researcher to ensure the safety and well-being of the participants throughout the study. Moss, Uluğ and Acar (2019) stressed the significance of conducting fieldwork without causing harm to individuals. Thus, the participants of this study were informed about the potential risks and benefits outlined of taking part in the study, as was also outlined in the consent forms.

3.7.5 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION.

The participants were informed that no individual will be coerced into participating in the research, and that their participation was a voluntary decision. Institutional authorities were contacted to verify the availability of participants. In addition, the informed consent forms also stated clearly that participation is entirely voluntary and

that participants can withdraw at any point. According to Utz et al. (2019), participants should be contacted in advance of the interviews to schedule a suitable time and location. Thus, prior to the interviews, participants were required to sign the consent forms which outlined the study's purpose, data collection methods, and potential benefits. Additionally, participants were required to provide consent for the interview process to be recorded. They were further assured that any information shared with the researcher will only be used for the study.

3.8 CONCLUSION.

This chapter detailed the methodology, data collection methods and research design employed in the study. A qualitative and interpretative approach was utilised for data collection and analysis. The chapter also outlined the essential ethical considerations for ensuring the credibility of the research. Therefore, subsequent chapter delves into the results and findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter three delved into the crucial aspects of research design, methodology and data collection methods. This chapter, on the other hand, is dedicated to the presentation and analysis of the research data obtained from the participants and relevant documents. The analysis, a vital part of the research process, is based on the data collected using various methods, such as interviews and observations conducted throughout the study.

4.2. THE PSEUDONYMOUS PRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS.

This study was conducted with a strong commitment to protect the dignity and privacy of the participants. A vital aspect of this was using pseudonymous references to present the remarks made by participants (Mukungu, 2017). This approach respects their anonymity and underscores the ethical considerations underpinning this research, thus fostering trust in the research process.

The two schools (School A and School B) were the primary settings for this study. In the interviews, the learners from School A were identified as LA 1 - LA 5 (Learner A one, two, three, four and five), and learners from School B were referred to as LB 1 – LB 5 (Learner B one, two, three, four and five). The learners played a crucial role in providing insights into the investigation. The English FAL teacher from School A, labelled TA 1 (Teacher One A) and the teacher from School B, referred to as TB 1 (Teacher B) were also instrumental in shaping the educational environment. The Departmental Head from School A labelled DH A1, and from School B, referred to as DH B1, along with the Senior Education Specialist (SES), provided valuable perspectives on the school's policies and practices.

4.3. PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

4.3.1. SCHOOL A

School A was situated in rural village in Limpopo Province, served Grades 8 to 12 and had 261 learners, ten teachers, a principal and one Departmental Head. Notably, Grade 10 was compacted in one classroom with 62 learners. Despite its best efforts, the school faced several challenges. These included the lack of a library or science laboratory, an ungraded sports field and poorly maintained learner toilets. The learners, who spoke Isindebele and Sepedi came from the two tribes (Ndebeles and Pedis) in the village. For this study, 5 learners from Grade 10, one English FAL educator, and 1 Departmental Head for English FAL were selected, each with their unique perspectives and experiences.

4.3.1.1. SUMMARY OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS SCHOOL A

Learners from school A were categorised as LA 1 - LA 5. The age of the learners ranged from 15 to 17 years. Thus, the sampling was made through their general performance in English FAL, looking at levels 1 and 2 in term 1, 2023.

Participants	School	Gender	Number of Years in Grade	Age
LA 1	A	Male	Second	17
LA 2	A	Male	First	15
LA 3	A	Male	First	15
LA 4	A	Female	Second	16
LA 5	A	Female	First	15

4.3.1.2. SUMMARY OF TEACHER PARTICIPANT (SCHOOL A)

A teacher from school A was categorised as TA1, and the teacher's qualification was a Bachelors of Education degree (BED).

Participants	Grades Taught	Number of Years Teaching EFAL	Qualifications	Number of Learners in Grade 10
TA1	8-12	6 Years and 6 Months	Bed Degree	62

4.3.1.3. SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTAL HEAD PARTICIPANT (SCHOOL A)

Departmental Head from school A was referred to as DH A1, and the participant held an Advanced Certificate in Education.

Participants	Grades Teaching	Number of Years Supervising ENGFAL	Qualifications	Responsible for Grades
HD A1	8-12	7 Years	Ace In English	8-12

4.3.2. SCHOOL B

The school was also located in a rural village and had Grades 8-12 with 525 learners. Grade 10 learners were 145 and were spread into 3 classrooms. The school had 17 educators, two DHs, one deputy principal and the principal. The school had five blocks of buildings with 20 classrooms. One block was reserved for admin and staff, with no library or science laboratory. New toilets were built for teachers and learners. The sports field was well maintained. Furthermore, the learners residing in Eensaam village spoke Sepedi as their mother tongue. Five learners in Grade 10, one English FAL educator and one DH for English FAL were sampled.

4.3.2.1. SUMMARY OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS in SCHOOL B

Learners from school B were categorised as LB 1-LB 5. The age of the learners ranged from 15 to 17 years. The sampling was made through their general performance in English FAL, looking at levels 1 and 2 in term 1, 2023.

Participants	School	Gender	Number of Years In Grade	Age
LB 1	B	Male	First	15
LB 2	B	Male	First	15
LB 3	B	Female	Second	17
LB 4	B	Female	First	15
LB 5	B	Female	Second	17

4.3.2.2. SUMMARY OF TEACHER PARTICIPANT

Not available as the educator was not willing to participate.

4.4.3. SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTAL HEAD PARTICIPANT

Departmental Head from School B was categorised as DH B1, and the participant held a BED Degree.

Participants	Grades Teaching	Number of Years Supervising ENGFAL	Qualifications	Responsible for Grades
HD B1	8-12	2 Years	Bed-Degree	8-12

4.3.3. INTERVIEWED SENIOR EDUCATION SPECIALIST (SES) SEKHUKHUNE SOUTH DISTRICT.

The senior education specialist is considered SES for English FAL and responsible for FET classes. He has an advanced Certificate in Education (English FAL).

Participant	Grades supervising	Number of Years Supervising ENGFAL	Qualifications	Responsible for Grades
SES	10-12	5 Years	ACE in English	10-12

4.4. PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.4.1. INTERVIEWED LEARNERS

Interviews are among the most widely used selection tools to measure a range of constructs (Elhami & Khoshnevisan, 2022). Their predictive validity varied as a function of the interview structure. Brosy et al. (2020) state that providing applicants with information about upcoming past-behaviour questions does not help them. However, interviewer probing improves story production and fosters a more balanced combination of narrative elements in applicants' stories.

The interview questions were repeated for ease of reference.

- *How many essays have you written so far?*

Learners responded to this question in writing, and stated the following:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "2"

LA 2: "2"

LA 3: "2"

LA 4: "2"

LA 5: “2

SCHOOL B

LB 1: “2”

LB 2: “2”

LB 3: “2”

LB 4: “2”

LB 5: “2

All the learners indicated that they wrote two essays, which were formal assessments. However, learners should have been given two informal and two formal essays. This implies that educators did not give learners a fair chance to express themselves in essay writing during informal activities. Learners should write daily and should be allowed to write freely. As stipulated in the guidelines for teaching and writing essays and transactional texts, learners should not only write essays as part of the formal assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2010 & Soeprijanto, 2022). Soeprijanto (2020) states that assessments encompass all activities given to learners by educators that generate information that can be utilised to enhance teaching and learning. Informal assessments are an effective way for teachers to listen to their learners and assist them in understanding a topic. These include informal assessments such as classroom discussions that assess the quality of teaching and learning — an integral part of education. As such, learners only wrote essays during formal assessments in term one and in term two for the June examination. The 2023/2024 Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) for EFAL indicates that essay writing should be given to learners at least once in a term, thus, one informal and one formal assessment in a term. According to Hyland and Jiang (2017), writing should become more informal.

Do you write essays in class or at home?

In responding to the question on where essays are written, learners from both schools responded said that the wrote essays in:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "Class"

LA 2: "Class"

LA 3: "Class"

LA 4: "Class"

LA 5: "Class"

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "Class"

LB 2: "Class"

LB 3: "Class"

LB 4: "Class"

LB 5: "Class"

All the interviewed learners were not allowed to write essays freely at home as an informal activity; they were allowed to do so only in class and were supervised without referring to dictionaries for spelling. The learners were unsure of the structure of essays and were not permitted to remind themselves. As part of informal essay writing, educators may give essay writing activities to learners to write in class while busy with other things at school. This could make up for the free writing learners miss at home. Relatively, learners should be allowed to write essays at home to get clarity from others and dictionaries because homework is designed to cultivate independence in the learner's learning environment. This is supported by McPherson (2020), who says that homework is meant for learners to practise the subject and build an understanding of knowledge without the teacher's or educator's supervision and support.

• *If you wrote essays in class, what was the duration?*

In responding to the question on the duration of the paper on essay writing, learners from both schools responded in this way:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "One hour"

LA 2: "80 minutes"

LA 3: "50 minutes"

LA 4: "One hour"

LA 5: "50 minutes"

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "50 minutes"

LB 2: "50 minutes"

LB 3: "50 minutes"

LB 4: "1 hour and 30 minutes"

LB 5: "50 minutes"

As shown above, LA 1 and LA 4 stated that they wrote for 1 hour, while LA 2 mentioned 80 minutes, LA3, LA 4 and LB 1, 2, 3 and 4 said 50 minutes. Lastly, LB4 mentioned that they wrote for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The learners need to be aware of the stipulated duration to complete essay writing in Grade 10, which is 80 minutes, as indicated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement 2011 (Ajani, 2021). This shows that educators need to use the correct duration when administering essay writing in class. They should also make learners aware of the allocated time for essay writing. Failure to do this may lead to situations in which learners may be in a hurry to finish writing while committing writing errors due to the pressure that might be exerted on them. As such, when learners are aware of the allocated time they will prepare themselves to finish on the stated time, and may allocate time to different stages of writing, i.e., planning, drafting, writing, reviewing, editing etc.

- *What were the topics of the essay that you wrote?*

In responding to the question on the topic written, learners from both schools responded in this way:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "A memorable journey"

LA 2: "The people who make my life interesting."

LA 3: "The people who make my life interesting."

LA 4: "The people who make my life interesting."

LA 5: "A memorable journey."

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "People who make my life interesting."

LB 2: "People who make my life interesting."

LB 3: "Do not start your day with broken pieces of yesterday."

LB 4: "Do not start your day with broken pieces of yesterday."

LB 5: "Do not start your day with broken pieces of yesterday."

The findings revealed that LA 2, LA 3, LA 4, LB 1 and LB 2 chose the topic of "The people who make my life interesting". On the other hand, LB 3, LB 4 and LB 5 wrote their essays on "Do not start your day with broken pieces of yesterday", while LA 1 and LA 5 wrote about "A memorable journey". Most learners wrote about the people who make their lives interesting, which is a story-telling topic. The DBE (2011) depicted writing as a powerful instrument of communication that allows learners to construct and communicate thoughts and ideas coherently. Learners must choose topics they are conversant with to successfully follow the writing process to write coherent and cohesive essays (Durga & Rao, 2018). In light of these definitions, it can be said that writing is a tool that can be used for communication, which helps people to express their thoughts differently. Aisyah (2019) indicates that when topics given to write about are not challenging and out of date, the writing becomes not interesting. On the other hand, Hasanuddin and Basalama (2020) state that many learners face difficulties in selecting a topic in an essay due to failure of teachers to assist them.

- *Describe the steps you normally follow when you write an essay.*

In responding to the question on steps that learners followed when writing an essay, learners from both selected schools responded in this way:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "Mind map, introduction and conclusion about what I have written about my topic."

LA 2: "Choose a topic, brainstorm and draft."

LA 3: "Introduction, body and conclusion."

LA 4: "Choose the topic you understand after writing a mind map. Where you write the essay, you write the introduction explaining the topic, body and conclusion."

LA 5: "Mind map."

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "I Choose the topic, brainstorm and mind map."

LB 2: "I choose the topic, I draft, I am thinking about how to write it, and I start to write."

LB 3: "Mind map, topic and body."

LB 4: "Draw a mind map with sub-topics, write the first draft, check all the mistakes and write the final draft."

LB 5: "Brainstorming, introduction and body/conclusion."

The writing process focuses on essay writing, which moves learners on ideas, drafting, and editing of work in presenting the last draft (Durga & Rao, 2018). Learners in both schools stipulated the exact steps they normally follow when writing an essay, such as using the mind map, introduction, body and conclusion. However, only one learner never mentioned the first draft and second draft. The writing process in English FAL requires three key stages: planning, drafting and editing. The learners must link what they will write as drafts, then revise, edit and give or receive feedback on written work before coming up with the final draft. Hajeid (2018) states that writing takes time, and this is true when one considers the stages involved in the process writing approach.

Therefore, to enable learners to focus on the process, it is important to give them time to go through the stages, write multiple drafts and incorporate the feedback they receive on their work. Henning et al. (2016) described it as a process writing approach that involves researching, free writing, organising, editing and referencing. The process writing is not only a writing approach that strives to develop the learners' writing competencies but also a way to establish their understanding of the constitutive cultural systems that govern academic writing.

- *Were there specific errors that you committed?*

In responding to the question on errors committed by learners in essays, learners from the selected schools responded in this way:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "I usually use wrong spelling and repeat the same words, but differently that means the same."

LA 2: "Spelling errors, not writing in paragraphs and punctuations."

LA 3: "Spelling errors, commas and length."

LA 4: "Wrong types of topics."

LA 5: "Use of wrong word and spelling."

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "The length of the essay and spelling errors."

LB 2: "Wrong words, spelling error and wrong topic."

LB 3: "Wrong words, spelling error."

LB 4: "Spelling of words and incorrect use of grammar."

LB 5: "Spelling and the concord."

The learners from both schools seemed to be aware of spelling errors, wrong words, wrong tenses, repetition of points, misuse of conjunctions and simple punctuation. The learners stated that they cannot brainstorm correct points when writing essays and

need more facts and evidence to support their statements. They also said that they sometimes write too long and unclear sentences that could not be understood. Ariyanti and Fitriani (2017) indicate that the above issues prevent learners from using a standardised English language when writing. Apart from the challenges that the learners revealed, social media language is also said to hinder the development of vocabulary, grammatical competence and the skill of writing in a standardised English language. Songxaba and Sincuba (2019), emphasise the effect of social media on English Second Language essay writing with special reference to WhatsApp.

- *What do you like most about essay writing?*

In responding to the question on what learners like in essay writing, learners from both selected schools responded in this way:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "Is that I give my own opinion without anyone disagreeing with me, my fact and opinion and what I feel about the topic."

LA 2: "The fact that I can write using my general knowledge about things."

LA 3: "To express my feelings and be more creative in thinking."

LA 4: "It reminds me about the memories, has many marks and makes you a critical thinker."

LA 5: "I feel free about essay writing."

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "It relies on my spirit, and it makes me always think out of the box."

LB 2: "I feel free after writing my essay; it makes you a critical thinker."

LB 3: "Because we chose our topic for the essay."

LB 4: "Essay writing gives you the interesting challenge of being creative about your writing."

LB 5: "Essays relieve my stress; when writing an essay, I can tell people's stories."

Learners from school A indicated the following: LA 1 likes to give their own opinion without anyone disagreeing with their facts and opinion about the topic, while LA 2 indicated that they can write using general knowledge about things. LA 3 likes to express feelings and being more creative in terms of thinking, while LA 4 enjoys being reminded about the memories that makes one to be a critical thinker. LA 5 stated that they enjoy feeling free about essay writing. Learners in school B stated their feelings as follows: LB likes essays because they relieve spirit and make one think out of the box; LB 2 enjoys feeling free after writing an essay as it makes one become a critical thinker, while LB 3 stated that they enjoy choosing one own's topic on the essay. LB 4 said that essay writing gives an interesting challenge of being creative about their writing, and LB 5 said that essays take out stress. As mentioned, most learners feel relieved from stress and become critical thinkers when writing essays. This finding is supported by Stapleton et al. (2021) who state that such type of writing can be classified as expressive writing, which has cognitive and emotional benefits required for a learner to perform well in the classroom. This tells us that learners enjoy essay writing more than any other type of writing they encounter.

- *What do you dislike about essay writing?*

In responding to the question of what learner's dislike in essay writing, learners from both schools responded in this way:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "You end up talking about your personal life because some topics seem made for you. Or they are asking you about your experience."

LA 2: "Topics that are not relatable to me."

LA 3: "The topic that they choose for us."

LA 4: "Topics that I am not comfortable with."

LA 5: "No, because I loose thinking about my topic."

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "Topics that are given and when it comes to the terms of lying."

LB 2: "I feel uncomfortable with other topics."

LB 3: "We don't like writing words and checking the mistakes."

LB 4: The most challenging part when writing an essay is the spelling of words and incorrect use of grammar."

LB 5: "The number of words at the end of the essay, the time allocated."

Learners in school A showed their sentiments as follows: LA 1 mentioned that they end up talking about their personal lives because some topics seem made for them and seem to ask about their experiences. LA 2 lamented on topics that are not relatable to her. LA 3 also stated that the topic that teachers chose for them are unrelatable. LA 4 stated that he is not comfortable with the topics. LA 5 said it was not because he was losing interest in his topic. In school B, LB 1 spoke about topics given and having to write lies. LB 2 lamented about feeling uncomfortable with other topics. While LB 3 spoke about not liking to write words and checking mistakes. LB 4 mentioned that the challenging part when writing an essay is the spelling of words and incorrect grammar. Lastly, LB 5 mentioned the number of words at the end of the essay and the time allocated.

The number of words required (150- 200) when writing an essay makes it difficult for them to cover the expected words as they will likely need more ideas. The learners hate it when they have a word in mind but need help to spell it correctly; sometimes, the topics given might need to be more comfortable. Paltridge and Starfield (2019) stated that for the written discourse, written mode is wildly open or complex and has many expansions. Sifletto (2018) clarified that spoken forms sometimes have more spread-out sets of clauses, which form more complex relations than written forms.

• *How can the process of writing essays be improved?*

In responding to the question on how the process of essay writing can be improved, learners from both schools responded in this way:

SCHOOL A

LA 1: "To be more careful about what you choose on your topic, you must understand the topic first before you choose any topic and have ideas on what you write about."

LA 2: "By giving us relatable topics in real life."

LA 3: "The duration hours and the topic should be relevant."

LA 4: "Duration of time must be increased, and schools should teach essays every term."

LA 5: "I write an essay to improve my understanding of English."

SCHOOL B

LB 1: "Increase the duration and issue of choosing the topics we are not related to."

LB 2: "Time must be increased, the topic must be relevant, and it should be straightforward."

LB 3: "We will need more time and an easy topic."

LB 4: "Candidates should be taught how to write types of essay; educators can also address the issue of spelling and grammar."

LB 5: "Every week, learners must write the essay and estimate the time per month."

Most learners complained about the number of words in an essay, which they say should be reduced, while others requested an opportunity to come up with their topics and would like to be given more time.

Responses of EFAL learners suggest that schools teach different numbers of essays. The concern is that the learners are allocated different essay writing durations and various essay topics. Learners were encouraged to plan for essay writing; they enjoyed the writing experience and needed more ideas due to the stipulated 250 to 300 words essays. Writing is considered a multifunctional tool in all educational levels of teaching and learning. Bora (2023) and Sadiku (2015) argue that it is mainly through writing that one's success is measured at a higher institution. Writing is critical in determining what learners have captured in academic subjects. Improving writing skills is an ongoing process that requires consistent practice and dedication. As such, some of the tips to help learners improve their writing may include: reading regularly, writing regularly, learning grammar and punctuation rules, using active voice, getting feedback, editing and revising, practicing time management and being motivated.

4.4.2. INTERVIEWED EDUCATOR FROM SCHOOL A

The interview questions will be repeated for ease of reference.

4.4.2.1. Biographical Details

- *What is your highest academic qualification?*

In responding to the question on the highest academic qualification the educator has, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: “Bed (SPF) education”

The educator indicated that he held a degree in education and is thus qualified to teach the subject. The teacher possessed all necessary skills and knowledge to teach English FAL in Grade 10.

- *Indicate years and months of your teaching experience.*

In responding to the question on several teaching experiences, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: “Six years and six months”

The educator mentioned that he has been in the teaching field for six years and six months. Wyse, Bradford, Jones and Wolpert (2018) lamented on that a teacher is more experienced if they have more than three years in teaching. This implies that the TA 1 was more experienced in this field.

- *What is your highest English Language teaching qualification?*

In responding to the question on the highest English Language teaching qualification the educator has, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: “BED (SPF)”

TA 1 has a degree in education, majoring in English FAL. Therefore, the teacher had all the skills to help learners understand writing in all grades. The subject allocation at

school may include subjects that the teacher has not majored in. Shahali, Halim, Treagust, Won and Chandrasegaran (2017) claim that it is not the qualification that makes a teacher to be great, but the passion and skills exerted when teaching.

• *Besides Grade 10, which other grades do you teach?*

In responding to the question on other grades taught by the educator, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Grade 8, 9, 11 and 12."

TA 1 stated that besides Grade 10, he teaches Grades 8, 9, 11 and 12. In addition, TA 1 stated that he teaches English FAL, Creative Arts, Life Orientation (LO) and Geography, which shows that he is overloaded. Schools do not allocate teachers' workloads by looking at specialisation since some subjects like LO and Creative arts do not have teachers who specialise in them. Therefore, educators such as TA 1 are allocated those subjects to teach, and they become a burden to them. Big-sized classrooms are commonplace in rural African educational systems. The Department of Basic Education states that the teacher-learner ratio in either public or rural South African schools is 1:30 (Fesi & Mncube, 2021). Scholars such as West and Meier (2020) discuss this challenge in light of potential impacts in that oversized classrooms are often associated with poor performance and grade repetition. In the long run, this could impact educators' ability to deliver and do their work exceptionally well.

What is the total number of learners in Grade 10?

In responding to the question on the total number of learners in Grade 10, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "62"

TA 1 mentioned that the total number of learners in Grade 10 was 62. This indicates that he was overloaded with work and was therefore unable to perform well. The school had few educators, and all the 62 learners were in one difficult-to-manage classroom. The teacher also struggled with marking learners' informal work (Becker, 2017).

4.4.2. The essay writing exercise

Structure

- *How many essays do you give learners per term?*

In responding to the question on number of essays given to learners, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: “2”

TA 1 stated that he gave two essays to the learners. The educator claimed to have taught essay writing in class. However, the lesson aims still needed to be achieved as the learners were given two informal activities regarding essay writing. Hyland (2019) claims that many learners are no longer required to write essays at secondary school. There is a common understanding among creative writing teachers, though they differ in some respects. Ngoepe (2022) lamented on the fact that learners should be given more essays to practice in order to elevate their writing skills because educators do not give them activities that improve their writing skills.

- *What type of essays do you find common among learners?*

In responding to the question on the type of essays found common among learners, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: “Narrative essay”

Learners should be given interesting topics when writing essays, and they must be motivated to do more writing to improve writing skills. In particular, the learners in Grade 10 still need to become conversant with other types of essays, like argumentative and descriptive essays, as they still feel they need more points to motivate their motions. Odena and Burgess (2017) revealed that learners could benefit from practising writing about the results of their own experiences and expressing their feelings and experiences.

- *What is the average length of an essay?*

In responding to the question on the average length of an essay, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "From 250-300 words."

TA 1 indicated that the length of essay writing in Grade 10 should be 250-300 words, equivalent to one and a half pages. Due to the type of topics learners encounter, they need more points that will enable them to meet the required length of essay writing. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011) for English First Additional Language indicates that Grade 10 learners' essays should be at least 150-200 words, not 250-300 which is for Grade 12 learners. The required number of words in Grade 10, 11 and 12 does not count words used in mind mapping. In concurrence, Owu-Ewie and Williams (2017) assert that learners must be able to use estimated number of words per grade.

- *How should the structure of an essay be?*

In responding to the question on the structure of an essay, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "The structure should have an introduction, body and conclusion."

TA 1 mentioned that essay structures must have an introduction, body and conclusion. He never mentioned anything regarding the mind map, first draft, or second draft, and this may cause his learners to write essays that have no drafts. According to Ngubane (2021), the process approach focuses on varied classroom activities promoting language development, such as brainstorming, group discussion and rewriting. Ngubane (2021) further explains that learners are only expected to produce and submit complete responses to their writing after going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback followed by revision.

- *Are learners' ideas expressed in paragraphs?*

In responding to the question on the ideas being presented in paragraphs, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Some can but mostly fail to express their ideas fully."

TA 1 said that learners' ideas were expressed in paragraphs. Although it may lack facts and points, they should be repeated within the paragraph. The sub-topic should be explained in one paragraph as an idea. However, when learners write using their

own ideas, paragraphs end up containing mixed ideas and distract the main idea of the paragraph. The study has found that learners still need more teaching on the issue of paraphrasing so that they can write good paragraphs. Ngoepe (2022) stated that learners' work is more understandable if they are presented in paragraphs, as the ideas are easily captured. Ariyanti and Fitriana (2017) stated that cohesion and coherence are crucial in the flow of ideas within essay in that they help in the construction of readable and understandable sentences in a paragraph.

4.4.2.2.2. The actual essay writing experience.

- *Are essay topics suitable for the grade being assessed?*

In responding to the question on the suitability of the topics, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Yes"

TA 1 mentioned that essay topics were suitable for Grade 10. The question papers for the formal assessments are set at the district level by the curriculum advisors who are well trained on how to set quality papers. Curriculum advisors are also aware of the levels of setting papers and the cognitive levels to be considered for a well-set paper. Ngubane (2021) argues that giving learners topics they care deeply about makes them enthusiastic about writing. According to Ngubane (2021), interesting topics may lead to fine writing and a life dedicated to writing.

- *Are instructions to the learners unambiguous?*

In responding to the question on instruction being unambiguous to the learners, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "No, most are understood."

TA 1 indicated that all instructions provided in Paper 3, creative writing, were not unambiguous. The learners understood instructions per section and responded or chose the topics according to instructions. However, the learners may fail to meet the requirements of each section due to wrong topics selection and lack of points to motivate their writing. DBE CAPS (2011) states that questions that are presented to learners should not be difficult to comprehend but easy to be understood by those who

will be assessed. What makes learners fail essays is the fact that they do not have enough vocabulary to present their ideas since English is not their mother tongue.

- *Do learners introduce their essays appropriately?*

In responding to the question on essays being introduced appropriately by learners, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: “Not all of them, only 20% can introduce the topic correctly.”

TA 1 indicated that a few learners introduced their essays appropriately. This makes most learners essays irrelevant to the topic because some think all essay topics are generic and broad. This finding indicates that learners need help in understanding the main subject and sub-topics to construct good essays. DBE study guide for writing essays and transactional text for English (2019) indicates that good introduction for essay is a great start in writing. Learners should be taught how to write a good introductory paragraph in an essay for them to have a good flow of ideas in their essays.

- *Do you allow learners to draft essays?*

In responding to the question on allowing learners to draft their essays, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: “Yes, is one of the instructions.”

TA 1 mentioned that he allowed learners to have first-draft essays. Consequently, drafts tend to help learners edit their work. The writer goes through several drafts using a pure process approach before producing a final version. This is only sometimes possible in practical terms and as part of a general English course. It may be helpful to let learners know beforehand that you should ask them to write a second draft as a teacher. Those with access to a word processor can then use it to facilitate redrafting. In most cases learners are not encouraged to present their first draft to teachers as they do not allocate marks to it, but they forget the importance of drafting work. Teachers must teach learners on drafting for the first time in pairs or group (Rababah & Rababah, 2019). The learners need to master all writing skills and understand that writing is a process so that they can be good writers.

- *Do you allocate marks for the draft?*

In responding to the question on marks allocated to draft in essays, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "First drafts, only for the final draft."

TA 1 stated that the draft is not allocated marks on the essay marking rubric. The draft assists learners in proofreading their essays, writing and making changes where possible before submitting the final draft — which will be assessed for marks that will be used for reporting. CAPS (2011) laments on the marking of the final draft when teachers allocate marks to learner's essays. Learners read what they wrote on the first draft in building the final draft that will be allocated marks (Rababah & Rababah, 2019).

- *Do learners finish writing essays on time?*

In responding to the question on learners completing their essays in time, the educator from School A responded said:

TA 1: "Few learners cannot finish on time."

TA 1 said that Grade 10 learners finish writing essays before the stipulated time ends. Learners in the lower grades, like Grade 10, do not take their time to complete a task; they are always in a hurry to finish and go even when given enough time. They may finish early and submit the written work, but they still commit more errors when writing. As such, they need to be encouraged to proofread their work to eliminate most errors committed during writing. CAPS (2011) shows that essay writing in Grade 10 is allocated 80 minutes, the intention of which is to enable learners to brainstorm, draft, edit and come up with error-free final versions.

- *Please explain your answer above.*

TA 1: "They differ in writing pace as there are those who are slow in writing, which qualify concession."

TA 1 lamented that a few learners could take close to an hour to write an essay, but most learners finish writing within an hour because they do not proofread their texts. Many Grade 10 learners do not show that they struggle with essay writing, or they may need special concessions as they may leave the exam room early even if they did not

finish writing. As long as they cannot add answers to the questions, they walk out of the class. Education White Paper 6 (2006) states that all learners who encounter difficulties in writing should be awarded extra time in order for them to complete their assessments. However, concession is considered in Grade 12 in most schools, and this causes learners from lower grades to suffer and fail.

- *Does the essay writing task comply with CAPS? Please explain.*

In responding to the question on essays complying with CAPS, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Yes."

Regarding the results, TA 1 mentioned that the assessment essays given to the learners were suitable and in line with CAPS standards. CAPS entails that the writing and presenting process should have the following: planning/pre-writing, analysing the structure and language features of the text type, drafting, revising, editing, proof-reading, presenting language structures and conventions during the writing process looking at text type structures and language features (Ajani, 2021). The writing process further entails affirming the types of essays that one needs to write, for example, information report, explanatory, persuasive, argumentative, reflective, discursive etc. All these types of essays require the writer to be creative in narrating stories and being descriptive (Bhaw & Kriek, 2020).

4.4.2.3. Marking

- *Do the essay questions cover low, medium and higher-order thinking skills?*

In responding to the question on cognitive levels, the educator from school A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Mostly cover all order questions."

Based on the results, TB 1 agreed that essay questions covered all three cognitive levels: low, medium and high order thinking skills. The topics set at the district or province were not ambiguous, they met the needs of the learners as they did not necessarily prescribe precisely what the learners should write about, but gave different kinds of topics to cater to learners' needs.

- *Do you use the correct rubric when marking?*

In responding to the question on the use of a correct rubric for marking essays, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Yes, is a current rubric for 2022/24."

TA 1 said that they used the correct rubric provided by the Department of Education when marking 50 marks essays. The rubric marks are allocated to content, language and structure for English FAL. Thus, language structures and conventions are marked in the context of skills and as part of a systematic language development programme. This includes word choice, spelling, sentence construction, punctuation, paragraph writing, revision of grammatical structures taught in earlier grades, and introducing new language structures. A rubric is essential for learners to meet a task's learning goals, which has been supported by (Jones et al., 2016).

- *Are learners penalised for spelling mistakes?*

In responding to the question on penalising learners for spelling mistakes, the educator from School A said:

TA 1: "Yes, they are."

TA 1 stated that they got instructions from a rubric showing marks for a text with errors. The following are part of the mistakes that are looked at when marking learners' essays: word choice, spelling, sentence construction, punctuation, paragraph writing, and revision of grammatical structures. If the learners' essays are free from the listed errors, they will score high. Many spelling errors encountered in an essay makes learners not to perform well because in the DBE study guide for essay writing (2019), the rubric states that 15 marks are allocated to language, style and editing.

- *How do you tackle spelling mistakes?*

In responding to the question on tackling spelling mistakes, the educator from School A said:

TA 1: "We correct them during remedial when marking as well are corrected with a red pen on the scripts."

TA 1 stated that they do passage reading, underlining misspelt words, providing the correct spelling for mistaken ones, and then the learners do remedial work (Bhaw & Kriek, 2020). Some learners may not realise their mistakes if not forced to write corrections and identify mistakes made during essay writing. The goal of correcting their mistakes may not be achieved as most of errors may be on spelling, which learners may not know without the teacher's intervention. As stated by Katter (2019), learners sometimes use words that they are not sure of how to spell, hence asking them to correct their own spelling errors may be a difficult exercise.

- *How long does it usually take you to mark an essay?*

In responding to the question on duration taken when marking essay scripts, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Depending on the learners' handwriting and the essay length, it should be at least ten minutes or less."

TA 1 stated that it takes him more or less than ten minutes to mark one script of a learner but this depends on the handwriting. The marking depends on the educator's reading skills and teaching experience. Ahmed (2019) states that it is only what and how the learners have written in their essay that will enable the marker to flow if free from errors.

- *Do you give learners feedback?*

In responding to the question on giving feedback to learners on essay writing, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Yes, particularly during the marking process."

TA 1 stated that they give feedback even while marking learners' essays. The corrected mistakes of learners are noted on the scripts, and they will be given their scripts to see what went wrong and write corrections using the previous writing. Learners tend to be ignorant if the educator does not stress the issue of reviewing their texts. There should be a strategy that will infuse the learners to realise their mistakes. Incorporating remedial work in all writing activities was also stressed (Eno, 2019). This

suggests that learners should be allowed to do more activities to understand the content better. This is confirmed by Mitchell, Cohen, Hruschka, Talukdar, Yang, Betteridge, Carlson, Dalvi, Gardner, Kisiel and Krishnamurthy (2018) when asserting that learners learn better when given more time. They further suggested that teachers should promote language learning by lengthening classes, extending school days, participating in summer school, and assigning homework.

4.4.2.3 Errors

- *Do they use the correct tense?*

In responding to the question on learners using correct tenses in essay writing, the educator from School A responded said:

TA 1: "In some instances, yes, they do."

TA 1 indicated that most learners used present tense instead of past tense. Learners have a great challenge when it comes to parts of speech; correct tenses of the words that they hardly use. For instance, the past tense of "eat" is "ate", but learners write "ate" is a present tense sentence. Köpfer (2022) states that learners' errors in the classroom occur because educators seldom perform error analysis to investigate the underlying causes of repeated errors among learners. Similarly, Marpinjun (2015) builds on the previous argument in stating that the recurrence of errors in learning suggests inefficient management of the problem by educators where they tend to focus on simply correcting the mistake as it arises without discussing the root cause in class. This means that if an educator calls on the next learner when an error occurs, and repeat this process until one student gives a correct answer, there is a risk that the initial step in the learning process has not been taken to enable the learner to recognise the error.

4.4.2.4 EFAL Learners

- *What are the significant challenges for EFAL learners' essay writing?*

In responding to the question on significant challenges faced by learners in essay writing, the educator from School A responded in this way:

TA 1: "Grammatical errors and spelling mistakes."

TA 1 stated grammatical errors and spelling mistakes as the significant challenges faced by Grade 10 EFAL learners in essay writing. Although the challenges differed from one school to the next, they suggested that there should be a relationship between English word pronunciation and spelling. Learners are not able to achieve this because of lack of knowledge of English phonetics. Katter (2019) lamented that learners struggle to present a sequence of ideas in essay when writing essays because of punctuation errors, spelling errors, prepositions, articles, incorrect verb tenses and wrong word choice. Learners' essays had lot of mistakes in spelling and grammar. Therefore, it can be concluded that grammatical errors and spelling errors are common in essays writing (Souidi, 2020).

- Are learners able to assume responsibility for tasks in the classroom situation?

In responding to the question on learner's ability to assume responsibilities for tasks in class, the educator from School A said:

TA 1: "No"

TA 1 indicated that their learners can only assume responsibility for tasks given in the classroom when writing formal assessments of essays after they are guided on what to do. This may lead educators to encourage learners to write on a particular topic stressed by the teacher when guiding them on how to write. During the teaching of essays, educators should enforce the norm of reading instructions for learners to have a better choice of topics and not rely on teachers to tell them what should be done and when to respond to questions. Ahmed (2019) states that learners perceive writing as a difficult task that needs more time and requires attention. As such, the teacher should be available to teach and motivate learners in order to make essay writing lessons creative and engaging.

- *How do your learners react to criticism or failure?*

In responding to the question on how learners react to criticism, the educator from School A said:

TA 1: "They cannot take it as a learning curve but perceive it as demotivation."

Criticism in essay writing is when the learners are given feedback by the teacher after editing their work. The teacher highlighted key issues that learners need to revise or

improve. The educator indicated that the reactions of their learners to criticisms or failure differed. Some learners may feel demotivated and start to dislike writing as they might think they will do wrong things at all times. Nevertheless, the educator's feedback is a promising educational method for improving learner's essay writing (Latifi et al., 2021). Most researchers lament that peer feedback can improve learners writing quality, knowledge to be gained and attitude of learners in essay writing (Latifi et al., 2021). Therefore, learners should take criticism as a learning curve and be positive so that they can improve in their learning. Teachers, on the other hand, must not use feedback to hammer learners; instead, they must praise the learners in areas that they are good and motivate them to improve on areas of weakness.

4.4.3. INTERVIEWS WITH DEPARTMENTAL HEAD, SCHOOL A.

- *Which grades are you supervising?*

In responding to the question on grade supervising, the DH from School A responded in this way:

DH A1: "Grade 8 -12"

DH A1 states that he supervises Grades 8 to 12, which puts him under pressure. The DHs have a high workload because they supervise EFAL and other subjects. South African schools' DHs are loaded with supervision work due to the number of subjects offered in schools, particularly in low enrolment schools. Andriani, Kesumawati and Kristiawan (2018) concur that subject leaders can make a difference in departmental performance in the same way head teachers contribute to overall school performance.

- *Are you able to monitor all grades per week, and what will you be looking at specifically?*

In responding to the question on monitoring essay per week, the DH from School A said:

DH A1: "Yes, monitoring is done on written work given to learners and teacher's lesson preparations."

DH A1 said that he can monitor all grades on written work given to learners and teachers' lesson preparations. The monitoring of classes can be done correctly if

grades are scheduled, said DH A1. Andriani, Kesumawati and Kristian (2018) concur that “while leadership is often identified at the head of a school, the level likely to have the greatest impact on learning and teaching in the classroom is that of the curriculum middle manager”. Department of Basic Education’s vision towards realising schooling in 2025 is set to achieve 27 goals, however, none of them targets middle management for improved education. Learners, teachers and the school principal are recognised as key to realising this plan, but no mention was made about the DH and her role in knowledge production.

- *How often do you monitor essay teaching and writing?*

In responding to the question on how often the DH monitor the teaching and writing of essays, the DH from School A said:

DH A1: “Every week”

DH A1 stated that he can monitor the teaching and writing of essays every week, particularly when the ATP indicates that it is time to teach essay writing. What influences the effectiveness of a DH in the areas discussed above is the burden of routine administrative tasks that often become the dominant role that DHs perform. This appears to be mainly due to lack of time and resources (DoE, 2002). In studies done by Ali & Botha (2006) of middle managers in South Africa, it is emphasised that teaching and learning can improve extensively if DH spend much more time in supervising the teaching and learning activities that occur daily in their subject or learning area.

- *In your view, do teachers follow the guidelines for teaching essay writing? Please explain.*

In responding to the question on teachers following guidelines on how to teach essay writing, the DH from School A said:

DH A1: “Yes, they guide learners on the planning process.”

DH A1 affirmed that teachers can guide the learners in planning. However, the current researcher is of the view that teachers should stress the guidelines for writing good essays or becoming great writers because many learners need help with essay writing. Khatter (2019) elaborated the sources of mistakes made by learners in essay writing

and attributed them to ignorance of grammatical rules, lack of word memorisation, and lack of writing practices at home. The learners face challenges that are influenced by many factors such as teachers who lack interest in teaching as they are ineffective and lack of interest in reading learners' written texts (Ashraf & Bilal, 2016).

- *What should the teachers do when teaching essay writing and when assessing?*

In responding to the question on what should be done by the teachers when teaching essay writing, the DH from School A responded in this way:

DH A1: "Teachers must discuss the writing process and guidelines on how to write essays and explain the criteria to evaluate."

DH A1 mentioned that teachers must discuss the essay writing processes and guidelines on how to write essays and explain the criteria to evaluate the piece of writing. Teachers generally use a question-and-answer method to teach writing, which requires them to control classroom interactions through a nomination-response cycle. Other teachers creatively employ code-switching to explain writing concepts better. Cahyani, Courcy and Barnett (2018) define process approach as an umbrella term for many writing courses. The term captures that learners engage in their writing tasks through a cyclical approach rather than a single-shot approach.

- *How many formal essays should learners in English FAL write per term?*

In responding to the question on number of essays per term, the DH from School A responded in this way:

DH A1: "Two essays per term of not more than 300 words."

DH A1 said two essays per term should be 300 words at most. The 2023-2024 Annual Teaching Plan for Grade 10 EFAL stated that one formal essay should be administered to the learners but did not imply that learners must not be allowed to practice essay writing through informal activities. The DH was not accurate on the number of words required in Grade 10 EFAL essays, which is 150 to 200 words not 300 words. This implies that the learners are not well taught as the Departmental Head failed to give the correct information.

- *What type of topics should learners in Grade 10 write about?*

In responding to the question on the type of topics learners should write about, the DH from School A said:

DH A1: "Narrative and descriptive and other three types of topics."

DH A1 stated that all five types of essays; narrative, expository, descriptive, analytical, and argumentative, are suitable as long as learners can choose an appropriate topic for themselves and write good essays. CAPS (2011) indicates that learners should be able to respond to any topic based on all types of essays, not to be one or two-sided. They should be able to argue based on what they know and support their facts. The DBE (2019) study guide for writing essays and transactional texts shows that most learners like to tell stories that they have experienced, hence many learners in Grade 10 choose narrative essays.

- *Which writing processes should learners follow in essay writing?*

In responding to the question on writing processes learners follow, the DH from School A said:

DH A1: "Planning, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and presenting."

DH A1 stipulated the following processes as core to essay writing: planning, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and presenting the essay. The process approach model comprises eight stages (Lee, 2018). Stage one: Brainstorming; this stage implies generating ideas through thinking and discussion. This stage helps to stimulate learners to write by inspiring ideas, unlocking, creating and providing vocabulary. Stage two: Planning/Structuring; in this stage, learners exchange ideas in note form and judge the quality and usefulness of their ideas. Stage three: Mind mapping; this stage requires learners to organise ideas into a mind map, spider gram or linear form. This stage helps learners to create a hierarchical relationship of ideas, allowing them to structure their texts. Stage four: Writing the first draft; this stage requires learners to write the first draft. This is done frequently in the class in pairs or groups. Furthermore, this stage incorporates strategies developed in brainstorming. As such, learners should concentrate on getting ideas on paper without worrying about spelling or grammar. Stage five: Peer feedback; in this stage, drafts are exchanged so that

learners become the readers of each other's work. By responding as a reader, learners develop awareness that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else, thus, they can improve their drafts. Lee (2018) concurs that feedback improves the writer's drafts and develops the reader's understanding of good writing. Stage six: Editing; in this stage, drafts are returned, and improvements are made based on peer feedback. Responses to writing come from various sources: self, teacher, friends and peer response groups. Stage seven: Final draft; a final draft is written in this stage. According to Lee (2018), the final draft should be ready for publication, and the student should be satisfied with how the text reads. This will help in motivating them to write. Stage eight: Evaluation and teachers' feedback; In this stage, learners' writings are evaluated, and teachers provide feedback. The teacher's written responses are central to most English First Additional Language writing classrooms.

- *What common errors have you identified from the learner's work?*

In responding to the question on common errors committed by learners, the DH from School A responded in this way:

DH A1: "Concord, spelling, tense and confusing introduction or conclusion."

DH A1 said that learners commit errors on concord, spelling and tenses. The participants also indicated that the learners' introductions and conclusions are sometimes confusing. The wrong tense is also identified as is incorrect. For example, "All my friends and I we put the drinks on the table". In this sentence, the learner seemed not to be aware of the correct past tense of the word "put" and used "put". The learners have the habit of spelling according to how they pronounce words, and this leads to wrong spelling (Afrin, 2016). The learners will either add or leave letters of the words. For example, using a "balloon" instead of a "balloon". According to Nyang'au Benard (2017), memorisation of the spelling can help learners to acquire good spelling.

- *What challenges do educators face when marking learners' essays using rubrics?*

In responding to the question on challenges faced by educators when marking essays, the DH from school A responded in this way:

DH A1: “Some educators are unable to use the correct grading to the students as they may not have understood the set of criteria to be used.”

DH A1 stated that educators are unable to use the correct grading for the learners’ work as they may not have understood the set of criteria. Teachers who do not read the learners’ works may not see what is written, and thus give incorrect marks. The learners are not doing well on papers one and two. Therefore, educators award marks to learners on creative writing to boost their performance. This means that the educators know their DH’s weaknesses of doing shadow marking when moderating papers. The DBE (2019) study guide for writing essays and transactional texts indicates that rubrics fasten marking and scoring learners in creative writing. Therefore, educators need to follow all the criterion indicated on rubrics in order to give learners accurate marks.

- *What should be done to strengthen essay writing in schools?*

In responding to the question on what should be done to strengthen essay writing, the DH from School A said:

DH A1: “Schools must have essay writing competitions.”

DH A1 stated that the learners should be given a chance to participate in essay writing competitions. The teachers should provide learners with much writing but not make every assignment count as a formal assessment. Learners’ texts are produced for real reader, but often respond to content without seeking to correct errors. Thus, learners must be given enough class time to brainstorm on a topic after being given an assignment. Furthermore, teachers should encourage a variety of prewriting and planning strategies. Lack of motivation is another challenge that should be eliminated among learners because it may fuel lack of interest in writing and the subsequent withdrawal in participation. Motivation is essential in improving learners’ learning results (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017).

- *As the DH, do you use proper moderation in essay writing?*

In responding to the question on whether the DH is doing proper moderation in essay writing, the DH from School A responded said:

DH A1: “Yes, a sample of 10% is remarked, and feedback is given to the teachers.”

DH A1 mentioned that 10% of the marked scripts get remarked, and feedback is given to the teachers. The DHs should be given enough time to moderate because most teachers drop the learner's scripts on the eleventh hours for moderation and capturing. Both agreed that they do a great job in moderation. This means they are unprepared to be assisted in challenges they might face. It seems as if many subject teachers question their Heads of Departments' knowledge of the subject. National Protocol for assessment (Grade R-12), indicates that moderation should ensure that the quality and standard of the School Based Assessment, as contemplated in Chapter 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, should be met from Grade 4 to Grade 12 (DBE, 2011).

- *How do you support your English FAL educators and their identified weaknesses?*

In responding to the question on how the DH supports educators on identified weaknesses, the DH from School A said:

DH A1: "Challenges in marking essays are noted, and feedback will be given to the teachers. A mini workshop will be held to support each other as a team."

DH A1 stated the challenges in marking identified essays and feedback given to the teachers. A mini workshop will be held to support each other as a team. Schools must capacitate teachers within the district. They must rely on the districts and provinces to train them (Hussein, Hassan & Nassef, 2019).

4.4.4. INTERVIEWED DEPARTMENTAL HEAD SCHOOL B

- *Which grades are you supervising?*

In responding to the question on grade supervising, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "Grade 8 to 12"

DH B1 supervised Grade 8 to 12 in their school. The DHs have a high workload because they supervise EFAL and other subjects. If a school has one Head of Department, the DH must supervise all the subjects within the school because other unappointed Acting DHs tend to complain and not do their tasks diligently. Sammons

et al. (1996); Harris et al. (1996a & b); Harris (1998); Busher and Harris (1999); Golele (2022) concur that subject leaders can make a difference to departmental performance in the same way head teachers contribute to overall school performance.

- *Are you able to monitor all grades per week, and what will you be looking at specifically?*

In responding to the question on monitoring essay per week, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "The school is big; it is not easy to monitor all classes every week."

DH B1 stated that the school is big, and she cannot monitor all the grades weekly. This implies that it is not possible to do thorough monitoring in a week. Lipscombe, Tindall-Ford and Lamanna (2023) concur that while leadership is often identified at the head of a school, the level that is likely to have the greatest impact on learning and teaching in the classroom is that of the curriculum middle manager. Among the 27 goals in the Department of Basic Education's vision towards realising schooling in 2025, none of the goals includes targeting middle management for improved education.

- *How often do you monitor essay teaching and writing?*

In responding to the question on how often the DH monitor the teaching and writing of essays, the DH from school B said:

DH B1: "Once in a month"

DH B1 mentioned that she can monitor essay writing once a month. What affects the effectiveness of a Departmental Head in the areas discussed above where it counts (teaching and learning) is the burden of routine administrative tasks that often become the dominant role that DH perform. In studies done by Ali & Botha (2006); Golele (2022) of middle managers in South Africa, the authors emphasised that teaching and learning can improve extensively if the DH spends much more time in supervising the teaching and learning activities that occur daily in their subject or learning area.

- *In your view, do teachers follow the guidelines for teaching essay writing? Please explain.*

In responding to the question on teachers following guidelines on how to teach essay writing, the DH from school B said:

DH B1: "Most of them do, except one or two."

DH B1 stated that most teachers do, except one or two. Teachers should be more relaxed about the guidelines for writing good essays or becoming great writers, as they encounter many learners who still need help with writing. Choi, Hickman, Monahan and Schwarcz (2021) argue that it is not the number of activities given to the learners but what and how learners are taught on how to write essays.

- *What should the teachers do when teaching essay writing and assessing accordingly?*

In responding to the question on what should be done by the teachers when teaching essay writing, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "Educators should show learners examples of good essay and some of the educators are new and not experienced."

DH B1 stated that some educators are still new and need to gain experience in essay writing. They need training. Teachers dominantly use a process approach to writing, which aligns with the curriculum. Teachers generally use a question-and-answer method to teach writing, and this method requires teachers to control classroom interactions through a nomination-response cycle. Other teachers creatively employ code-switching to explain writing concepts better. As such, the teachers should teach the learners to brainstorm based on a particular topic. The process approach model comprises eight stages (Choi, Hickman, Monahan & Schwarcz, 2021) Stage one (Brainstorming): Generating ideas by brainstorming and discussion. This will help to stimulate learners to write through inspiring ideas, unlocking, creating and providing vocabulary. Stage two (Planning/Structuring): Learners exchange ideas in note form and judge the quality and usefulness of their ideas. Stage three (Mind mapping): learners organise ideas into a mind map, spider gram, or linear form. This stage helps create a hierarchical relationship of ideas, allowing learners to structure their texts.

Stage four (Writing the first draft): learners write the first draft. This is done frequently in the class in pairs or groups. This stage incorporates strategies developed in brainstorming. Learners should concentrate on getting ideas down on paper without worrying about spelling or grammar. Stage five (Peer feedback): Drafts are exchanged so that learners become the readers of each other's work. By responding as a reader, learners develop awareness that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else, and thus, they can improve their drafts. Feedback improves the writers' drafts and develops the reader's understanding of good writing (Choi, Hickman, Monahan & Schwarcz, 2021) Stage six (Editing): Drafts are returned, and improvements are made based on peer feedback. Responses to writing come from various sources: self, teacher, friends and peer response groups. 17 Stage seven (Final draft): A final draft is written. The final draft should be ready for publication, and the learner should be satisfied with how the piece reads. This will help in motivating them to write. Stage eight (Evaluation and teachers' feedback): learners' writings are evaluated, and teachers provide feedback.

- *How many formal essays should learners in English FAL write per term?*

In responding to the question on number of essays per term, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "It varies per term, but a maximum is two."

DH B1 said two essays per term should be at most 300 words. The 2023-2024 Annual Teaching Plan Grade 10 English FAL stated that one formal essay should be administered to the learners but did not imply that learners must not be allowed to practice essay writing informally.

- *What type of topics should learners in Grade 10 write about?*

In responding to the question on the type of topics learners should write about, the DH from school B said:

DH B1: "All types of essay writing."

DH B1 stated that all five types of essays, i.e., narrative, expository, descriptive, analytical and argumentative, are suitable as long as learners can choose an appropriate topic for themselves where they can write good essays. CAPS (2011)

indicates that learners should be able to respond to any topic based on all types of essays, not to be one or two-sided. They should be able to argue based on what they know and be able to support their facts.

- *Which writing processes should learners follow in essay writing?*

In responding to the question on writing processes, learners follow the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "Planning and editing, use of grammar."

DH B1 stipulated the following processes: planning, editing and the use of grammar. The Process Approach Model comprises eight stages (Choi, Hickman, Monahan & Schwarcz, 2021) stage one (Brainstorming): Generating ideas by brainstorming and discussion. This will help to stimulate learners to write through inspiring ideas, unlocking, creating and providing vocabulary. Stage two (Planning/Structuring): learners exchange ideas in note form and judge the quality and usefulness of their ideas. Stage three (Mind mapping): learners organise ideas into a mind map, spider gram, or linear form. This stage helps create a hierarchical relationship of ideas, allowing learners to structure their texts. Stage four (Writing the first draft): learners write the first draft. This is done frequently in the class in pairs or groups. This stage incorporates strategies developed in brainstorming. Learners should concentrate on getting ideas down on paper without worrying about spelling or grammar. Stage five (Peer feedback): Drafts are exchanged so that learners become the readers of each other's work. By responding as a reader, learners develop awareness that a writer is producing something to be read by someone else, and thus, they can improve their drafts. Feedback improves the writers' drafts and develops the reader's understanding of good writing (Choi, Hickman, Monahan & Schwarcz, 2021). Stage six (Editing): Drafts are returned, and improvements are made based on peer feedback. Responses to writing come from various sources: self, teacher, friends and peer response groups.

- *What common errors have you identified from the learner's work?*

In responding to the question on common errors committed by learners, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "Spelling errors, wrong words and punctuation."

DH B1 mentioned incorrect spelling, wrong words and punctuation. One learner wrote a sentence, “I make my dreams”, which is inaccurate, instead of “I make my dreams”. So, the learner is unaware of the correct past tense of the word “put” and uses “putted”. The learners have the habit of spelling according to their pronunciation, which will lead to wrong spelling (Afrin, 2016). The learners will either add or leave letters of the words. For example, using a “balloon” instead of a “balloon”, according to (Nyang’au Benard, 2018), memorisation of the spelling will help the learners to have good spelling.

- *What challenges do educators face when marking learners’ essays using rubrics?*

In responding to the question on challenges faced by educators when marking essays, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: “Some learners don’t have good handwriting.”

DH B1 mentioned that some learners need better handwriting. Teachers who do not read the learners may not see what is written and give incorrect marks. The learners need to do better on papers one and two; educators award marks to learners on creative writing to boost their performance, which means that the educators know their DH’s weaknesses of doing shadow marking when moderating papers.

- *What should be done to strengthen essay writing in schools?*

In responding to the question on what should be done to strengthen essay writing, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: “Since it is a process, learners be given enough time to go through each process/ stage and remedial be given immediately.”

DH B1 mentioned that since writing is a process, they should be given enough time to go through each process or stage and remediate it immediately. The teachers should provide learners with much writing but not make every assignment count as a formal assessment. Read some learners’ texts as a “real” reader, responding to content without seeking to correct it. Lack of motivation is another challenge faced by the learners. If the learners are not motivated, they might not be interested in proceeding

with their learning process. Motivation is important in improving learners' learning results (Gbollie & Keamu, 2017).

- *As the DH, do you use proper moderation in essay writing?*

In responding to the question on whether the DH is doing proper moderation in essay writing, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "Yes"

DH B1 mentioned that teachers' marked scripts are remarked on, and feedback is given to the teachers. The DHs should be given enough time to moderate as most teachers drop the learner's scripts on the eleven hours for moderation and capturing. Both agreed that they do a great job in moderation. This means they are unprepared to be assisted in challenges they might face. Another tension that DH's face in many South African Schools alluded to by (Vermaak, 2020), is that some large multi-subject departments can be seen as primarily an administrative convenience and may be described as 'confederate departments' subject areas are allied together but share little in common.

- *How do you support your English FAL educators and their identified weaknesses?*

In responding to the question on how the DH supports educators on identified weaknesses, the DH from school B responded in this way:

DH B1: "Encourage regular discussions and sharing."

DH B1 mentioned that they encourage regular discussions and sharing as colleagues. Teachers in the same phase should have meetings to share challenges and good practices within a school and have strategies to enhance performance.

4.4.5. Interviewed Senior Education Specialist (SES).

- *Which grades are you supervising?*

In responding to the question on grade supervising, the SES from Sekhukhune South responded in this way:

SES: "Grade 10-12"

The senior education specialist under Sekhukhune South District is appointed to support Grade 1 to 12 English FAL; he has three other colleagues, each of which is responsible for four out of 16 circuits. Therefore, he supervises 46 schools.

- *Are you able to monitor all grades per week, and what will you be looking at specifically?*

In responding to the question on monitoring essay per week, the SES from Sekhukhune South Districts said:

SES: "No, I can monitor 10 to 15 schools monthly."

SES stated that he can monitor and support more or fewer than 15 schools in a month if they still need to get competing programmes from the Department of Education. DBE (2011) stipulated that a subject Senior Education Specialists must support an underperforming subject once per month to improve performance. The curriculum advisors are working under pressure due to the number of schools assigned and they cannot visit all schools in a month.

- *How often do you monitor essay teaching and writing?*

In responding to the question on how often the DH monitor the teaching and writing of essays, the SES said:

SES: "Two schools during formal writing of essay or Paper 3."

SES stated that only two schools are monitored on the day of writing formal essays; the two schools monitored are to be scheduled due to the writing of formal activities on the same day in the district. The SES must therefore spend 1 hour in each school. This implies that monitoring of learners' writing essays is compromised to cover a certain number of schools per day.

- *In your view, do teachers follow the guidelines for teaching essay writing? Please explain.*

In responding to the question on teachers following guidelines on how to teach essay writing, the SES said:

SES: “No”

The SES said that the teacher must follow the processes of teaching the learners how to write a good essay. This means that learners need to be trained to decide on the purpose and audience of a text. They need to learn how to brainstorm ideas and produce the first draft, and to read the draft critically to get feedback. Furthermore, learners must be taught how to edit and proofread the draft and make a well-designed final version of the essay. For this to be achieved, educators need to be trained to revive their skills in essay teaching. DBE (2011) indicates that educators should guide and teach learners on how to write better essays.

- *What should teachers do when teaching and assessing essay writing?*

In responding to the question on what should be done by the teachers when teaching essay writing, the SES said:

SES: “They should teach learners to choose the correct topics, plan, brainstorm and proofread their writings.”

The curriculum advisor lamented that Grade 10 educators should teach learners how to choose suitable topics, plan for the essay using mind maps, brainstorm and read what they have written. Many learners do not write good essays because they need to follow the writing procedures; they write without interest of producing great essays with good facts and few errors. The guideline for teaching and writing essay and transactional texts (2018) states that learners can teach each other on issues of writing and edit other’s work as they may be interacting and correcting each other. Thus, CAPS (2011) mentioned that educators should develop their learner’s writing methods so that they can be lifelong independent writers.

- *How many formal essays should English FAL learners write in a term, and what is the length?*

In responding to the question on number of essays per term, the SES from Sekhukhune South responded in this way:

SES: “One per term.”

The SES indicated that learners should be given only one essay per term without mentioning the required length. The learners, particularly in Grade 10, need time to write various essays. Even though they may not be allocated marks, they need to be trained on how to stay focused during essay writing in preparation for formal evaluation. CAPS (2011) states that Grade 10 English FAL learners should write an essay that will consist of 150 to 200 words. Most educators use 250 to 300 words to Grade 10, which may agreeably assist learner’s vocabulary and motivate them to be able to creative writers, although too overwhelming for their ages and cognitive levels.

- *What type of topics should Grade 10 learners write about?*

In responding to the question on the type of topics learners should write about, the SES said:

SES: “Any of the topics on the question papers to show their writing abilities.”

The respondent indicated learners should write about any topic given in the paper, as long as the topic is age-appropriate and endorsed by Paper 3 moderators. Most Grade 10 learners write essays based on their experiences because they like to tell stories. Educators should read through learners’ essays with understanding as others may write about bad past experiences where they may still need help from others. Study guide for writing essays and transactional text (2019) shows that a narrative essay should have story line and be convincing. As such, learners must use past tense and capture the reader’s attention by writing great paragraphs using rhetoric style.

- *Which writing processes should learners follow in essay writing?*

In responding to the question on writing processes learners follow, the SES from Sekhukhune South responded in this way:

SES: “Planning.”

Planning has been identified as the most critical process that should be followed. However, as the SES did not mention, brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing and proof reading, the learners can choose a topic they feel comfortable with but not the writing process properly. In that case, learners are may not be able to produce sub-

topics nor to form paragraphs that discuss one idea. Other learners may go to the extent of not writing mind maps and just write without planning. Such learners are likely to not reach the expected number of words and length of the essay. Rashtchi and Porker (2020) state that planning is unique because it involves generating ideas, exchanging opinions and developing new thoughts about the raised topics that may positively affect learners' performance. Rababah and Rababah (2019) concur by mentioning that planning is seen as part of problem solving, generating innovative ideas and preparing the state of mind to solve problems by free association of different ideas.

- *What common errors have you identified from the learner's work?*

In responding to the question on common errors committed by learners, the SES from Sekhukhune South responded in this way:

SES: "Mostly spelling and tenses."

SES mentioned spelling errors and the use of wrong tenses as some of the common errors in learner's writing. Usually, most learners choose topics under narrative essays wherein they are expected to present their essays in the past tense, but they mix the tenses. Sometimes, the issue of spelling is a great challenge due to technology used on smartphones where wrong words are automatically corrected without learners putting effort into finding the correct spelling for the words. As such, poor spelling is another cause of anxiety for learners in learning writing skills (Nyang'au Benard, 2018). Having good spelling skills can lead to positive learning of writing skills. If the learners struggle with spelling, it will hold them back from moving forward. The learners have the habit of spelling according to their pronunciation, which often leads to wrong spelling (Afrin, 2016).

- *What challenges do educators face when marking learner's essays using rubrics?*

In responding to the question on challenges faced by educators when marking essays, the SES from Sekhukhune South said:

SES: "Most educators mark off learners' scripts without a thorough reading of the learners' work due to a high number of learners assigned."

SES mentioned that most educators mark off learners' scripts without a thorough reading of the learners' work due to a high number of learners assigned in the grade. Sometimes, teachers cannot perform quality assessment of learners' work when they are hurried by the Department of Education in need of reporting to parents. Therefore, learners may not be given the proper feedback and the marks they deserve as the marking may not be correct. Equally, marks may also even be given to undeserving learners. Marking must not commence when schools are about to close. The educators must mark learners' work immediately after learners finish writing. On the other hand, most educators fail to score learners correctly using rubric. DBE (2011) stated that for creative writing, a rubric should be used in assessing learners' work. Marks should be awarded accordingly for different parts of the essay. For example, content and planning must be marked out of 30 marks, language and style out of 15 marks and 5 marks for structure of the essay.

- *What should be done to strengthen essay writing in schools?*

In responding to the question on what should be done to strengthen essay writing, the SES from Sekhukhune South responded in this way:

SES: "Teach process writing."

SES laments the teaching process of writing to the learners by educators. The educators need to have enough time to teach the writing process and even give essay topics to the learners without enforcing the issue of marks obtained. Learners can be encouraged to write essays without judgement of how many marks they will obtain; they should be encouraged to showcase the writing skills that they have grasped. The study guide for writing essays and transactional text states that writer's process should have the purpose and audience of a text designed, be able to brainstorm ideas using mind maps or list, organise own ideas, read draft and edit, and produce a well-designed final version (DBE, 2019).

- *Does the DH do proper moderation in essay writing? Please explain.*

In responding to the question of whether the DH is doing proper moderation in essay writing, the SES said:

SES: "No."

The senior education specialist stated that DHs need to be use proper moderation as most do shadow marking of following educators' ticks, and there will be no difference in mark allocation between the teacher and DH. The DHs should be given enough time to moderate as most teachers drop the learner's scripts at the eleventh hour for moderation and capturing. The DH agreed that he does a great job in moderation. This simply means they are not prepared to be assisted in challenges they might face. Another tension that DHs face many South African schools is that some large multi-subject departments can be seen as primarily an administrative convenience and may be described as 'confederate departments' because subject areas are allied together but share little in common with individual subject areas, creating their own identities that may be in conflict (Sani, Zainal & Hakim, 2023). It seems as if many subject teachers question their Heads of Departments' knowledge of the subject. "The views on subject knowledge and pedagogy held by their Heads of Departments are then of major concern to subject staff (Sani, Zainal & Hakim, 2023). Departmental Heads should provide the necessary support and expertise to subject teachers. For this to be valuable, DHs have to be subject experts themselves. Furthermore, DHs should be appointed on the strength of their subject expertise, and they must provide opportunities for teachers to improve their subject and pedagogic knowledge (Sani, Zainal & Hakim, 2023).

- *How do you support your English FAL educators and their identified weaknesses?*

In responding to the question on how the DH supports educators on identified weaknesses, the SES from Sekhukhune South responded in this way:

SES: "Teach them how to mark and use a rubric."

The SES lamented that educators should be provided with training for marking essays using rubrics. This is because educators cannot award marks accurately using the rubric; but sometimes, this might be because of the unwillingness to read learners' writings. Moreover, the high enrolment plays a role in deterring teachers from using rubrics. The Department of Education's Roles of Curriculum Advisors document indicates that subject specialists play an integral role in building educators based in schools in totality (DBE, 2017). Key to the areas that teachers need support in are on the issues of lesson planning, classroom management, teacher behaviour and

professional development (DBE, 2017). We have educators who teach subjects that they are not qualified to teach, but are forced to teach it due to lack of human resources. The subject advisor should visit an underperforming subject teacher that may have obtained less than 30% at least once in a month to check completion of Annual Teaching Plan, monitor written work and do audit. The subject advisor should also evaluate the availability of all necessary resources required for teaching and learning, and supply them in cases of any lack and shortage.

4.4.6. DOCUMENT OBSERVATION IN SCHOOLS.

Documentation is taking observation notes on what you observe the materials that are used at school in order to support teaching and learning.

1. Do the teacher have the following?
 - CAPS Policy Document Grade 10-12.

During my observation, these were the findings:

TA 1 had the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement document for EFAL FET. However, the educator seemed not to utilise the document more fully as they had to look for it when the researcher requested to see it. This tells us that the implementation will not be followed until later. Sani, Zainal and Hakim (2023) describe a curriculum as a document that outlines structured philosophies, goals and objectives of a specific academic objective. Consequently, the main goal of the curriculum is to attain academic performance, particularly on learners' reading and writing skills. CAPS encourages the independent writing of various texts to cultivate learners' competencies in reading different materials. In the study of Sibanda (2016), it was claimed that South African teachers are deprived of sufficient in-service training in CAPS, hence the high failure rate in Physical Sciences. As such, to implement English teaching effectively, teachers need to have a good base knowledge of the subject as well as the application of different skills of imparting knowledge to the learners. For instance, CAPS curriculum encourages teachers to give learners a chance to share their ideas and engage in practical activities using authentic skills.

- Abridged Section Four CAPS.

TA 1 needed to learn what the abridged section four CAPS document is and what it replaces. Therefore, this implied that the teacher was not using it, but because the curriculum in the district provides schools with annual teaching plans and assessment programmes, the teacher was not bothered to refer to it because ATPs replace certain aspects in the CAPS document. This also indicates that the abridged section four CAPS mediation meetings were less effective in the district than hoped for. Under the abridged CAPS section 4, the Programme of Assessment states that learners should write one essay in terms one and two for formal assessment. On the other hand, Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) builds on previous curriculum; as a result, it still follows the same processes and procedures as the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 (Pinnock, 2017). There has been much debate and discussion about Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) being removed, however, OBE is a method of teaching, not a curriculum. It is the curriculum that has changed (been repackaged) and not the teaching method. In National Curriculum Statement (NSC) and CAPS mention is made of the curriculum conveying the knowledge, skills and values that should be communicated in a post-apartheid South Africa. They both contain a similar list of values, which include social justice, human rights, environmental awareness and respect for people from diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Teachers seem to be more interested in finishing the content rather than developing learning as part of curriculum implementation.

- Textbook English FAL.

The study found that TA 1 had various textbooks that she used to teach essay writing. However, the challenge was that she needed help identifying a good textbook for teaching essay writing. The teacher mentioned that there is shortage of textbooks in schools, which according to her, is a challenge that worsen every year because some learners do not return the books at the end of the year. Resultantly, the schools make parents pay for the lost textbooks, but they do not use the funds to replace them. Some textbooks issued to the learners are worn out and need replacement. The learners need better textbooks to attract and encourage them to read more. Therefore, if the textbooks are not in good condition, they may not stimulate reading interest among learners. Shanghai, Wang and Fan (2021) found that in German secondary schools,

learners used textbooks mainly for solving tasks and problems, consolidation, knowledge acquisition and for practicing activities related to mathematical interests. In their study of the textbook use of 206 Chinese and 161 British secondary school learners, Shanghai, Wang and Fan (2021) discovered that in most British and Shanghai secondary schools, learners used textbooks mostly for homework and test preparation. The amount of time learners spent reading textbooks was significantly less than the number of hours necessary for the course.

- 2023/2024 Annual Teaching Plan.

Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) are comprehensive documents that outline the key concepts and skills that need to be taught during a school year. These plans provide a roadmap for the delivery of the national curriculum, allowing teachers to plan their lessons and activities effectively. The ATPs are essential for effective learning and teaching. They provide a roadmap for teachers and outline the topics that need to be taught on specific days throughout the school year. By having a clear plan, teachers can ensure better curriculum coverage and make the most of their teaching time. This study found that School A received the ATPs at the beginning of the year. However, although the educator had the ATP, it was not convincing that she followed it to the latter because she used previous question papers to treat activities. The educator seemed to teach what they want to teach without following the ATP, making learners incompetent in most aspects of EFAL.

Does the teacher plan for the lessons in English FAL?

Lesson plans serve as a compass that guides teachers in delivering organised and meaningful instruction. They ensure that essential skills, learning objectives, and curriculum components are covered. Moreover, well-structured lesson plans make it seamless for relief teachers to take over the classroom if needed, maintaining instructional continuity. Nonetheless, it was found that the educator did not plan for their lessons in Grade 10 EFAL. The teacher downloaded lesson plans from Free State Province and used them without updating them. The current researcher is therefore of the view that the lesson plans need to be updated as the other content is no longer taught in term 2 and should be tailored to cater for different types of learners that exist in classroom.

Does the teacher follow the writing process in developing writing skills?

The writing process is a learner centred approach in which learner's expectations, goals, learning methods, skills and knowledge are considered (Durga & Rao, 2018). The study found that the educator followed the writing processes when teaching essay writing. However, the learners needed more time to learn and gain skills. The teacher must create time and conducive space for the learners to understand the writing processes. When guiding learners to choose a topic, teachers should give more detailed advice and lead learners to write by giving ways, starting from choosing topic, making design, drafting, revising and editing. Similar to Elsulukiyyah and Aisyag (2019), this study found that learners' essay topics were not challenging and out of date, which made the writing to be less interesting for learners.

The use of rubric provided by the Department of Basic Education when marking essays.

Rubric is multidimensional sets of scoring guidelines that can be used to provide consistency in evaluating student work. It spells out scoring criteria so that multiple teachers would arrive at the same score or grade when using the same rubric for a learners' essays (Edutopia, 2018). The two schools need to use rubrics effectively as required; they mark off the learners' scripts to boost their performance. The Senior Education Specialist mentioned that only 50% of educators in the district follow the rubric. However, the other 50% still need to be encouraged follow and use the provided rubrics. The history of rubrics follows the proliferation of compulsory education and learning standards. An increasing emphasis on formative assessment has further encouraged the adoption of rubrics within secondary and higher education classrooms, both in North America and East Asia (Ragupathi & Lee, 2020).

Does the school timetable comply with the stipulated norm time?

The schools complied with the stipulated norm time for EFAL as they allocated one hour per subject and five hours per week. English as the First Additional Language was allocated 5 periods per week in both schools. As such, 4.5 hours were allocated to the subject as stipulated in the national policy about the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12. The schools further allocated an extra 30 minutes to English FAL on their timetable as they do not have

30 minutes periods. This imply that educators may not be behind in content coverage as given extra time weekly.

Can the teacher spend the allocated time teaching essay writing?

The study revealed that teachers did not have lesson plans that show required information about teaching essay writing. Also, the learners' activity books in one school did not have informal written essays. However, in the other school, the learners were given an essay writing activity although not all learners wrote the activity. More even, the essay activity was not marked. As a result, the learners were not able to see their mistakes during informal activity. The teachers normally teach writing only when learners are about to write formal essays. Mailula (2022) lamented on teachers focusing more on CAPS and ATP when it comes to teaching essay writing.

Is the teacher supported fully in teaching essay writing by the mentor?

The study revealed that the DHs did not support educators. The study further revealed that the teachers were not provided with in-service skills development training and meetings to discuss EFAL content. Furthermore, it was found that the DHs did shadow marking when moderating learners' essays by agreeing with all educators' marks when conducting moderation. There was also no evidence of mentors giving one-on-one feedback to the EFAL educators. Resultantly, the teachers had to do trial and error in their teaching due to lack of sufficient support. The DBE (2011) stated that educators may be trained within the school by Departmental Heads, or the curriculum advisors may train them on the skills that they lack in teaching. Writing skills is very critical to learners because they communicate through written texts in educational context and is used a tool for measuring learners' performance (Ahmed, 2019).

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter presented, analysed and interpreted data collected qualitatively on EFAL Grade 10 learners' errors in essay writing. In line with the research objectives, the essay writing errors committed by Grade10 learners in EFAL rural schools were identified and classified. The chapter further presented and interpreted the teachers' perceptions towards the errors that learners commit and their perceived methods of improving learners' development of essay writing skills and the subsequent performance thereof.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on two main aspects: conclusions and recommendations. Its purpose is to review the study's objectives and summarise the key findings. The first part presents the conclusions drawn from the study, while the second part provides suggestions for further research.

5.2 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The study was conducted to analyse the errors in essay writing made by Grade 10 EFAL FET learners in rural schools within the Sekhukhune South District, Limpopo Province. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To identify the essay writing errors made by Grade 10 learners in EFAL in rural schools.
- To interpret how EFAL Grade 10 educators and Departmental Heads perceive the essay writing errors made by learners.
- To classify the essay writing errors made by Grade 10 learners in EFAL in rural schools.
- To recommend approaches to essay writing that can assist Grade 10 EFAL learners in rural schools in avoiding errors.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS.

This section presents the data collected through interviews using a checklist for essay errors conducted in four selected schools. Interviews were carried out with learners and later with educators. Each of the ten learners from the two schools was asked the same set of questions, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. The researcher began by analysing the learners' responses and then proceeded to the educators' responses.

5.3.1. ESSAY WRITING CHALLENGES.

Findings on essay writing experienced by Grade 10 EFAL learners were explored through interviews. The findings have shown that learners are not aware of how many

essays they should write in a term and the duration that they should take when writing essay. They also did not know the significance of writing first draft, which was a result of lack of knowledge about the steps involved in the process writing approach. For instance, the issue of planning seemed not too important to learners as they did not see the reason behind planning. Learners from the two schools acknowledged specific errors they made during essay writing, such as spelling, punctuation, noun, pronoun, preposition, word order, tense and paragraphing. They also indicated that they enjoy writing essays as they can express themselves. Literature on essay writing challenges experienced by learners share the same sentiment with the findings of this study that learners are challenged to write essay in an organised manner (Ahmed, 2018). They struggle to organise their creative writing in a coherent manner.

The educator had a Bachelor of Education Degree with English as a major subject. However, the educator was unable to provide the correct length for essay in Grade 10. The educator mentioned that the length of Grade 10 learners' essays should be 250-300 words instead of 150-200. In addition, the teacher administered essay to learners in preparation for formal assessment and did not give enough essays writing to the learners. The issue of process writing is not attended to by the teachers. Therefore, learners were not taught on how to write a good essay as the educator's focus was not on creative writing. The teacher did not encourage learners to follow the process writing approach when writing, hence, most of the learners' essay were not edited and were full of errors.

The Departmental Heads did not monitor writing of essays in the investigated schools. They only evaluated if lessons and activities that the teacher gave to learners were compliant with the Annual Teaching Plan. Therefore, the focus was not on the learners' ability to write effective essays in Grade 10 nor on the elimination of the challenges that learners experience as part of Grade 12 preparation. The DHs, therefore, did not encourage the issue of peer marking or feedback so to make the learners to be aware of their mistakes before they are assessed formally.

The study revealed that the curriculum advisors were not fully supporting educators and Departmental Heads in schools because they were not able to monitor schools on a monthly basis to assist with essay writing. Furthermore, it was found that Educators were supported on essay writing in term one because there is a task for

essay writing in the first term, however, the support was not provided in term two. Their workshops are not meant to address writing essay alone.

5.3.2. OBSERVATION OF DOCUMENTS IN SCHOOL.

The study revealed that the educator had the CAPS document for English FAL Grade 10-12, but the document was not read concurrently with abridged CAPS section four. As such, it was concluded that the standard and procedures for essay writing were not followed as the educator was not able to give the exact number of words or the length of an essay in Grade 10. The educator mentioned that Grade 10 learners must write essays of 300 words, but this is the standard for Grade 12 learners. This defied the CAPS (2011) stipulation that Grade 10 learners should write an essay of 150 to 200 words.

The study revealed that the teacher used various textbooks used for teaching Grade 10 learners essay writing skills. However, the usage by the teacher in class with the learners was found to not be enough to equip learners with the necessary essay writing skills. The researcher found that the teacher fully followed the ATP. However, the researcher suggests that the teacher should not just follow what the ATP says because the learners were not able to comprehend nor follow essay writing steps. As such, learners need to be taught essay writing skills in different way than what is prescribed in the ATP's. The study found that there was no lesson planning among educators, meaning that teachers had no objectives and aims of conducting the lessons. The educators could not evaluate whether the learners have grasped what was supposed to be learnt due to lack of planning. To further the findings more, the researcher found that the process writing was not taught to learners and that assessment rubrics for essay writing were not utilised, although provided by the DBE.

School A's timetable did not comply with the stipulated time by DBE because extra 30 minutes were offered to EFAL lessons instead of 4,5 hours per week. Due to more time and the inability of the educator to use the time productively, the teacher taught other content other than essay writing. On the other hand, the Departmental Head did not support the teacher fully on creative essay writing teaching techniques. When moderating the learners' essay activities, the DH followed the comments made by the teacher when marking and gave same marks as the teacher. Therefore, there was no constructive feedback provided by the DH to the teacher as part of development.

5.3.3. CAUSES OF LEARNERS' CHALLENGES IN ESSAY WRITING.

The challenges faced by Grade 10 learners in essay writing can be attributed to inadequate instruction on essay writing techniques. Many learners were only taught how to complete formal writing tasks without being exposed to interactive learning methods or given opportunities to practice writing independently. Additionally, learners seemed to lack an understanding of the writing process, such as planning before writing, and struggled to follow ideas presented in a mind map. Teachers also tended to overlook the importance of allowing learners to draft, revise, edit and proofread their work in the classroom. This aligns with the findings of Ratnaningsih and Aziza (2019) who noted that learners struggle to translate their thoughts and emotions onto paper.

5.3.4. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ESSAY WRITING.

The research indicates that learners need to be effectively instructed on how to write essays. Teachers should provide learners with notes and explain the steps involved in essay writing process. It is crucial for teachers to outline the writing process in the classroom so that learners can follow all the necessary steps to produce a coherent and error-free essays. In this study, learners agreed that, if implemented, incorporation of mind mapping and feedback techniques during the prewriting stage could significantly enhance their essay writing skills, particularly in terms of content, organisation and vocabulary. In addition, it is clear from the findings that learners struggled with vocabulary and require instruction on language awareness due to lack of exposure to extensive reading materials. The study further demonstrates that learners prefer peer feedback, as they believe it will help them achieve goals such as identifying content problems, improving organisation, developing ideas, enhancing clarity and editing each other's work. Overall, the findings of this study support the research conducted by Bukharu (2016), which suggests that learners who are taught the process of writing can effectively demonstrate cohesion and coherence in their essays. Thus, the process of writing should be effectively taught in EFAL classrooms. Teachers should provide learners with more essay writing activities that involves interaction with peers throughout the writing process and encourage them to read in order to expand their vocabulary.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY.

The study findings highlighted the difficulties learners face in essay writing and the presence of cohesive errors that impact the coherence of their essays. It was noted that learners lacked sufficient instruction and evaluation to develop strong writing skills. As a result, it is recommended that:

- Educators adhere to the process writing approach outlined in CAPS to address most of the challenges encountered by learners in essay writing. Additionally, teachers should utilise collaborative teaching techniques to promote peer assessment.
- Curriculum advisors and Departmental Heads should ensure that teachers adhere to yearly teaching schedules and that learners are evaluated appropriately in the classroom. They should also offer support to teachers, provide training, and equip them with resources to ensure effective instruction and enhancement of learners' essay writing abilities.
- The DBE should arrange training sessions for teachers on implementing the process writing approach and other methods such as collaborative learning.

5.5. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY.

The results of this study are from data collected from English FAL Grade 10 learners. The study was limited to two schools under Eensaam Circuit. Two Grade 10 English FAL educators were sampled but only one educator consented to the interviews, while the other one refused. All the ten learners, five from each school and two Departmental Head were interviewed. The findings indicated that spelling errors and lack of grammatical skills are the major causes of failure rate in English FAL in Grade 10.

One teacher was interviewed and documents to be used by the teachers were observed. This led to the conclusion that teachers do not have effective skills, resources and support for teaching essay writing and utilising CAPS document as well as the abridged CAPS section four. The researcher also observed that teachers did not plan for their lessons but relied on ATP'S in teaching Essay writing, hence learners did not to have the required writing skills.

5.6. CONCLUSION.

The study successfully enabled the teachers to recognise the mistakes made by the learners in essay writing, thus, aligning with the study's objectives. Furthermore, the teachers demonstrated their ability to categorise the essay writing errors made by Grade 10 learners. As supported by literature review, it is the duty of the teacher to oversee every stage of the essay writing process, encompassing planning, drafting, and producing the final copy (Department of Basic Education, 2018).

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APENDIX A

LEARNER INTERVIEWS

A: Background Information

Circuit: Eensaam

Name of School: _____

No. of learners in class: _____

No. of EFAL educators in school: _____

School Term: TWO

Duration: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

B: Essay Writing

1. How many essays have you written since the beginning of the year 2023?

2. Do you write essays in class or at home?

3. If you wrote essays in class, what was the duration?

4. What were the topics of the essays you wrote?

5. Describe the steps/ process you normally follow when you write an essay.

6. Were there specific errors that you committed?

7. What do you like most about essay writing?

8. What do you dislike about essay writing?

9. How can the process of writing an essay be improved?

Thank you for participating.

APENDIX B

INTERVIEWS WITH EFAL EDUCATORS

1 Biographical Details

1.1 What is your highest academic qualification?

1.2 Indicate year(s) and month(s) of your teaching experience.

1.3 What is your highest English language teaching qualification?

1.4 Besides Grade 10, which other grades do you teach?

1.5 What is the total number of learners in Grade 10?

2 The Essay Writing Exercise

2.1 Structure

2.1.1. How many essays do you give learners per term?

2.1.2. What type of essays do you find common among those learners that write?

2.1.3 What is the normal length of an essay? _____

2.1.4 How should the structure of an essay be?

2.1.6 Are learners' ideas expressed in paragraphs? Please elaborate.

2.2 The Actual Essay Writing

2.2.1 Are essay topics suitable for the grade being assessed?

2.2.2 Are instructions to learners unambiguous?

2.2.3 Do learners introduce their essays appropriately?

2.2.4 Do you allow learners to draft an essay?

2.2.5 Do you allocate marks for drafts?

2.2.6 Do learners finish writing in time?

2.2.7 Please explain 2.2.6.

2.2.8 Does the essay writing task comply with CAPS? Please explain.

2.3 Marking

2.3.1 Do the essay questions cover low, medium, and higher order thinking skills?

2.3.2 Do you use the correct rubric when marking? Please explain.

2.3.3 Are learners penalised for spelling mistakes? _____

2.3.4 How do you tackle spelling mistakes?

2.3.5 How long does it normally take you to mark learners' essays?

2.3.6 Do you always give feedback after marking your essays?

2.4 Errors

2.4.1. Do they use the correct tense? _____

2.5 Questions about your EFAL Learners

2.5.1 What are the major challenges for EFAL learners essay writing?

2.5.2 What type of essays do you find common among those that learners write?

2.5.3 What is the normal length of an essay?

2.5.4 Are learners' able to assume responsibility for tasks in the classroom situation?

2.5.5 How do your learners react to criticism or failure?

Thank you for your contribution.

APENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOD/SES

1. Which grades are you supervising?

–

2. Are you able to monitor all grades per week and what will you be looking at specifically?

3. How often do you monitor essay teaching and writing?

4. In your view do teachers follow the guidelines on how to teach essay writing? Please explain.

5. What should teachers do when teaching essays writing and assessing accordingly?

6. How many formal essays should learners in English FAL write per term?

7. What type of topics should learners in grade 10 write about?

8. Which writing processes should learners follow in essay writing?

9. What are the common errors you have identified from the learner's work?

10. What are the challenges faced by educators when marking learner's essay using rubric?

11. What do you think should be done in order to strengthen essay writing in schools?

12. As the Departmental head do you do proper moderation in essay writing?

13. How do you support your English FAL educators and their identified weaknesses?

Thank you for your contribution.

APENDIX D

ESSAY WRITING OBSERVATION

Description	Yes	No
1. Does the teacher have the following:		
• CAPS Policy Document grade 10-12.		
• Abridged section Four CAPS.		
• Textbook English FAL.		
• 2023/2024 Annual Teaching Plan.		
2. Does the teacher plan for the lessons in English FAL?		
3. Does the teacher follow the writing process in developing writing skills?		
4. Use rubric provided by the Department of Basic Education when marking essays?		
5. Does the school timetable comply with the stipulated norm time?		
6. Does the teacher able to spend the allocated time for teaching essay writing?		
Are the teachers supported fully in teaching essay writing by their mentors?		

APPENDIX E

P O BOX 1161
GROBLERSDAL
0470
07 JUNE 2022

The Principal
Ntshebele Secondary School
Nebo
1059

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA AT YOUR SCHOOL.

The above matter bears reference:

I, Letsoalo MP, am a student doing Masters in Language with the University of Limpopo. I hereby request for permission to conduct interviews with your grade 10 English FAL teachers and grade 10 learners at your schools.

The interviews and lesson observation forms part of my data collection. I will adhere to the University's ethical principles such as confidentiality, respect for human dignity and privacy.

Hoping for your positive response

Yours Faithfully

.....

Letsoalo MP (076 4516 321)

APPENDIX F

P O BOX 1161

GROBLERSDAL

0470

07 JUNE 2022

The Principal

Magukubjane Secondary School

Nebo

1059

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA YOUR SCHOOL

The above matter bears reference:

I, Letsoalo MP, am a student doing Masters in Language with the University of Limpopo. I, hereby request for permission to conduct interviews with Grade 10 English FAL teachers and learners in your schools.

The interviews and lesson observation forms part of my data collection. I will adhere to the University's ethical principles such as confidentiality, respect for human dignity and privacy.

Hoping for your positive response

Yours Faithfully

.....

Letsoalo MP (076 4516 321)

APPENDIX G

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Title of the Research Project: An Exploration of Challenges Experienced by Grade 10 Learners' Essay writing in English FAL in Eensaam Circuit.

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in a research project aimed at exploring your understanding (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) on English FAL lessons. This invitation is open to all learners and teachers teaching English FAL

I am a registered student for the MEd: Language in Education at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus and this study is done as part of my Master's degree.

Your participation in this research project is voluntary. Should you declare yourself willing to participate in an interview, confidentiality is guaranteed and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time should you wish not to continue with an interview and or questionnaire.

The duration for each interview will be 10 – 20 minutes per session per each Participant. All interviews will be taped/recorded. Audio taped interviews will be recorded with pseudonym (false name) corresponding to your name. Your name will not be on the transcription associated with the study. Your name will also not appear in any publication resulting from this research. A summary of the research will be made available to you.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent, i.e., that you participate in this project willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw from the research project at any time.

Participant's signature:Date:

Researcher's signature: Date:

THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY ON MARKING THE WRITING PAPER

Dear: Marker

You are advised to use the following indicators or symbols to indicate any errors which the candidate's writing might contain.

- √ - For approval
- ? - For puzzlement
- L - For language error
- t - For tense error
- ,
- O - Encircle the word/take it off
- = - Paragraph the work
- / - Divide the word/ hyphenation
- c - Capital letter/Cap- capitalization
- p - For punctuation errors
- co - Concord/arg-no agreement between subject and verb used
- sp - Spelling error
- ls - Long sentence distract meaning
- amb - Ambiguity/unclear/double meaning
- log - Logic/points do not follow coherently
- Prep - Have used wrong preposition
- pron - Have used the wrong pronoun
- rep - Repetition/ do not use an idea over and over
- exp - Expression wrongly used

- syn - Syntax error/ surface constructed incorrectly
- voc - Vocabulary error/ used the wrong word/ could have used a better one
- art - Wrong article used
- Inc - Incomplete sentence, grammatically incorrect
- wo - Word order error/ should rephrase the sentence
- gen - Generalization/ writing too generally incorrect
- Intro - Introduction fail to capture the markers attention
- Conc - Conclusion fail to draw the threads of the points written above

Use the indicators and symbols together with rubric to assess the candidate's work.

NB:

Be marker friendly

Have positive attitude

Do not compare candidates work. Mark each writing as unique. Think through the rubric

Always refer to your rubric when awarding marks. Check the descriptors. Then award whatever marks the candidate deserves.

Enjoy the marking session and enjoy the best of luck

