

**Challenges Experienced by Grade 11 Learners in Xitsonga Home Language
Essay Writing in Mafarana Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa**

By

HLAYISANI HLUNGWANE

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Education

in

(Language Education)

in the

Faculty of Humanities

(School of Education)

at the

University of Limpopo

South Africa

Supervisor: Dr M.A Khosa

Co-supervisor: Dr W.S Chauke

2023

DECLARATION

I, **Hlungwane Hlayisani**, declare that the dissertation entitled: **Challenges Experienced by Grade 11 Learners in Xitsonga Home Language Essay Writing in Mafarana Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa**, hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree Master of Education in the Department of Language Education, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature 

Date: 18 September 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for He has given me strength and encouragement throughout the research process and throughout all the challenges I faced in the moments of completing this study.

Without the extraordinary assistance, encouragement, and support of so many excellent people, for whom I am sincerely grateful, this job might not have been a success. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, **Dr. M.A. Khosa**, and my co-supervisor, **Dr. W.S. Chauke**, for their expert guidance, amazing support and ongoing encouragement during this research journey and writing of this dissertation.

I would especially like to thank my classmate **Mr. Mahlaule Predict**, who never stopped pushing me even when I was about to give up. Educators and learners from the two chosen schools who voluntarily took part in this study. To them I say: 'Thank you'. Additionally, this endeavour would not have been possible without the generous support of **Mr T.B Semono** who patiently edited my work

Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude to my close friends **Maryshen Makgoba**, **Mbhokazi Ntshuxeko** and **Refiloe Malele** who never ceased to inspire, make me happy and encourage me. I want to express my gratitude to everyone who helped with this dissertation in different ways.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my mother, **Teleni Iris Hlungwane**, my younger sister, **Khensani Polite Hlungwane** and my daughter, **Nsaseko Xilombe Makhubela**. They have been by my side the entire time I have been conducting research. This work is also dedicated to my grandmother **Sarah Mphephu Hlungwane**, who has never lost faith in me and has supported me without condition during my years of school.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Challenges experienced by Grade 11 Learners in Xitsonga Home Language Essay Writing in Mafarana Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The focus of the study was to explore challenges that learners experience when writing argumentative essays, with significant focus on meaningful sentence construction, correct spelling, grammar, and punctuations, as these are important components of writing. This study applied qualitative methodology and used a case study design to generate data. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and documents (text) analysis was used in collecting data used to gain different perspectives regarding different factors that affect learners' essay writing skills in Xitsonga. The collected data was analyzed using thematic data analysis to develop the necessary writing process when writing argumentative essays. The results revealed that learners from both selected schools faced challenges of not being able to form sound sentences in Xitsonga argumentative essays. Their background and lack of knowledge regarding writing argumentative essays were found to be the main factors influencing their writing skills. The findings also revealed that learners experience challenges regarding essay structure, words choice in sentences, sentence formation, punctuation, word order within sentences and good writing. Furthermore, the results of this study indicated that teachers when teaching these learners essay-writing skills follow not all process-writing steps. Therefore, the study recommends that teachers create conducive learning environment in which learners will learn to follow steps when writing argumentative essays. It is also recommended that teachers should use sociocultural writing strategies to advocate knowledge that is experimentally and socially based, wherein learners can reflect and share their experiences of writing.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER 1	1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION	1
1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM	3
1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	4
1.4. RESEACRCH AIM, BJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY	5
1.4.1 Main aim of the study.....	5
1.4.2 Objectives of the study.....	5
1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.6 CONCLUSION.....	6
CHAPTER 2	8
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
2.2 CHALLENGES OF TEACHING WRITING SKILLS	8
2.3 TEACHING WRITING SKILLS	11
2.3.1 Teaching writing step-by-step (process approach).....	12
2.3.2 Teaching writing abroad	12
2.3.3 Teaching writing in South Africa	18
2.4 CONCLUSION.....	26
CHAPTER 3	27
RESEARCH METHODOLODY	27
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	27
3.2 RESEARCH METHODS	27
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	28
3.3 1 Theoretical Framework.....	29
3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING	30
3.4.1 Population.....	30
3.4.2 Sampling.....	31
3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE	33

3.6 DATA COLLECTION	34
3.6.1 Interviews	34
3.6.2. Observations.....	35
3.6.3 Documents analysis.....	36
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS	36
3.7.1 Interview schedule.....	37
3.7.2 Observation schedule.....	37
3.7.3 Organising documents	38
3.8 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES	38
3.8.1 Request for permission	38
3.8.2 Informed consent	38
3.8.3 The right to privacy	39
3.8.4 Confidentiality.....	39
3.8.5 Respect.....	39
3.8.6 Anonymity.....	39
3.8.7 Protection from harm.....	40
3.8.8 Discontinuance.....	40
3.9 CONCLUSION	40
CHAPTER 4	41
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	41
4.1 INTRODUCTION	41
4.2 PROFILE OF THE SCHOOLS	41
4.2.1 School A	41
➤ School policy	41
➤ Discipline	42
4.2.2 School B	42
➤ School policy	42
➤ Discipline	42
4.3 PROFILE OF EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS' PARTICIPANTS	43
4.3.1 Learners' profile	43
4.3.2 Educators profile	43
4.4 DATA PRESENTATION	44
4.4.1 Interviews	44
➤ Educators interview from the two selected schools.....	44

Learners' interviews from the two selected schools	53
4.4.2 Lesson observation	57
➤ Teaching and learning aids.....	57
➤ Strategies for teaching essay writing skills.....	58
➤ Challenges learners have regarding Xitsonga essay writing skills.....	60
4.4.3 Document analysis (Learners' classroom activities, test, and examination papers)	61
➤ Learners' classroom activities	61
➤ Tests and examination papers	67
4.5 CONCLUSION	74
CHAPTER 5	75
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	75
5.1 INTRODUCTION	75
5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY	75
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	79
5.4 CONCLUSION	81
6. REFERENCES	82
7 APPENDICES	85
APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO THE CIRCUIT	85
APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO THE SCHOOL	86
.....	86
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT	88
.....	89
APPENDIX E: LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE	98
APPENDIX F: LEARNER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	101
APPENDIX G: TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	102
APPENDIX H: QUESTION PAPERS	103
APPENDIX I: LEARNERS WRITTEN WORK	107

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Reading and writing skills are important to everyday and learning processes. Their significance in increasing learners' vocabulary, grammatical competence and the communicative competence of the written language cannot be overemphasised (Astrini, Ratminingsih & Utami, 2020). This is because mastery of these two skills lays a firm foundation for academic excellence and lifelong learning. According to Nashirova (2018), writing remains the most important skill to master as it is commonly used in the South African education system to assess learners. For instance, learners are mostly assessed through tests, assignments, and examinations, all of which are based on the written language. Thus, this study focused on exploring the challenges that learners experience when writing argumentative essays with significant focus on meaningful sentence construction, correct spelling, grammar, and punctuations as these are important components of writing.

Van der Berg, Spaull, Willis, Gustafsson and Kotzé (2016) argue that most learners do not receive appropriate help regarding their writing difficulties. Therefore, learners can complete Grade 12 without communicative competence of the written language nor skills of reading and writing for comprehension. This implies that some of the challenges that learners experience in Grade 11 may be because of poor foundations of essay writing skills development from the primary school age and they might also complete grade 12 having these challenges.

Indigenous languages are known of their history of being used as mechanisms of separation, oppression, and marginalisation (Motlhaka & Makalela, 2016). In the era of apartheid, South African indigenous languages were given little if no role to play in public domains. This gave little room for their development regarding school use. As compared to English and Afrikaans, the indigenous language speakers did not receive equal privilege to develop corpus for their languages and this limited the growth and

development of the indigenous language writing skills. It is important now that learners be taught their Home Languages and use them as media of instruction where applicable. However, the footprints of marginalising indigenous languages today are that there are no resources for developing the use of indigenous languages in schools and in the public (Motlhaka & Makalela, 2016). Furthermore, there are no relevant terminologies to teach other scientific concepts in indigenous languages. This expresses a challenge of inadequate vocabulary among indigenous languages subsequently among speakers, and more especially among the youth. Thus, despite the challenges created by issues of the past, there could be other burning issues that hinder teachers from teaching learners the argumentative essay writing skills in Xitsonga. Hence this study seeks to explore such other challenges that hold back the effective development of writing skills in Xitsonga.

The researcher acknowledges that teaching of writing was challenging and was one of the toughest tasks faced by educators through her experience of teaching Xitsonga Home Language. In the same thought, Nashirova (2018) argues that learners also find it difficult to generate and organise ideas and to master different aspects of writing due to teachers' misapplication of teaching methods when teaching writing skills. Thus, the current researcher seeks to investigate the challenges of teaching and learning the writing skills, with particular focus on spelling, grammar, communicative competence and meaning. These components are the most important skills of writing that often cause failure among learners to compile comprehensive texts (Astrini, Ratminingsih & Utami, 2020).

The current study aimed to investigate the challenges of teaching writing in indigenous languages (Home Language) in consideration of the DBE (CAPS, 2011) and Language in Education Policy (LiEP, 2002) that when a learner at any grade fails to achieve 40% of Home Language mark, she or he automatically fails the grade despite their performance on other subjects. It is the stance of the current study that the challenges that have the potential to affect learners' performance of writing in indigenous Home Languages need to be investigated to culminate in improved outcomes of teaching writing for academic purposes and preventative measures to the threats of grade repetition. The study therefore generated results that helped to

improve the overall academic performance of learners, particularly regarding the skill of writing for comprehension.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Home Languages play an important role in developing the academic skills of learners particularly in the context of South Africa where majority of learners are expected to learn through the medium of the First Additional Language (English) Dowling and Krause (2019). Home Language skills that learners bring to school do not resemble competence of their fully developed linguistic codes. Hence, learners find it difficult to get their messages across in speaking and writing in Home Languages. It was, therefore, identified as a problem that learners cannot construct meaningful essays in Home Languages, and this problem is contextualised into Xitsonga Home Language learning in this study. The Grade 11 learners in the proposed schools of this study may be affected by this problem based on Van der Berg et al. (2016) that some learners complete Grade 12 without acquiring neither communicative competence nor the conventional competence of their Home Languages. Thus, this study explores the problem of learners being unable to write argumentative essays with immense focus on problems associated with learners' lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, inability to spell words correctly, lack of extensive reading materials of indigenous languages and lack of reading materials in schools. The above factors are among the countless shortfalls that contribute to learners' inadequate (essay) writing skills in Home Language.

Dowling and Krause (2019) argue that, given the historical background of South African indigenous languages, the importance of developing learners' Home Languages cannot be overemphasised. Thus, part of renaissance of the previously marginalised indigenous language includes equipping relevant speakers with effective skills of such languages to function well enough in education and public domains. It is the current researcher's view that a study of this nature is important to discover and address the challenges that affect learners' development of essay writing skills in Xitsonga Home Language as one of the previously marginalised South African indigenous languages. This study was conducted to investigate the challenges

experienced by learners and teachers in the teaching and learning of Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills.

1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Constructivism theory of 1987, frequently referred to in this study as the constructivism theory. The constructivism theory is an approach to learning that declares that learners actively construct their own knowledge by acquiring experiences and using such experiences to adapt to new learning situations (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). The socio-cultural constructivism theory in languages is commonly used to study how learners' experiences and pre-existing language repertoires influence their performance when learning new skills (Daneshfar & Moharami, 2018). According to Vygotsky (1987), the environment where a learner grows up can influence how they think and what they think. Thus, limited exposure to the written texts of the indigenous languages at home and in schools may imply that learners miss out on opportunities to develop foundations of learning to write in their indigenous languages. This can have negative impacts on the development of writing skills.

The use of the Socio-cultural Constructivism theory was based on its key elements of preliminary knowledge, the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO), Zone of Proximal Development and scaffolding. Vygotsky (1987) states that for learners to understand their new experiences, they require a process of teaching and learning that allows them to draw from their own experiences to interpret the new situations. This term contextualises the argument of Cummins (1979) that the ability of learners to write in the Home Language can help learners grasp the writing skills of other languages. This means that when a learner lacks academic writing skills in the Home Language, most of which are indigenous in South Africa, they may experience challenges in developing those of the First Additional Language.

In adopting social theory to the study, the researcher observed how educators use experiences and knowledge of learners to teach Xitsonga Home language writing skills. The theory was further used to explore how teachers, as the More

Knowledgeable Others (MKO), adopt other teaching methods to teach writing skills and to handle challenges that affect learners' essay writing skills in Xitsonga.

1.4. RESEACRCH AIM, BJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Main aim of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing in Mafarana Circuit, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study aimed investigate challenges related to learners' difficulties of meaningful sentence construction, correct spelling, grammar, and punctuations when writing argumentative essays.

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

This study was guided by the following research objectives, which assisted the researcher with the selection of methods and respondents who were deemed suitable for providing relevant data for this study:

- To explore the strategies used in teaching essay writing skills in the selected secondary schools.
- To examine factors that contribute to the challenges experienced by learners in the classroom regarding learning Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills.
- To examine how teachers assist learners to overcome their challenges in essay writing in Xitsonga Home Language.
- To explore the methods of teaching that can be used and how they can be used to enhance the essay writing skills of learners in Xitsonga Home Language.

1.4.3. Research questions

- What are the strategies used in teaching essay writing skills in the selected secondary schools?
- Which factors contribute to the challenges experienced by learners in the classroom regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills?

- How do teachers assist learners to overcome their challenges in essay writing in Xitsonga Home Language?
- What other methods of teaching can be used and how can they be used to enhance the essay writing skills of learners in Xitsonga Home Language?

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will benefit the Department of Education, educators, and learners in the following ways:

- The Department of Education will realise that language policy documents are not applied well in the selected school because learners should not continue to struggle with Xitsonga writing skills when policies are effectively applied.
- It will enable educators to apply new teaching techniques on teaching writing skills.
- Educators will be able to prepare a conducive environment for learners so that they improve their Xitsonga writing skills.
- Learners will be able to produce meaningful texts and achieve the written communicative competence of their Xitsonga writing skills.
- Learners will acknowledge their challenges and seek help with their writing skills.
- This study will contribute to the existing literature on issues pertaining to teaching and learning Xitsonga writing skills. This will help to provide solutions to the language teaching and learning challenges that hold back learners and teachers from reaching the language curriculum goals.

1.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the context of the present study, the background of problems to be addressed in this study, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. This chapter has highlighted the findings and the importance of the research in general. Here the researcher presented the findings on the topic of exploring the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners while learning the skills of essays writing in Xitsonga Home Language essays under the Mafarana Circuit in two selected schools. This chapter outlined the background of the study in terms of major

challenges in language writing skills throughout the world in schools and the background in African languages. It also examines factors impacting on learners writing skills with African language background in particular Xitsonga in two schools in Mafarana Circuit. The following chapter reviews related literature about the topic and information from other literary sources were presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A thorough analysis of other studies by other researchers regarding essay writing was performed in this chapter to identify the gaps left by others on the topic. This chapter highlighted the challenges that learners experience in learning essay writing skills basing facts on previous research findings by other scholars.

2.2 CHALLENGES OF TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

According to Eskalieva and Jaksulikova (2021), educators often demonstrate inadequate skills of developing writing skills, and poor lesson planning of teaching writing skills. Eskalieva and Jaksulikova (2021) further confirm that learners are given little attention regarding the challenges they experience in writing essays for understanding. The problem that learners are unable to form meaningful sentences roots from lack of books for teaching sentence formation as well as unencouraging teaching and learning environments for learners to write creatively. Although books help learners to form sound sentences, they should also be able to enhance learners' ability to express their thoughts and emotions through writing. As such, this cannot be achieved when learners are taught through methods that prompt them to merely understand definitions of concepts as well as names of punctuation marks and how to use them with little practice.

Eskalieva and Jaksulikova (2021) further emphasise that most teachers are familiar with a broad selection of instructional methods and activities for composing texts, and possible adaptations for struggling writers. However, they are not able to move beyond the scope of the teaching and learning curricula to expose learners to authentic events of writing for meaning through argumentative essays. Thus, the challenges of teaching writing skills can be summed up to poor teacher content, lack of resources, poor vocabulary, and grammar as well the fact that learners do not write for meaning often enough.

Given that the medium of instruction in most South African schools is English language, most learners only learn the writing skills of their indigenous languages at schools. This could have an impact of slowing down their progress of developing meaningful writing skills in essays as they spend little time to learn these skills at schools—and no time at all in their home environments. This suggests that learners do not get enough exposure to develop the indigenous (Home) language writing skills. Learners are taught in a variety of ways that demand them to only understand the meanings of words as well as punctuations and how they can use such information in writing essays. Eskalieva and Jaksulikova (2021, p.134) further reinforce the above remarks by stating that:

Most educators are familiar with a broad selection of instructional methods and activities for composing texts, and possible adaptations for struggling writers.

The above statement reveals that many educators are knowledgeable about how to select application layouts and provide word-forming functions to help those who fail to write. However, educators cannot go onward, they head towards the end of the teaching curriculum and to learn, which reveals the truth of what learners write in terms of argumentative essays. Moses and Mohamad (2019: 271-272) confirm this by saying:

One of the main problems in most school is the lack of materials that can create an ineffective writing environment.

These reveal that the problems of teaching writing in schools are mainly associated with lack of resources. Therefore, teaching essay writing skills can be regarded as of poor quality given the lack of resources and writing in a language that is not correct. Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019, p167) point out that:

Learners who study at high school levels should not be facing essay writing difficulties in the presence of these wide mechanisms of training learners to write meaningfully.

Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) state that learners in high schools should not experience difficulties especially when using instructional method because the methods are easier to use and familiarise with. It is said that several schools in South Africa use English as an instructional language, where learners learn the skills of writing in Home Language during the Home Language subject. That is, majority of the subjects taught in schools are taught through the medium of English, and the home language is only learned as a subject. As such, this can have consequences that lead to gradual drop in development of Home Language essay writing skills such as Xitsonga. This is because learners spend less time learning Home Language writing skills in schools and homes. Makalela (2015) supports the above statement when stating that Home Languages do not provide adequate space for learning and teaching in the curriculum of South Africa. This gives the impression that learners do not have time to develop their Home Language through writing. Makalela (2015, p. 201) adds that:

Situation becomes even more difficult when learners lack cognitive ranges that they can use to make meaning to new lessons.

Makalela (2015) implies that poor writing skills are likely to worsen when learners are deprived opportunities to learn the content that they receive through the English Medium in their subdisciplines (Home Language subjects). Therefore, for Home Language learners, the inability to write emanates from lack of good foundation for teaching and learning writing skills where essay writing development is built. This prevents learners from writing meaningful essays, as they learn mostly through the English medium than their native languages.

Educators often use instructional method to teach writing skills and they focus more on language form than its function. On this approach, educators let learners read more texts than they write. This prevents learners from absorbing the language and understanding its use when writing an essay. The researcher identified that the use of instructional method to teach writing skills does not improve nor establish good essay writing skills among learners. This explains that learners imitate essay writing skills which do not benefit them in terms of communicating and interacting with others in

everyday life the purpose of which is to get marks and pass with higher marks. Moses and Mohamad (2019) argue that some of the challenges that learners encounter in writing essays are grammar and spelling.

2.3 TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

Writing skills are the most important of the four language skills. Writing is a somewhat difficult skill for modern educators and learners. This is evident when many educators and learners experience challenges in teaching and learning writing skills. Moses and Mohammed (2019, p. 273) define writing as “a way to produce language, which you do naturally when speaking.”

Here, Moses and Mohamad (2019) define writing as a means of creating language through presentation of spoken sounds in print. This means that writing begins with speaking then what is said is transferred into writing. Speaking may have great inspiration for writing lessons. According to Motlhaka (2018: 252-254):

Writing in a Second Language (L2) is a challenging and complex process unique from L1 writing wherein L2 writers depend on their L1 during their writing process to prevent a complete breakdown in language.

Motlhaka (2018) confirms that writing in an additional language is difficult, and it is different from writing in the first language. Thus, for learners to be able to write meaningfully in an additional language, they should first be to write in their Home Language. This shows that learning to write in the language you use is very important because it can help make writing lessons easier to understand. According to Gezmis (2020, p. 158), “Errors in constructing meaningful sentences is mainly caused by three ways, namely dialect, punctuation, and spelling problems.” The above argument reveals that the common causes of errors in learners’ essays are sentence structure (infusion of dialect grammar), punctuation and spelling.

2.3.1 Teaching writing step-by-step (process approach)

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is used as a guide established by the Department of Education to help educators and learners regarding the teaching and learning of essay writing skills. CAPS (2011,p.30) recommends that learners be taught to write through the process approach to writing. The process approach helps learners to develop writing skills through active process of meaning making. According to Gezmis (2020,p. 160), process writing is an approach that incorporates writing skills from the beginning of the learning process.

Here Gezmis (2020) shows that process writing is a process that involves writing skills from the beginning of learning. This process helps educators on what to follow when teaching essay writing, and it focuses on writing as a process that follows steps such as planning, brainstorming and presentation. One other important aspect of writing in the process approach is the drafting stage.

Drafting is a step-by-step process of compiling a text. It is therefore important to give learners the opportunity to grasp this concept by following right steps. Learners are taught to choose a topic based on their experiences or knowledge from the texts they have read, then they brainstorm ideas using objects such as mind maps, flowcharts and programs. Thereafter, learners use different sources of knowledge to select relevant information to help them develop ideas for their texts. They create this first draft taking into account the theme of the text, then they read the first draft carefully and accept advice from others (classmates and educators). After drafting, learners edit and analyse defects in their drafts and then start to organise their essays by themselves or with help from their classmates and the teachers. The purpose of this process, thus, becomes fulfilled when learners can write for a wide range of audience in different text genres.

2.3.2 Teaching writing abroad

Eskalieva and Jaksulikova (2021) writing skills are the first of the four skills of language. Writing skills are the slightly dull abroad in four skills since they are widely

used in an additional language. English Additional Language lessons are more component-oriented because they focus on word formation, sentence formation, vocabulary within sentences, word sounds and writing.

English language educators in secondary schools point out that the teaching of writing is a very important subject although some educators do not take it seriously. They show that they never take it seriously because it requires a lot of time for practice especially for assignments. Educators point out that writing skills have play a big role in learners' studies as they help learners to communicate with other people without always being in contact with them.

Moses and Mohamad (2019) investigated the challenges faced by learners and educators concerning writing skills in English Second Language (ESL). Their research addressed the challenges that learners had in writing skills in English Second Additional Language. The purpose of their research was to explore the challenges faced by both the learners and educators in learning as well as teaching writing skills in elementary schools in Malaysia.

In their research, they had the goal of seeking to identify challenges that educators and learners were experiencing and recognizing the potential for teaching writing skills in primary schools. Teaching writing skills are found to be a difficult skill to teach because of these challenges learners experience it in writing skills. Moses and Mohammed (2019) confirmed that the challenges learners in primary schools' face is of language deficiency, poor spelling, book deficiency to read and learners are not yet ready to read. They have shown that learners should have a good foundation that can enable them to be able to write meaningfully by practicing reading as many times as possible when they started schooling.

The challenges learners face makes teaching writing skills become difficult for educators. The challenges that educators encountered in teaching writing skills make them struggle to motivate their learners to write, use reading materials, and find adequate time to teach these skills. Moses and Mohammed (2019) pointed out that learning to write in these skills should be studied extensively in the primary schools through reading practice books and practice following good writing. They also showed

up that teachers cannot teach as they have prepared because many learners are not prepared to learn to write.

Moses and Mohamad (2019) in their research used a critical approach (qualitative research) where they used two methods to collect data of theirs. They used interviews and observed sub-lesson on the writing skills. They asked learners and educators about the challenges they faced in teaching and learning writing skills. Moses and Mohammed (2019) recommended that the learners must be able to expand their writing skills, and must follow all instructions and feedback the teacher gives them during writing lessons. Educators need to consider the challenges that other educators experienced to compare them with what they experience in teaching writing skills in English sub-lessons and challenges.

Their research highlighted the challenges educators and learners face in elementary schools in learning skills of writing in English Additional Language. This research is limited to essays because it looked at the challenges that educators and learners encounter in teaching and learning writing skills. This research avoided the research under consideration because it was looked at challenges educators and learners face in the ability to write Xitsonga argumentative essays.

Rashid, Hui and Shunting (2022) conducted a study titled “Analysing the Challenges of Teaching Writing among English educators in Chinese universities.” In their research, they looked at the challenges of teaching writing that encounter in Chinese universities. The purpose of their research was to examine the challenges faced by ESL educators in teaching writing skills to learners in university classrooms.

These researchers used a series of questionnaires to explore the challenges that educators experienced in teaching writing skills. The researchers used qualitative method to highlight the challenges that the participants faced in teaching writing skills. Participants were asked (12) questions. Rashid, Hui and Shunting (2022) showed that educators experienced pressure teaching the writing skills as they failed to help their learners with perfecting essays due to time.

Their research did not fully elucidate the reasons for challenges that educators faced in teaching English Additional Language. However, Rashid, Hui and Shunting (2022) asserted that other strategies can eliminate the challenges faced by learners. They recommended that educators should see that the time to develop writing skills is present in their plans. They have also shown that this is what can help to improve the challenges teachers face, especially for most learners with writing difficulties. Rashid, Hui and Shunting (2022) confirmed that teachers should practice using a variety of approaches to teach the writing skills. They have shown that using a variety of approaches can help learners to quickly understand the content taught in class. Their observations revealed that educators should do planning first before start writing as this will help learners to know that they must make planning before starting writing by following what the teacher demonstrates.

This research brought to light the challenges educators face in Chinese universities regarding learning English language writing skills. This research differed from the current research because it focused on the challenges at university level, while the current one focuses on similar challenges, but at secondary school level. The reviewed study also looked at the challenges that lecturers face in in the context of English writing skills, but the current research focuses on these challenges in the context of Xitsonga Home Language (African native language).

Rubina, Hanita, Aminabi and Sajid (2019) in their study titled “A Systematic Review of the Challenges and Solutions of ESL Learners Academic Writing”, investigated the challenges encountered by English Additional Language learners in India regarding writing. The authors also sought to find suggestions that can improve their identified problem. The purpose of their research was to provide a systematic literature review of academic writing studies which focused on learners’ academic writing challenges and solutions thereof.

The above statements reveal that the edited text for this writing investigates the challenges learners face and solutions for these challenges. This study investigated the challenges that learners encounter in writing English Additional Language in universities. It looked at alternative approaches that could be used to improve the

challenges students experienced. This research used the exploratory approach to explore literature or another research designed with the same theme.

According to Rubina et al. (2019), English Additional Language learners see writing as a very difficult skill. Therefore, this makes learners less interested in writing skills sub-lessons. Learners show that they are not interested in learning to write by writing texts without context. Lack of understanding writing in sub-lessons and poor motivation during writing lessons reported in the literature to be some of the contributory factors to the underdevelopment of the writing skills. In addition, literature reveals that the challenges faced by learners are caused by lack of interest in writing, lack of writing practices at school and home, lack of inspiration and the use of irregular writing—where learners cannot start sentences with capital letters.

The study of Rubina et al. (2019) recommended that educators should motivate learners to write so that they will develop interest of participating in writing activities. Furthermore, Rubina et al. (2019) state that educators should train learners to read to familiarise them with good writing through seeing what other writers write. They also recommended that learners also practice reading to increase their vocabulary.

This research is different from the one of Rubina et al. (2019) because it does not look at the writing challenges faced by English Additional Language learners, nor is it based on university students. Rather, the current study focused on the challenges faced by learners in learning writing skills at secondary school level, particularly in Grade 11.

Paryshan (2019) in his research on “Major Writing Challenges Experienced by EFL Learners in Soran University”, aimed to identify the challenges that English language learners encounter in writing skills at the university of Soran. Paryshan (2019) analysed the challenges faced by English First Additional Language learners in essay writing skills. He showed that developing writing skills among learners requires teachers to transfer the spoken language into a written language—which is a difficult task for most teachers. Paryshan (2019) identified that the main problem that his participants had (Soran University students) is the ability to write meaningful essays. Paryshan (2019) used a descriptive survey research design where thirty-two (32) third year students were randomly sampled and found that majority of them could not write

meaningful essays. His study also revealed that learners are overwhelmed by language of instruction such that they could not list words in sentences, punctuate nor use comprehensible language in writing.

Paryshan (2019) recommended that it is important for teachers to know the challenges that their learners experience to find alternatives to address the challenges faced by learners. The researchers also advised educators to train learners to write through writing activities that require them to demonstrate good. Thus, researchers advised that this can be done through giving learners sufficient reading activities for them to learn correct spelling and punctuation. Paryshan's (2019) research highlighted the challenges faced by English language learners at Soran University regarding essay writing. However, his study differed from the current one because the current one is premised in rural areas and at a high school level.

Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) conducted a study on "The teaching of ESL writing in high schools", where they focused on writing in a Bangladesh secondary school. Their study focused on high school tests that required learners to write summaries, paragraphs, articles and reports. To achieve their goal, they used qualitative methods to explore the challenges faced by teachers in teaching writing. Their study indicated that teachers experienced numerous challenges that held them back from helping their learners to fully acquire the writing skills. Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) add that the challenges are fuelled by the unavailability of teaching and learning resources, as well as the limited time in the curriculum to teach writing skills.

Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) in their research found that educators used emails to teach writing skills in English Additional Language. Thus, they revealed that educators preferred to use emails to teach writing skills because emails encourage learners to write regularly. However, the shortfall with the use of emails was that most learners did not have access to emails because of poverty, lack of smartphones, computers and the internet. Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) confirmed that educators teaching in secondary schools had troubles implementing these methods because of the above factors, hence it is not easy for them to get learners used to writing.

Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) also found that in Bangladesh, writing practices required learners to know only the forms of words and their definitions. They showed that the subscales of the higher literacy schools in Bangladesh demand that learners write summaries, paragraphs, essays, reports through emails. According to Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019), illiteracy is observed among learners because they are not the first to learn writing skills where writing development is built.

Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) recommended that educators should enhance learners' writing skills using alternative methods that can improve writing lessons. Educators should consider challenges learners face to align their teaching methods and strategies to the needs of learners. Their research highlighted the challenges educators encountered in teaching writing skills in English Additional Language in secondary schools in Bangladesh. The study of Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019) aligns with the current research because both studies addressed the challenges educators encounter in teaching writing skills at high school level.

2.3.3 Teaching writing in South Africa

South Africa adopted a democracy in 1994 and transformed the teaching curricula from teacher-centred to learner-centred. This implies that under the current curriculum, learners should contribute in their own learning other than teachers being the custodians of knowledge. Nondabula (2020) points out that teaching of writing is an important aspect of language learning and a tool for assessment in Basic and Higher Education across the globe. Learners need to acquire proficient writing skills to learn and demonstrate their knowledge and creativity.

According to Nondabula (2020), learners should be encouraged to work in groups. This method will encourage learners to work interdependently as they will communicate with each other, solve problems together, and all have roles to play in writing lessons. Nondabula (2020) points out that learners' interactions are crucial in language learning and practice because learners are able to teach each other different skills as they work in groups. They learn to form words and create sentences with meanings.

The challenges of teaching and learning writing skills are worth urgent consideration in South Africa. Many learners cannot write because they form meaningless and out-of-context sentences that contain errors (Canagarajah, 2015). Furthermore, learners fail to follow the components of writing as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011), while educators encounter difficulties of integrating lessons and learners' experiences. Many learners leave high schools without the ability to form sentences that are as meaningful as their spoken language. These challenges distract learners and put them at the risk of not being able to write in their Home Language. As a result, most learners are subjected to assessment failure and grade repetition because the Language in Education Policy does not permit a learner to proceed to another grade if they have failed their Home Language (Eskalieva & Jaksulikova, 2021).

The challenges of teaching writing in the Home Language are due to the lack of reading materials in schools. Lewis, Sandilos, Scheffnerhammer, Sawyer and Mendez (2015) argue that learners should be able to read before learning to write. Reading expands learners' vocabulary and exposes learners to the standardized language required for academic writing. Therefore, learners become more familiar with writing processes of the language they read, and in turn, become able to write in that language. The lack of Home Language reading materials and time in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) shows that learners do not receive necessary support to fully enhance their Home Language writing skills. Arguably, it is likely that learners will continue to experience writing challenges given the limited time they have to learn Home Language essay writing skills in school. Nondabula (2020), in his research on "Investigating the Teaching and Learning of Creative Writing in English First Additional Language in selected Grade 9 classrooms in the Western Cape", investigated how creative writing was taught through the medium of English First Additional Language (FAL) to Grade 9 learners in one primary school in the Western Cape Province.

The research explored the methods used to teach writing in English First Additional Language for Grade nine (9) learners in one school in the Western Cape Province. Nondabula (2020) found that educators mixed English and isiXhosa words (code switching) when teaching English to enable all learners to understand what it was

taught. The findings also indicate that learners could not easily understand English language writing lessons because of the everyday use of their native language. The researcher recommended that educators should interchange approaches to help learners in writing. The researcher also recommended that learners should also practice writing in English many times to enhance their writing skills.

The research study is different from the current study because it investigated the teaching and learning of writing in the English First Language in Grade nine (9). Although the studies differ, the previous study left some gaps for the current study to fill as far as writing is concerned. This is because Grade 11 learners face different writing challenges, implying that the reviewed study might have not come nearer in resolving the essay writing challenges.

Sibanda (2018) conducted a study on “The major ESL essay writing challenges experienced by Grade 12 learners in Mafikeng Sub District.” He indicated that being illiterate poses some challenges especially for Grade 12 learners when they enter universities. The purpose of this study was to “Identify major ESL essay writing challenges experienced by Grade 12 learners in Mafikeng Sub District”. Sibanda (2018) found that educators were unable to identify writing themes when preparing essay assignments for learners. He also pointed out that his teacher-interview results have shown that learners have no interest in writing sub-lessons, and this affects learners’ writing development. Sibanda (2018) further found that first-tier and second-tier schools (quintiles 1 and 2) respectively, face more writing challenges because they are not taught to follow the steps of the process writing approach.

Sibanda (2018) recommended that educators should apply steps for teaching essays to help learners write contextually correct essays in English Additional Language even if this is not their language. He also recommended that educators should develop other strategies that can help learners to enhance their writing skills in English Additional Language.

His research is different from the one under investigation because he investigated the essay writing challenges faced by English Additional Language learners in Grade 12. Sibanda (2018) showed that writing poses some challenges on learners, especially for

those from Grade 12 going to universities. This research is in addition to the current study because the current investigation focused on these challenges but in Grade 11.

Makgati (2018) conducted his research on essay writing skills at a secondary school in Bronkhorstspuit Circuit, Gauteng Province. His study revealed that essay writing is a steppingstone to broaden learners' intellect because it helps them to think logically, to plan, create and synthesise information for the reader's clear understanding. Thus, Makgati (2018) asserts that an essay cannot be written haphazardly without following a specific structure and consolidating its ideas with its supporting ideas for ideas to align with the chosen topic. One can infer that Makgati (2018) implies that writing essays motivates to think, prepare for learning, and create words and phrases that can be understood by readers. The purpose of his research was to investigate the challenges that Grade 10 Sepedi language learners face in essay writing.

Makgati (2018) discovered challenges such as writing out of context, failing to form sentences, writing long and meaningless paragraphs, failing to present clear ideas within paragraphs, and failing to write a conclusion that makes sense. This research aimed to investigate how different types of essays were taught.

The study of Makgati (2018) used mixed method research included both qualitative and quantitative research gathering information comes from educators and learners in the form of questionnaires, observations and analysis of learners written books (documents). Thus, Makgati (2018) revealed that the Grade 10 learners' essays have shown that learners are not knowledgeable about writing essays and are not used to writing essays. From his findings, he pointed out that educators must consider learners who cannot write correct words in sentences. He acknowledged that his findings would enable educators and learners to see where they have both failed, then device strategies that can help them enhance the essay writing skills. Makgati (2018) confirmed that the writing challenges trigger higher failure rates as they hinder learners from excelling in their Home Language(s). Thus, Makgati's (2018) research adds to the current research as they both focused on the challenges learners experience in essay writing skills in high schools.

Gezmis (2020) researched on “The teaching of essay writing Skills in ESL: A concern in Mpumalanga high schools”. His study looked at the processes of teaching writing skills in English Additional Language and the methods used to teach essay writing skills in high schools. Gezmis (2020) revealed that educators use the process approach to teach essay writing skills. According to Dyke (2018), process writing is an approach to teaching writing that allows the teacher and the learners to go through the process of producing a text together. Dyke (2018) explains that step-by-step writing is the approach that allows teachers and learners to work together to learn how to form sentences. Gezmis (2020) pointed out that educators reinforce two branches of learning: writing to learn what is useful especially for learners to learn words comprehensibly; and writing fluently and carefully where learners are taught writing skills with dedication to be involved in the essay.

Educators ensured that learners followed the three stages of the writing process, namely, planning, drafting, and editing. Educators indicated that learners tend to follow along what they teach in classes when they work in groups. Gezmis (2020) found that some educators do not create enough time for writing and revising the steps of teaching essays. Learners also do not have enough time to write because they are often asked to write longer papers that require editing and revising—they often do not finish writing.

Gezmis (2020) recommended that educators should follow the writing steps to provide learners with skills to tackle different topics in different types of essays. This can also enable learners to start writing proposals, followed by a sketch, and then write the topic information that also analyse topic without punctuation and spelling errors. He also recommended that learners should be educated very so that they can form sentences that are contextual. This is what it is can challenge their minds to work the researcher warns educators that it is important to give learners the opportunity to express what they write it down by having them follow the steps, choose a topic, do brainstorm ideas using materials such as maps of concepts, narrative charts, and programs.

The study looked at the methods of teaching essay writing skills in English as an Additional Language in secondary schools. Gezmis (2020) showed that teachers over-

emphasise the second branch of learning, namely, writing to learn what is most helpful to learners, learning words in a comprehensive way and writing fluently and carefully. Here learners are taught writing skills with the aim of enabling them to participate in writing activities. This research adds to the current study because it also focused on the challenges learners experience in essay writing skills in two Grade 11 classrooms at two secondary schools.

Motlhaka (2018) conducted a study titled “Crossing boundaries in L2 Writing Development: a study of first-year Academic Writing Learners”. This research investigated the boundaries in the development of writing among learners that enter university. It also looked at the influence of using Sepedi language in English writing by examining writing components in Sepedi and English at Venda University. The purpose of this study was to investigate possible ways in which L2 writers can be given opportunities for Higher Education, considering inclusion and diversity—thus by accommodating learners’ L1 (Sepedi language) for creative self-expression and socialization in English academic writing.

The researcher used mixed method approach and explanatory design to investigate the habits of beginning learners at university to note what prevents them from writing what is right. Participants included 84 first-year learners who were approximately eighteen (18) to thirty (30) years, registered to for English Studies (English communication skills ECS 1541 module) in the School of Humanities.

The data obtained revealed that the use of Sepedi and English languages in writing have an incentive for learners in writing and enables them to form good sentences. This further helps learners to develop perspectives that help them produce words and use such words within sentences. This research found that writing in English should be expanded to encourage learners to think with ease for them to, in turn, write meaningfully in English Additional Language.

The study recommended that educators should ensure that their teaching environment allows for additional language learners to use different languages in essays sub-lessons to reduce the challenges that prevent them from learning to write. The study also recommended that learners should use sociocultural writing strategies to train

knowledge which they have and share their experiences through writing in Sepedi and English.

Maluleke (2021) in his research on the “Challenges of writing non-verbal sentences unheard by 10th graders at SDW High School Nxumalo, Vhembe, Limpopo”, pointed out that the learners still have a little difficulty when it comes to writing meaningful sentences. The purpose of her research was to identify the challenges that Grade 10 learners faced when writing a grammar essay at SDW Nxumalo School. This research used qualitative methods to gather information. Maluleke (2021) found that learners experienced many difficulties when they form sentences in Xitsonga Home Language essays. She revealed that learners encountered problems such as inability to form sound sentences, connect words, use other words, and to write flawlessly.

The study recommended that educators should provide all learners with time to form sentences in classes, not only selected learners. Educators are advised to know their learners thoroughly; this includes knowing their tactics as well as their vulnerabilities to avoid leaving other learners behind because of their shortcomings. The educators should teach learners to form sentences in all grades and give learners plenty of writing and sentence-forming activities to get them active at school and at home. Learners should work committedly in the writing subjects.

Sibeko (2019), in his research on “The use of rubrics and correction codes in the marking of Grade 10 Sesotho home language creative writing essays”, wanted to find out more about the methods used for assessing learners by rubric method to corroborate learners essay work. The purpose of this research was to investigate the assessment of creative essays in Grade 10 Sesotho Home Language.

Sibeko (2019) pointed out that there is lack of research regarding assessments of Sesotho essay writing skills in South African schools. He confirmed this by disclosing that the literature on English First Language teaching and English Second Language teaching are used to theoretically contextualise the writing and assessment of creative writing essays in Sesotho Home Language in South African high schools.

The study used mixed methodology, through which information was collected from educators using questionnaires and the review of learner’s essay papers (written

essays). Educators indicated that using rubrics to assess learners' tasks makes assessment and teaching easier for them because they precise their teaching on the skills to be evaluated in the rubrics. Hence, for them, rubrics serve as evidence that learners either understand or not. This study found that educators award at least 60 percent marks despite the learners' mistakes and inadequate response to the topic of the essay.

The researcher found that there was no relationship between his findings in the interview and what he found in the learner's papers articles. His study, therefore, recommended assessment rubrics should be used at the beginning of essay writing lessons. Sibeko (2019) indicated that an alternative such as marking grid may be used to prepare learners for writing assignments. Sibeko (2019) also recommended that because of the information he received from the learners, it is not appropriate that teachers persist to use strategies that yield same results despite the evidence from rubrics indicating that there are still challenges regarding essay writing. He confirmed this by saying this rubric will have this very indicative of the key components which should be addressed when adjusting learners activities should be produced, so that it may serve to correct the essays.

Ramothwala, Segabutla, Rwodzi and Thokwane (2021) conducted a study titled "Exploring Grade 8 Khelobedu-speaking learners' writing challenges in Sepedi Home Language in Mopani District, South Africa", where they wanted to recognise the challenges that Grade 8 Khelobedu learners encounter in writing. They pointed out that in South Africa, Khelobedu-speaking learners learn Sepedi as their 'Home Language' at school because Khelobedu (sometimes referred to as 'Selobedu') is classified as a Sepedi dialect.

Here Ramothwala et al. (2021) show that Khelobedu-speaking learners learn Sepedi as a Home Language in schools because Khelobedu is a dialect that was derived from Sepedi. This study highlighted the challenges that learners face in writing Sepedi Home Language. The purpose of this research was to investigate the Selobedu-speaking learners' writing experiences in Sepedi Home Language with reference to dialectical variations, exploring the strategies learners use to adapt to lessons.

The study of Ramothwala et al. (2021) found that many learners write in Khelobedu in their essays with full believe that they are writing in Sepedi. The educators also showed that many learners have conversations using unstandardised languages (dialects), which makes them more likely to write in unacceptable languages. The researcher recommended that learners should practice writing in standardised language, and that teachers should ensure that learners use the standardised words in writing.

In all the reviewed publications, it was found that there is a gap that needs to be closed by the current research regarding the challenges that learners encounter in writing essays. Hence, the current study sought to explore the Home Languages essay writing challenges and evaluate the influence of English Additional Language (Medium of Instruction) over such challenges. It was anticipated that this study will help to find solutions for the challenges that affect learner's effective development of essay writing skills. Complementary to the above, this will help the researcher to develop solutions to clarify the causes of the challenges of teaching essay writing skills to Xitsonga Home Language learners. In summation, the reviewed literature helped the current researcher to look at the identified problem from an informed perspective and to examine strategies that were previously used to enhance essay writing skills.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter explored findings from previous studies regarding the difficulties encountered by learners in Home (Native) Language essay writing skills. However, the current study limited its focus to Xitsonga essays in two schools at Mafarana Circuit, Limpopo Province. This chapter examined literature published at both international and national level. This review focused primarily on qualitative studies because they paved way for the current researcher to conduct this study. Therefore, the following chapter discusses research methodology, population and sample procedures, data collection techniques, data processing techniques, ethical consideration, and integration of research purpose.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the qualitative approach used in the research, where the challenges experienced by learners in learning writing skills were investigated. This chapter reveals the following methods used to collect data: interview (semi structured interview), document analysis (learners' notebooks and examination papers) and observation of subject teaching. This chapter also covers the research design, the role of theory, data collection, population and sampling, data organisation and the ethical principles of the study.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research method was used to gather information in this study. Creswell and Poth (2016) define qualitative methodology as the method used to gather information. Therefore, to obtain information that can help answer the questions and sub-questions of this research the researcher used a qualitative method. This process involves collecting and organising non-statistical information, which is supported by (Mohajan, 2018). The purpose of using this approach was to gain an understanding of the challenges learners face in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills lessons from the experience of the educators and learners.

According to Creswell and Poth (2016), qualitative methodology helps to obtain accurate information, allowing participants to express their feelings and experiences. The researcher obtained further information about the topic from various literatures through critical research, which made the information reliable. Therefore, qualitative approach helped the researcher to identify the in-depth details defining the validity of the open questions: Why do the challenges exist and how to work to alleviate these challenges? The collection of key methodological information clearly produced answers to the research questions. This approach helped the researcher to interview the participants face-to-face to obtain information. The researcher had sufficient time

to collect data using learners' notebooks to assess the essay writing challenges experienced by learners. Using this approach enabled the researcher to present the evidence found about the problem that prompted the researcher to conduct this research.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a case study research design to generate data. According to Mohajan (2018), research design is a way that the researcher uses to engage with the participants involved in the study to record information that is efficient and effective to the study. Thus, a case study was relevant to be used in this study because it enabled the researcher to limit her focus to the selected population and the subsequent sample. This choice was influenced by the need to observe methods of teaching essay writing skills using the selected case of two secondary school in Mafarana Circuit. A case study design was used in this study to understand the challenges learners experienced in learning writing skills in Xitsonga Home Language at two secondary schools in Grade 11. Additionally, educators and learners were asked questions to determine if there were no alternative approaches they could use to teach and learn Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills to improve the essay writing challenges. These approaches are those that can improve understanding of the sub-subjects of writing skills in Xitsonga Home Language.

Interpretivist paradigm was used in the study. The adoption of interpretivist paradigm was suitable for this study because the paradigm encourages researchers to study participants in their natural settings without filtering the natural setups. As Torres (2021) explains, the interpretivist paradigm seeks not to change the authentic settings or behaviours of the participants. Rather, it seeks to develop an understanding to the questions of why and how a particular problem affects people (Torres, 2021). Thus, it was beneficial for the researcher to employ this paradigm in line with the need to understand the challenges that affect the writing skills of Xitsonga Home language learners. A case study design and an interpretivist paradigm were used in the study because they share a common objective, which is to understand how people are affected by events that occur in their lives.

3.3 1 Theoretical Framework

This research followed Vygotsky's Socio-cultural constructivism theory of 1987. Socio-cultural constructivism theory is a learning theory that affirms that learners could shape their own knowledge through experience, and by using their experiences to achieve new learning levels. According to Daneshfar and Moharami (2018), the socio-cultural constructivism theory in languages is commonly used to study how learners' experiences and pre-existing language repertoires influence their performance when learning new skills.

The words of Daneshfar and Moharami, (2018) reveal that the concept of cultural construction of identity in language is commonly used to study how learners' knowledge and language range have an impact on their performance when learning new skills. According to Vygotsky (1987), the environment where a learner grows up can influence how they think and what they think.

Learners often speak what they speak in their communities of origin, which makes many learners in school to find themselves having the challenge of writing in a non-standard language. Therefore, learner failure at home and even at school may cause the learner to miss the opportunity to improve the basics of learning to write in the Xitsonga Home Language because writing begins at home. This may have negative consequences for the improvement of Xitsonga essay writing skills.

Socio-cultural constructivism theory maintains that initial knowledge, i.e., what a learner learns before going to school, is the most important foundation for learning. What is said at home can have an incentive for the learner to understand more in writing and can also cause the learner to struggle with his or her writing. Vygotsky (1987) states that learning from others who are familiar with the environment nearby work together to create understanding and support. Vygotsky (1987) also pointed out that for learners to understand their new experiences, they require a process of teaching and learning that allows them to draw from their own experiences to interpret the new situations.

Here Vygotsky (1987) shows that for learners to understand or acquire new knowledge, they need teaching and learning practices that allow them to use their knowledge to make sense of the new knowledge. By practicing writing more often at home rather than just in schools, learners can enhance their writing skills in standardised language. Therefore, this reinforces the essence and importance of Cummins' phrase of (1979) when he said that learners' ability to write in their mother tongue can help them learn writing skills in other languages. The ability to write in other languages requires learners to practice reading what is written in those languages. Learners often make many spelling mistakes that are commonly observed in writing texts where learners write in the wrong language because of the dialects in the places they come from.

By using Vygotsky's theory in this study, the researcher analysed how educators use learners' experiences and knowledge to teach writing skills in Xitsonga. These ideas were also used to find out more about how educators, as some of the More Knowledgeable Others (MKO), can use alternative approaches to teach Xitsonga writing skills, and how they cope with the challenges learners experience regarding writing essays in Xitsonga.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.4.1 Population

Population in a study are the individuals from whom empirical research data is collected and the materials from which these have similar characteristics. This is supported by Torres and Nyaga (2021) when they state that Population is a collection of individuals or objects known to similar characteristics. The population of this study was derived from Mafarana Circuit. Mafarana Circuit constitutes of 8 Secondary Schools where Xitsonga is offered as a Home Language. From the eight schools, two 2 schools were used as cases of this investigation. The researcher conducted this study in two schools, both of which are in Mafarana circuit, Mopani West District in Limpopo Province. Thus, the population of this study consisted of educators and learners from the selected schools, out of which samples of participants were

deduced. This implies that the unit of analysis for this study was based on the two selected schools out of the eight schools in Mafarana Circuit. The selection of the above schools was convenient for the researcher to reach on time during data collection and at a reduced cost of travel because of the proximity between them and the researcher.

School A comprised of a population of 436 learners and 13 educators out of which four are Xitsonga Home language educators. Grade 11 classrooms in School A comprised of 98 learners, who were divided into two classes (Grade 11 A and B) whereby each grade consisted of 49 learners. On the other hand, School B comprised of a population of 193 learners and 7 educators of which one was a Xitsonga educator. Grade 11 in School B consisted of 43 learners who were accommodated in one classroom. Thus, the population of this study comprised of 20 Educators and 629 learners from both schools, making an overall population figure of 649 individuals. The schools were purposively sampled due to their accessibility as the researcher stayed at the village where the schools are located.

3.4.2 Sampling

Sampling is the steps that can be used to organise indicative statistics and what is expected to work in the research. Smith (2018) states that a sample is group of people, objects or items that are taken from a large population for a measurement.

This study used non-probability sampling method and applied the purposive sampling technique to select research participants. Non-probability sampling regarded by Creswell and Poth (2016) as the sampling method that involves the researcher making a direct selection of the participants that he or she deems most capable of providing the required data to the study. Therefore, purposive sampling was necessary and relevant for this study because it ensured that the researcher used relevant people to respond to the questions of the study. There was no probability that any selected participant could fail to share relevant information under this method of sampling. Thus, there was a reduced probability that the sampling method could lead the researcher to wrong informants or information.

The researcher purposively sampled 141 Grade 11 learners from all three Grade 11 classrooms in the selected schools to conduct classroom observations during essay writing lessons. This implied that the researcher conducted observations in two Grade 11 classrooms (A and B) in School A as the Grade was divided into two classrooms, and one Grade 11 in School B. The researcher additionally used criterion sampling method to select six learners' classwork and homework books in each grade to examine the challenges that they experienced regarding argumentative essay writing. That is, the researcher used the essays designed and administered by educators for learners to write argumentative essays to examine the challenges that learners experienced in essay writing.

The criteria for selecting learners' books were looking for two lowest performing pupils, two average and two highest in each Grade 11 of the two schools. This was done through evaluation of the marks that learners achieved in class and home activities of argumentative essay writing. Thus, the researcher was able to search for common errors that learners committed in essay writing to develop applicable recommendations for both schools. The six learners whose works were identified through the criterion selection method were purposively sampled to take part in the semi-structured interviews regarding the challenges they face and their perceived or experienced causes of such challenges.

The researcher further used purposive sampling to select Grade 11 Xitsonga Home Language educators in the selected schools. Their involvement in this study was for the purpose of semi-structured interviews. Xitsonga Home Language educators were deemed by this study to be more suitable for yielding relevant information regarding the challenges that learners experience in Xitsonga Home Language argumentative essay writing. Thus, three teachers from both schools were purposefully sampled to participate in semi-structured interviews. The overall sample of this study comprised of 144 participants out of which 141 were learners from both schools and 3 Xitsonga Home Language educators from both schools.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Since the researcher conducted the study in two schools located in Mafarana Circuit, the researcher started with school A since it was easy to manage, as it did not have many learners. The researcher first interviewed Xitsonga Home Language educator about the challenges she faces in teaching the skills of writing argumentative essays. The researcher asked the teacher all the questions that were prepared for the interview and noted all the answers the teacher gave her.

After the teacher was interviewed, the researcher went to the two learners who were willing to participate, and asked questions scheduled for the interview. However, the learners' questions were adjusted to align teachers' remarks with learners' experiences as well as data from observations. The researcher went to the findings of the classroom interviews and noted the responses and observations during the teaching. Lastly, the researcher reviewed the learners' classwork books by taking the works they have written based on argumentative essay and the examination papers of those who chose to write the argumentative essays among different types of essays in the exam question paper.

After finishing with the School A the researcher went to School B which had slightly more learners than School A. The researcher followed the same procedures as in School A so that the collected information could be consistent. The researcher interviewed teachers separately in School B so that each one could give answers privately. Four learners who were willing to participate were also interviewed individually. The researcher recorded all the responses received from educators and learners from both selected schools so that she could revisit the recordings during transcription and when some data are not clear.

After obtaining interview responses from learners and educators, the researcher conducted classroom observations to observe the teaching of argumentative essay writing skills. Thus, during the lesson, the researcher took important notes according to what was observed using the observation schedule. The researcher took the learners' classwork books and made copies of previously written argumentative essays. The researcher also took argumentative essays from the sampled learners'

exam scripts to examine the reoccurrence of the errors they commit in home activities compared to examinations.

All the processes above vividly explained how the researcher collected data through interviews, observations and documents analysis (Learners' classwork books and examination papers).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

According to Moser and Korstjens (2017), data collection is a method used to compare the details of a particular problem or process. Three methods were used to collect data, namely, semi structured interviews, observations, and texts analysis (learners classwork books and examination papers).

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews were the primary method of gathering information from educators and learners. Interviews are used to gather information by means of questions from the researcher to the respondents. Interviews were chosen as a method of data collection because they allowed researcher to have contact conversations with learners and teachers, wherein the respondents were able to share their thoughts freely. Interviews allowed the researcher and participants to be in a place where they were all able to communicate without hindrance of asking or answering questions. This indicates that the participants in the study provided information freely, and the researcher was able to ask questions in sequence where necessary. Educators and learners were the ones who were asked questions about the problem that prompted the researcher to conduct research.

Educators had their set of questions and so were the learners. The researcher prepared the questions to ask the learners and educators who volunteered to be involved in the research. The interview helped the researcher organise the information obtained from the educators. The notes helped the researcher to remember responses received from the participants. The responses were stored in the researcher's

computer with key numbers which would be available if required solely for the researcher's use.

Learners who agreed to participate in the study expressed themselves about the challenges they faced concerning the ability to write argumentative essays in Xitsonga Home Language in Grade 11.

3.6 2. Observations

The study also gathered information from the participants through classroom observations where teaching writing lessons occurred. The purpose of performing observations was to explore the methods and strategies the teachers used when teaching essay writing skills and to observe other aspects such as language, register and context that teachers use to make learners understand content as far as teaching and learning essay writing skills were concerned. In addition, observations enabled the researcher to explore the challenges that prevailed in classroom during lessons, especially those that relate to the skills of teachers to teach learners to write for meaning, manage classroom, address learner's challenges relating to the problem of the study and entice participation among learners.

The researcher collected data by attending two classes at School A and one class at School B observing the methods of teaching essay writing skills and the challenges learners faced in learning essay writing skills. The observations enabled the researcher to understand the challenges that arose during lessons, especially those that related to educators' skills of teaching argumentative essay writing skills.

The researcher used observation schedule that indicated what to observe when writing skills were being taught in the classroom. The schedule placed more attention to the methods of teaching argumentative essay writing skills, the teachers' preparedness, and learner participation during lessons. The schedule helped to identify the strategies educators used when teaching essays writing skills and to look at other aspects of language, and the strategies teachers used to make learners understand what they

are expressed during teaching and learning. The researcher also observed whether learners had challenges in learning writing skills while the teacher was teaching.

3.6.3 Documents analysis

The researcher used the learner's classwork books and examination papers of the third paper (P3) to assess the learners on writing skills. The researcher focused only on parts of the learners' classwork books where they wrote the argumentative essays. Essays from the classwork books and examination scripts to analyse the challenges faced by the learners in writing skills. These processes helped the researcher to examine whether the methods used to teach writing skills had an impact on the challenges learners faced in writing Xitsonga Home Language essays.

The researcher analysed the learners' written tasks to explore the challenges that learners encountered in writing argumentative essays. In this regard, the researcher focused on the learners' written works on Paper 3. The purpose of analysing the third paper (Paper 3) was that it teaches essays and encourages writing longer texts. Hence, the researcher felt it crucial to analyse the challenges experienced by learners in writing argumentative essays by way of using the learners' classroom books and examination papers for Paper 3. The researcher used teacher prepared essays for learners to write argumentative essays and analysed the challenges learners experienced in writing essays. The researcher used transcripts written in her absentia to find out the truth about the challenges faced by the learners.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic data analysis was used to organise the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents analysis (Classwork books and examination papers). According to Connelly (2016), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data.

Connelly (2016) points out that thematic data analysis is the process of identifying, organising, and revealing meanings in terms of structures that are important to the process of thematic data analysis. The objective framework was chosen to work in this

research to help the document findings to identify the challenges learners face in learning the argumentative essay writing skills. The researcher read and reviewed the data and presented all the findings. The results of the information obtained from educators and learners were compared. Purposeful organisation of data helped the researcher to select only what was important from the collected data. Botma, Greef, Mullaoudzi and Wright (2016) assert that objectively organising data helps to form relationships between different data sets and that sorting helps to identify how the data contributes to the research problem. This type of analysis helped the researcher to extract the information and compare it with the results from other literature. This helped the researcher to document all the results and to be able to analyse them critically.

3.7.1 Interview schedule

Data from interviews were transcribed to obtain keywords from the participants about the challenges they faced in teaching and learning essay writing skills. These highlights were used to reveal what happened during the lessons to compare what was obtained from the participants with what was observed during the training. This helped to determine whether the challenges participants claimed to experience were realistic considering what happened in the classroom. The researcher was able to identify these indicating challenges that prevented learners from writing argumentative essays.

3.7.2 Observation schedule

The recorded information from observations was closely examined to identify what was not seen and clearly heard during observations. This process was followed to enable the researcher to identify the parts of language teaching that the educators focused on most while teaching writing skills. This process also helped the researcher to identify the strategies that educators use to teach writing skills and to see how the strategies they used to teach writing skills helped them to achieve curriculum goals. Challenges such as those identified for learners were used as training sessions to develop writing components.

3.7.3 Organising documents

Details from the documents (Classwork books and examination papers) were printed. Vocabulary categories describing the research problem were used to highlight some of the challenges in support of other components. Therefore, this study was used guidelines and tools developed by Botma, Greef, Mulaudzi and Wright (2016) to examine the development of components of writing and how they can be divided.

3.8 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The researcher considered the following ethical principles while collecting the data:

3.8.1 Request for permission

The researcher requested permission from the University of Limpopo Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (UL-TREC). The permission was granted to the researcher in the form of a Clearance Certificate that confirmed the ethicality and safety of the study to the participants. As the study took place at the chosen schools from the chosen circuit, the researcher needed permission to conduct the study in the schools. Before conducting the study, a request for permission was sent to the circuit office for the attention of the circuit manager, and to the selected schools for the attention of school principals. When the school principals permitted the researcher to conduct this study at their school, they were requested to inform Grade 11 Xitsonga language educators, learners, and parents in cases of minor ages, that all relevant stakeholders should not be surprised during the days of the visit by the researcher.

3.8.2 Informed consent

Consent forms were used as a means of informing participants and the supervisors of the research about the research sites. They were made aware of the purpose, problem, direction, and achievements of this research. Important details about the main purpose of this study in the selected schools and the importance of the participants in the study were indicated in the forms. This helped participants to decide

whether they were willing to participate or not. Therefore, those who were interested to participate in the study were fully informed about the research and confirmed their willingness to participate by signing the forms that were provided to them.

3.8.3 The right to privacy

The researcher ensured that participants have rights to confidentiality. In this regard, the researcher indicated that participants' privacy will be treated with respect, such that the information collected in a discreet location will not be used for any other purposes except for this study. As such, the names of the participants nor of the schools this study was conducted were not disclosed in any part of this study. Hence, the participants were interviewed in discreet locations for their comfort and privacy.

3.8.4 Confidentiality

According to Creswell and Poth (2018) confidentiality is to keep sensitive information secret. Participants were assured that their names will not be mentioned in the study. This enabled the participants to participate in the study without fear of being exposed by the researcher. Participants were also guaranteed of their privacy in the study such that the researcher did not use participants' real names. This enabled participants to take part in the research without fear of exposure by the researcher.

3.8.5 Respect

The researcher showed respect to participants' opinions and feelings during all the stages of this research. The researcher also ensured that respect was given to participants' decision to withdraw from the study. Participants were not coerced, interrogated nor threatened regarding their decisions to withdraw from the study.

3.8.6 Anonymity

According to Nashirova (2018) anonymity is the way in which information is kept unknown or hidden. Participants were assured that their responses would not be linked

to where they came from. In this regard, the researcher concealed the addresses of participants and their names.

3.8.7 Protection from harm

The researcher ensured that all participants in the research were safe and that no procedures or aids that were used for communication posed any threat to their safety. Participants were assured that no one would be harmed during the investigation.

3.8.8 Discontinuance

Participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary. Therefore, no one was forced to participate. The researcher also informed the participants that should they wish to withdraw from participation, they must notify the researcher, and that they will not be penalised for such a decision.

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the methodology used to conduct the research, the research design, data collection techniques and instruments, as well as other methodological aspects of this study. The chapter also highlighted the perspective that is relevant to this research and the intention to implement this perspective. Furthermore, the researcher used a critical research methodology and explained how this methodology can be used in research. The researcher concluded by presenting the code of conduct for the research. Thus, the next chapter focuses on data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of data collected from two selected schools. The main purpose of the research was to explore the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners regarding the ability to write Xitsonga Home Language argumentative essays in Mafarana Circuit.

Guided by the methods discussed in Chapter 3, this chapter shows how the data collected were organised and presents all the findings of the research. This chapter answered the questions and sub-questions that the research had in the form of interviews, observations, and document analysis. The researcher noted important information during data collection to support some of the findings reported in this chapter. The notes also helped the researcher to organise the information in case the researcher could not remember some of the participants' assertions during all processes of data collection.

4.2 PROFILE OF THE SCHOOLS

4.2.1 School A

School A had a total of 436 learners and 13 educators. Four (4) of the educators were Xitsonga Home Language educators. The school runs from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

➤ **School policy**

School times

Lessons time: Half past seven (07h30) to half past two (14h30) in the afternoon.

Study time: half past two (14h30) to four o'clock (16h00).

Prayer time: Monday and Friday at half past seven (07h30) to fifteen minutes before nine (07h45)

➤ **Discipline**

Learners who find themselves guilty at school are called to the parents and the school parental representative body (SGB). If a learner fails, the learner is assessed at school in accordance with the rules, and out of respect of the learner's right to learn especially if the learner has engaged in fights with other learners.

4.2.2 School B

School B had 193 learners and 7 educators. There was one Xitsonga Home Language educator. School B also runs from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

➤ **School policy**

School times

Lesson time: Half past seven (07h30) to half past two (14h30) in the afternoon

Study time: Half past two (14h30) to four o'clock (16h00)

Prayer time: Monday and Friday at half past seven (07h30) to fifteen minutes before eight (07h45)

➤ **Discipline**

Punishment in the form of corporal punishment is not used in school as indicated in the Bill of Rights. Learners who find themselves guilty or involved in crime are extended to the legal arm where their parents are summoned to settle the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved at the school, it then proceeds to the point where the learner is expelled if appropriate.

4.3 PROFILE OF EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS' PARTICIPANTS

4.3.1 Learners' profile

Learner code	Gender	Age
L1	Female	17
L2	Female	16
L3	Male	17
L4	Male	18
L5	Female	17
L6	Male	16

4.3.2 Educators profile

Educator code	Age	Gender	Qualification	Experience
E1	28	Female	Bachelor of Education Senior Phase and Further Education and Training	5 years
E2	48	Male	Diploma in Education (Xitsonga)	12 years
E3	36	Female	Bachelor of Education Senior Phase and Further Education and Training	9 years

4.4 DATA PRESENTATION

The details of this research were presented in the following categories: Data from interviews with educators and learners, data from classroom observations, and data from documents analysis (learners' classwork books and examination papers).

4.4.1 Interviews

Three (3) educators from two selected schools were interviewed in different locations with each educator answering the questions freely because there was no one else but the participant and the researcher. Two (2) educators were from School A, and one (1) educator was from School B. The researcher wrote down all the educators' responses. The researcher also interviewed six (6) learners from all the observed classrooms.

Since the research was conducted in two schools the researcher was able to interview all six (6) learners who were willing to participate. Four (4) learners were from School A of whom two were male and two were female. Two (2) learners were from School B, and they were also sexually diverse, one female and one male.

➤ Educators interview from the two selected schools.

The researcher interviewed two (2) educators at School A and one (1) educator at School B using the questions she prepared for the interviews. The questions sought to reveal the causes of the challenges experienced by Xitsonga Home Language learners in writing essays in Grade 11. Educators were asked the following questions:

Question 1: Is teaching essay writing skills important? Why?

E1 (School A):

“Teaching essay writing skills is important in everyday Xitsonga Home Language lessons because it is often the lesson itself that often challenges learners to create something for themselves along the given topic about writing an essay of some kind.”

E2 (School B)

Following interactions of the educator with learners and responding to how the educator knows her learners in the essay writing skills lessons the second educator responded to the researcher as follows:

“Yes, the writing skills is important to teach but many learners are not interested in learning the Xitsonga writings especially the essays. Learners are not interested in writing long texts in their own language, which is why the importance of teaching essay writing skills is often overlooked.”

Teaching of writing is an important aspect of language learning and a tool for assessment in Basic and Higher Education across the globe. Learners need to acquire proficient writing skills to learn and to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity, the educator concludes.

E3 (School B)

An educator from School A responded in this way:

“Yes, writing skills lessons are very important in everyday Xitsonga Home Language lessons where the lesson of writing helps learners to open their minds especially when they devote themselves to creating topics or writing under them.”

The above educators’ interviews reveal that teaching writing skills is indeed important. Their responses are supported by Nondabula (2020, p. 123-125) when stating that: “Teaching writing is an important aspect of language learning and a tool for assessment in Basic and Higher Education across the globe. Learners need to acquire proficient writing skills to learn and to demonstrate their knowledge and creativity.”

Given the feedback from all educators, educators seem to be aware of their role in enabling learners to form meaningful sentences as they showed that they can do this by showing learners the importance of learning to write and encouraging them to practice writing. Thus, when learners leave the primary grades with understanding and interest in writing, this can enhance the value of learning writing with commitment using the help of educators.

Question 2: What methods do you use to prepare lessons to teach essay writing skills?

E1 (School A)

The educator responded in a very simple manner where she showed how she was preparing her lessons on essay writing skills.

The educator indicated that she writes the topics she wants to exemplify while teaching learners writing. Firstly, the teacher places great emphasis on fiction which is considered as a sub-subject. She teaches fiction independently so that learners can have a good start in writing their essays. The educator confirmed that since teaching writing should be taught step by step for the learner to express what is written, the educator plans writing skills lesson to be weekly, as on one day she indicated that she will not have enough time to teach all the steps of writing completely because of time.

E2 (School A)

The educator responded as follows:

The educator indicated that she follows mostly what is written in the CAPS document to prepare lessons. She also indicated that she is mostly helped by the instruction for teaching long essays and short essays to prepare her lessons where she uses the instruction as a learning aid. She indicated that she adjusts her essay lessons to two or one week so that she can reach all the process approach of writing.

E3 (School B)

The educator responded as follows:

“Writing skills require a little more reading time where it requires that as an educator teach writing following the process of writing.”

The educator indicated that she organises her writing tasks into weekly tasks as stipulated in CAPS document. She also pointed out that some steps in writing even non essay writing are self-explanatory. Thus, she can teach different language lessons using the CAPS document.

Feedback from all educators revealed that writing lessons require more time as educators indicated that they adjust their Xitsonga essay writing lessons to weekly or bi-weekly sessions. However, they pointed out that this time is not enough to teach all the writing steps as shown in the CAPS document. Gezmis (2020) points out that the process writing is a time-consuming process that involves teaching writing skills from the beginning of learning to write. The Department of Education and educators should expand the time in essay writing lessons where learners would be given more time to write in class with the help of educators. This will help those who are more vulnerable to write the content of the essay according to their plans.

Question 3: What methods are used to teach the Xitsonga essay writing skills lessons?

E1 (School A)

The educator responded in this way regarding the methods she uses to prepare the essay writing lessons.

The educator responded that the methods she often uses especially when starting a lesson of a particular type of Xitsonga essays writing are explanatory methods. The educator indicated that these methods allow her to highlight the steps of writing argumentative essay as she explains them.

E2 (School A)

In response to a question posed to him about approaches to teaching essay writing skills the educator indicated that he uses two teaching methods where he uses mostly explanatory method and the question-and-answer method. Through explanatory methods, he indicated that he often uses a chart where he has written a plan for and explains using it to show learners what they should plan for. In the use of question-and-answer method, the teacher indicated that he asked learners questions about the step he was working on that day and then saw what the learners understood and did not understand by following their answers.

E3 (School B)

The educator responded as follows:

“Explanatory teaching is the most appropriate used method, especially when teaching writing essay lessons.”

She indicated that it is easy for her to explain a topic to the learners while showing them how to write their essays. She also explained how learners should begin writing argumentative essays, with great emphasis on planning and following the outlined plan so that learners know what to write about in their essay.

Data from interviews reveal that all educators used explanatory methods to teach writing skills, while one educator also used the question-and answer-method. The question-and-answer method used did not seem to help learners because many learners still had difficulty in forming words at the end of the observations.

Question 4: How do you assess learners' work on Xitsonga essay writing skills?

E1 (School A)

The educator was asked a fourth question that wanted to know more about the methods they used to assess learners' written work.

The educator indicated that in the classroom writing activities, she mainly adjusts the structure of the essay without using a rubric or crossword puzzle but only looking at whether the structure is correct and whether the learners follow the writing process. Regarding examinations or tests, she indicated that she makes extensive use of a rubric, which indicates the areas she should look at when correcting aspects such as structure, spelling, and use of standardised language.

E2 (School A)

In response to the question of assessment, the educator indicated that in classroom activities, he works with the learners and corrects them on spelling and formatting errors following the plan he has taught them. He also indicated that he was more assertive of sketch issues in classroom activities where he checked more curiously where the learner had sketched and indicated on the sketch the mistakes he had found and corrected. Concerning examinations and tests, the teacher indicated that he assesses the learners' work using a rubric that guides him on the steps he should consider when assessing learners' essays.

E3 (School B)

The educator responded as follows:

“For all writing activities I use a rubric where I focus on the use of language within sentences, structure and whether the learner is not out of context while writing.”

This respondent also stated that she corrects wrong words in the learners' essays by writing the correct word above the wrong one for the learner to become aware of spelling mistakes and avoid repetition of such mistakes.

The results showed that educators use rubrics to assess learners in terms of specific writing components. Sibeko (2019) confirmed that the practice of using a rubric to prepare learners' tasks makes it easier for learners to practice writing based on how they will be assessed using the rubric. Therefore, rubrics serve as evidence of how learners were awarded marks for their work.

Question 5: What challenges do you face in teaching Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills?

E1 (School A)

In response to this question the educator said, "Many learners in Grade 11 are unable to form meaningful sentences." She pointed out that learners who cannot write what is said in class do not engage in writing activities, and while many of them are not interested in Xitsonga essay writing lessons, it becomes more difficult to teach and make them understand.

E2 (School A)

The second educator pointed out that, "Many learners, when it comes to forming grammar sentences, fail to list words in sentences. They often write in English words and use excessive punctuation of the wrong words." He also pointed out that some learners are unable to follow what he has shown them in their planning when writing essays. This makes them unable to express the context of the sentence clearly and to write coherent paragraphs.

E3 (School B)

The educator replied: "Learners use limited language in their essays. Some use their dialects-tendency which is motivated by their background. This makes learners fail to write." The educator confirmed that learners are no longer committed to reading and that this stimulates laziness in them when it comes to writing. "They often make spelling mistakes because they are not used to reading books or other texts that were going to make them familiar with good writing," said the third educator.

Educators' responses revealed that learners are not interested in writing lessons. Learners are more concerned about not being able to arrange words correctly in a sentence, which is why they end up forming meaningless sentences. Moses and Mohamad (2019) confirm this when stating that one of the main problems in most school is the lack of materials that can create an ineffective writing environment.

The statement above reveals that the difficulties of teaching writing in schools are mainly due to lack of resources. The biggest challenge educators face is learners' inability to form sentences whereby learners fail to separate the subject from the verb in sentences.

Question 6: What other methods do you think can be used to teach essay writing skills?

E1 (School A)

The educator responded that the question-and-answer method of teaching can be used as an alternative support method because it can challenge learners' thinking if used too often. She also pointed out that as Xitsonga Home Language educator, she should follow up on teaching learners the skills of writing and sentence formation. This will help learners to write and form meaningful sentences when writing Xitsonga essays.

E2 (School B)

The second educator responded as follows: "I use explanation and question-and-answer methods. Using these methods simultaneously is effective because I can explain the steps of writing before learners start writing."

One can infer that using the two methods mentioned above seemed to help the teacher to identify areas that need more focus in learners' writing. For instance, if he sees many learners failing to answer certain questions, he can then give them time to write while observing whether they are following what he had taught them.

E3 (School B)

The educator responded as follows:

"As educators they can train learners to write where they are given the task of forming sentences from which they form paragraphs. This is likely to enable them to write a

plan that they will then be able to follow to produce an essay that makes sense-although it can take a lot of time.”

The comments of all educators revealed that educators should follow up on learners' activities. Two educators confirmed that the question-and-answer as well as explanatory teaching methods can improve learners' writing and sentence formation skills. Educators should encourage their learners to engage in writing activities. Educators should also instil an interest of writing among their learners. This can be developed by educators through working with learners.

Question 7: How can the challenges learners face in writing essays be improved?

E1 (School A)

The educator responded that they, as educators, should teach writing skills in a way that follows the learners' activities closely to see if they understand what they have been taught. The educator stated that they can also encourage learners to participate in writing activities, which will ensure that they are not left behind.

E2 (School A)

The second educator pointed out that educators should instil the interest of writing among the learners. They can instil it by giving a prize to the one who performs well in writing. This will make more learners write with the goal of winning the prize. Additionally, this will be a way to get learners interested in Xitsonga essay writing lessons.

E3 (School B)

The educator responded as follows:

Educators use the standardised language with learners so that learners are familiar with the standardised language instead of the language they use at home. The language used to learn makes it difficult for learners to distinguish between the

colloquial, spoken and written language. This is one of the reasons why learners face challenges because it makes learners unable to write essays.

The above answers reveal that spoken language plays a role in learners' inability to write essays properly. Eskalieva and Jaksulikova (2021) argue that the problem that makes learners unable to form meaningful sentences in many schools is the lack of sentence formation textbooks that can encourage learners to write meaningfully. Learners should see the challenges they face by practicing writing so that educators can also align teaching writing content with the skills learners need.

Learners' interviews from the two selected schools

Six (6) learners were selected for interviews with the researcher out of which four (4) learners were from School A, and two (2) were from School B. Due to time constraints, the researcher was able to present information from the interviews of four (4) learners from the two selected schools. The researcher selected the results from the learner interviews that were most responsive to the problem at hand.

Question 1: What challenges do you face in writing essays in Xitsonga Home Language?

L1 (School A)

The learner indicated that she often did not understand why his results came back low because he just wrote everything that was needed in the essay. He confirmed that the most difficult thing for him is to write the essay and proofread it by himself. This is because when he must explain what is in the essay, he sees the same essay which to him does not have a mistake.

L2 (School A)

The second learner indicated that she often connects words that should not be connected. She further explained that excessive spelling mistakes make it difficult for her to write and cause her to achieve low marks.

L3 (School B)

The learner indicated that she cannot distinguish between the words used to speak and the words that should be used when writing an essay especially when telling a story. She pointed out that writing words incorrectly often causes confusion of words in her essay because of writing as if she is speaking.

L4 (School B)

The learner indicated that he is unable to brainstorm, use mind maps, and to choose appropriate information to plan ideas.

The results from the learners' responses reveal that the learners cannot write appropriately because they cannot follow the writing steps namely: preparing for writing, where they should know what to do at every step. Makalela (2015) supports this in arguing that situation becomes even more difficult when learners lack cognitive ranges that they can use to make meaning to new lessons. Thus, educators should encourage learners to write meaningfully so that they can improve their writing skills. This can enable them to apply the skills they have learned when writing their Xitsonga essays and when writing for their life needs.

Question 2: How do the challenges experienced by learners interfere with their ability to write?

L1 (School A)

The first learner indicated how the challenges she faces interfere with her Xitsonga essay writing skills lessons. The learner said that she often does not write her essays because she does not see her results changing, and her paper is not well corrected. In other words, the teacher does not give feedback on whether she missed the structure of the essay or used wrong words in a sentence and so on.

L2 (School A)

The second learner responded that he tries hard to write correct words in the sentences but often makes similar mistakes. This causes him to become discouraged and lose interest in the essay writing lessons.

L3 (School B)

The learner pointed out that when learning Xitsonga essays, educators do not teach them all essay types but tend to teach one type of essay. These make them ignorant of the characteristics of essays in general. Hence, they are unable to compose different types of essays properly because they do not know the structures nor characteristics of various essays.

L4 (School B)

The learner indicated that he has difficulty in the essay lessons because he is unable to form sentences, punctuate, organise words within sentences, and use good writing. He confirmed that his essays often contain many spelling errors that he struggles to improve on.

Feedback from all learners indicates that learners have challenges with essay structure, using correct words in sentences, sentence formation, punctuation, word order, and good writing. According to Zahirul Islam, Moshiur and Khorshed (2019), learners are unable to write meaningfully because they have not first learned writing skills where writing development is built. Learners should have a good start in learning to write for them to write meaningfully. This can be achieved through exposing learners to wider reading at the beginning of school.

Question 3: How do educators help you improve the challenges you face in writing argumentative essays in Xitsonga Home language.

L1 (School A)

The learner pointed out that, “Educators are often the ones who see that learners benefit when they encounter difficulties and are the first to notice when they are correcting classwork book or offer to help”. The learner replied that, “The educator asks those who are unable to write a plan of an essay to come and get help before they start writing essays. If no one shows failure, the educator uses what is found in the classwork books of individual learner to help them where they are weighed down.”

L2 (School A)

The second learner responded by pointing out that the educator helps them by practicing the sounds of words and by saying, shaping, and seeing whether the words they say are written together or separately.

L3 (School B)

The learner indicated that her educator uses explanatory methods to teach them essay writing skills. The learner also indicated that the methods used by her educator in teaching essay writing skills make her love to write because the method challenges her mind. The learner indicated that the explanatory strategies used by the educator are more likely to be understood because they provide a mental picture of what has been explained.

L4 (School B)

The learner indicated that the educator had conversations with them in class in a figurative way where the educator helped them by using some examples of conversations and following the beginning of the essay. The learner explained that the methods their educator used to assess their thinking such as asking them questions and using a symbol on the chart, make his mind come back to learning when his mind is absent from the classroom.

The results from the learners reveal that learners are not interested in learning to write, nor do they practice writing. The methods used to teach them to write encourage them and bring their ideas back to the classroom with the help of educators, but they find it difficult to use correct writing where they cannot start sentences in capital letters, connect words appropriately and use correct punctuation. Paryshan (2019) claims that it is important for an educator to be aware of the areas of writing that learners struggle with and find alternative ways to address the challenges learners face essay writing. Learners should therefore practice reading to see how academic writers write and to increase improve on different writing components.

4.4.2 Lesson observation

Data were collected by observing Xitsonga argumentative essay writing lessons in two classrooms at School A and one classroom at School B. The researcher observed the use of teaching and learning aids, teaching methods of essay writing skills and challenges which learners experienced in learning Xitsonga argumentative essay writing skills.

➤ Teaching and learning aids

School A

School A Grade 11 class was divided into two classes where the researcher had to attend both carefully because they were taught by different educators. However, due to time constraints, the researcher was able to attend one classroom to conduct observations.

The educator started her lesson in an interesting way by writing the plan on a chart where everything in the plan was clearly visible and understandable. The educator used all the planning methods where she showed learners an example with a mind map that was on the chart so that learners could choose the planning method that they understood best. The educator's chart with an example of a mind map helped the

learners to understand the concept better where everyone could plan while showing greater understanding.

School B

The researcher observed and listened carefully to the learners as they were taught an argumentative essay where the educator used some newsletters with little reading information to show the learners the structure of good writing. Learners were taught to form sentences and paragraphs in an essay through the theme 'Writing and Presentation'.

Based on classroom observations in both schools, all educators appeared prepared to teach writing skills although some learners appeared to have little misunderstanding at the beginning of the lessons. The educators worked hard to unveil the steps of essay writing following the topics they had prepared for the learners to learn on that day. Rashid, Hui and Shunting (2022) support the teaching approaches that use aids as they validate that using different approaches helps learners to understand faster and easier when other approaches are not understood. Learners can have interest in learning to write when they find it easier to understand what they are being taught. This could minimise the challenges they experience in writing essays.

➤ Strategies for teaching essay writing skills

School A

The educator used explanatory methods extensively where she explained to the learners at the beginning of the lesson by giving them a topic as an example and explaining the purpose using the example she had prepared. The researcher observed that the educator also used question-and-answer method where she asked her learners about their plans for writing essays. Many learners showed interest in using a mind-map to plan their essays. The educator gave the learners the topic: "The advantages and disadvantages of family planning" for them to plan on and write an outline of an essay as homework. The learners were given equal time (15 minutes)

during the lesson to prepare the essay plans before they went and wrote individually at home.

School B

The educator mentioned that in all major subjects they teach, they are teaching in accordance with Xitsonga policy document which reflects the everyday activities. The educator used explanatory methods where she explained the steps to writing essays. From the educator's explanation, it was clear that time was rushed because in the curriculum writing skills are allocated less time for classroom teaching and learning. To save time, the educator focused on the outline of the essay, the structure and purpose. The educator looked at the work she gave learners previously where they wrote essays on the topic: "Discuss the good and bad ways of the internet for today's learners". The educator showed the learners an example of a plan as a correction and asked one learner to read what they wrote in their plan.

In the first school, the observations revealed that learners were actively engaged in learning and that they showed interest and understanding of what they were being taught. In the second school, the researcher found that most of the learners did not write their homework (essays) while some did not follow the essay writing steps taught in classroom. Gezmis (2020) supported the educators' approaches to teaching essays by stating that the process writing is an approach that incorporates writing skills from the very beginning of the learning process.

The Department of Education should increase time for teaching essays in the curriculum because, at some time, teaching essays require learners to understand all the stages of the process writing approach. Thus, considering that the time is too short for educators to complete the requirements of the curriculum, they are unable to teach learners all steps of the process writing approach when teaching essay writing.

➤ **Challenges learners have regarding Xitsonga essay writing skills**

School A

In school A, the researcher found that most learners showed more difficulties in writing meaningful essays, while others had some difficulties writing coherent essays. The study found that spelling errors within sentences were a minor challenge with some learners showing difficulties in forming sentences. Since teaching essays takes a long time, the researcher was able to observe the use of essays during teaching and learning. The researcher observed mostly the issues of writing and challenges that learners faced write. Therefore, the study found that time for teaching and learning was a major challenge as some learners could not write quickly and ran out time before they could write anything tangible in their plans. All of these were challenges that learners faced in the limited time given to them to learn about the purpose of writing essays.

School B

Most learners failed to arrange words within sentences correctly in school B. When they wrote sentences, they were inconsistent with word order. Some learners failed to express their ideas when writing essays because they could not form meaningful sentences and could not adhere to Xitsonga grammatical rules. As a result, their messages in the written essays were unclear and un-understandable.

The results from the first school show that learners found it difficult to write coherent essays, while in School B the results have shown that learners struggled with using punctuation marks in sentences. In short, the study revealed that learners in both schools experienced difficulties with word order, spelling, punctuations, grammar, and sentence formation while time posed a huge challenge on teachers to address these challenges. According to Gezmis (2020) and Moses and Mohamad (2019), errors in constructing meaningful sentences is mainly caused by three things: dialect, punctuation, and spelling problems.

Moses and Mohamad (2019) confirmed that the challenges faced by learners include language deficiency, poor writing, lack of reading materials and learners' lack of readiness to write. Learners should practice reading to become familiar with good writing styles to minimise the difficulties of writing meaningful and coherent essays. Their commitment will reduce the pressures they encounter.

4.4.3 Document analysis (Learners' classroom activities, test, and examination papers)

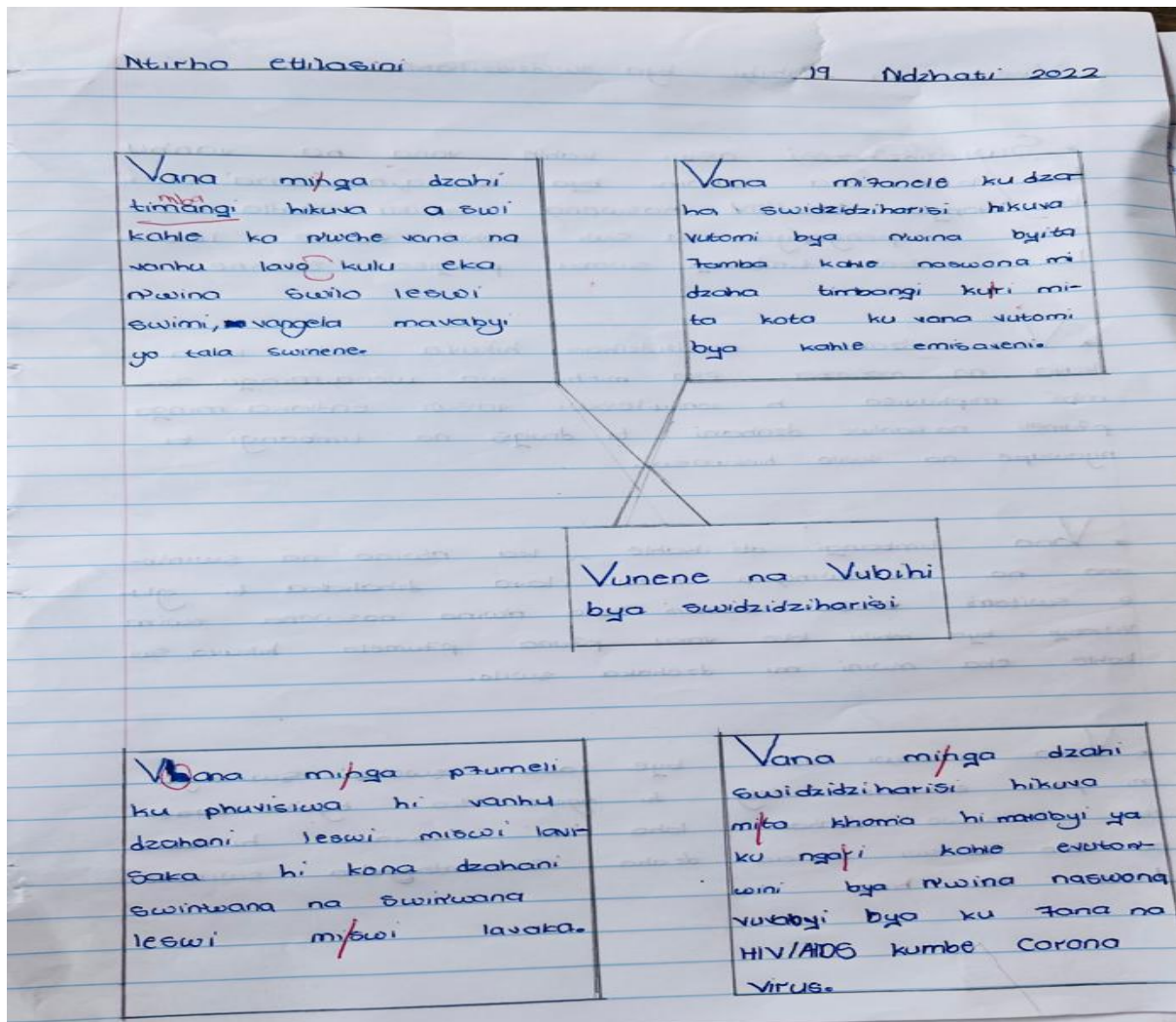
Data from the two selected schools were also gathered in the form of illustrations from learners' classwork books and examination papers. These were analysed and carefully organised to find the answer to the research problem. The researcher used the learners' classwork books, and Paper 3 tests and exams on which the learners were tested on writing argumentative essays. The researcher took the learners' classwork books where they wrote the argumentative essays and presented them with the papers of those who wrote essays to explore the challenges experienced by learners in writing Xitsonga argumentative essays.

➤ Learners' classroom activities

Works from the learners' written essays were analysed. The pictures below show the works that the learners wrote.

School A

Learners wrote an argumentative essay under the topic: *Vunene na vubihi bya swidzidziharisi*. (Advantages and disadvantages of using drugs) The activity below shows one of the argumentative essay activities that the educator planned for learners to do in class.



The researcher found that L1-6 had difficulties in connecting words and were unable to write coherent sentences. The learner's thinking showed that he did not understand the topic because in his thinking there was more meaning about the topic than what would be presented in the essay. The learner wrote the following words and connected them where they should not have connected them:

minga should have been written as: **mi nga (do not)**

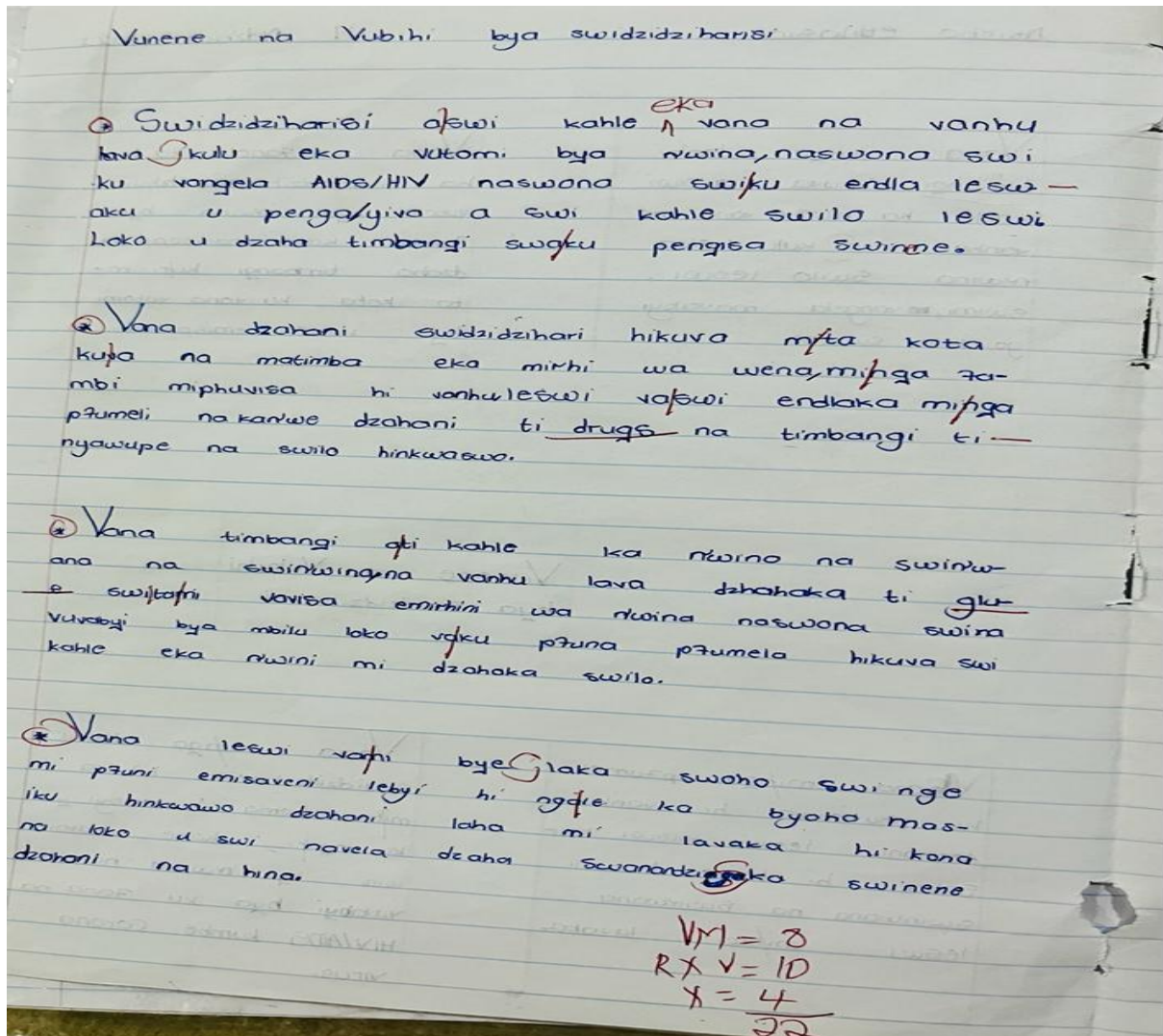
miswi – **mi swi (you should)**

kuri – **ku ri (it is)**

mita – **mi ta (you will)**

ngari – **nga ri.**

The word **timangi** was wrong where the learner should have written **timbangi** (weed)
 The learners also spelt the word **lava kulu** wrongly, which should have been written as **lavakulu** (the adults).



In the first paragraph of the essay which is an introductory paragraph, the learner did not indicate that it is an introduction because it does not attract the reader's attention. The learner started with discussing the topic wrongly as it is without introduction. The learner's paragraph comprises of one long sentence with few ideas, and this is wrong. Regarding spelling, the learners misspelt the following words:

aswi – which should have been **a swi**, (it is not)

swiku – **swi ku** (it says)

lava kulu – **lavakulu** (the adults)

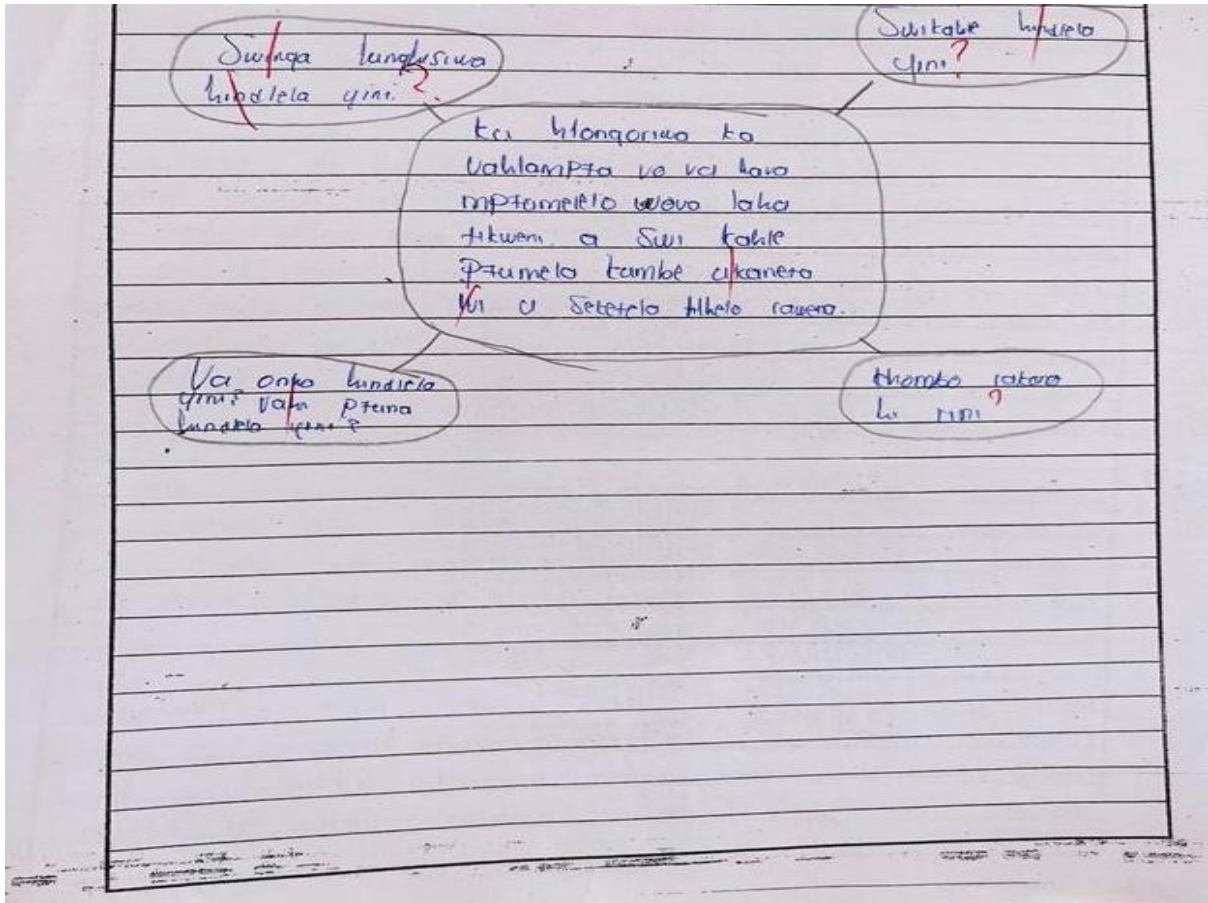
The word ***lava kulu*** should have been written as one word and become ***lavakulu*** (**the adults**) because when it is written as two words, it causes ambiguity in the learner's sentence.

The learner's essay contains shows that the learner has writing difficulties as he often connected words that should not be connected and disconnecting those that should be connected. The learner showed understanding of the topic and was able to show all aspects of the text without filling in a particular sleep and did not hold his feelings in the right direction. The structure of the essay was good, but his essay lacked syntax. He also used the English word (**drugs**) instead of ***swidzidziharisi***, (**aids**) instead of ***xipalansawuto***. These are some of the difficulties that learners showed regarding Home Language vocabulary as they wrote some words in English unaware that such words exist in their Xitsonga Home Language.

The researcher found that learners struggled more with good writing, writing paragraphs with coherence, and writing interesting introductions. In the essays, learners showed that they have difficulties with writing essays that show all essential aspects of the topic worth discussing in the essay. Learners also have difficulties in connecting and writing correct words. This affects the context of their sentences and messages in the essays.

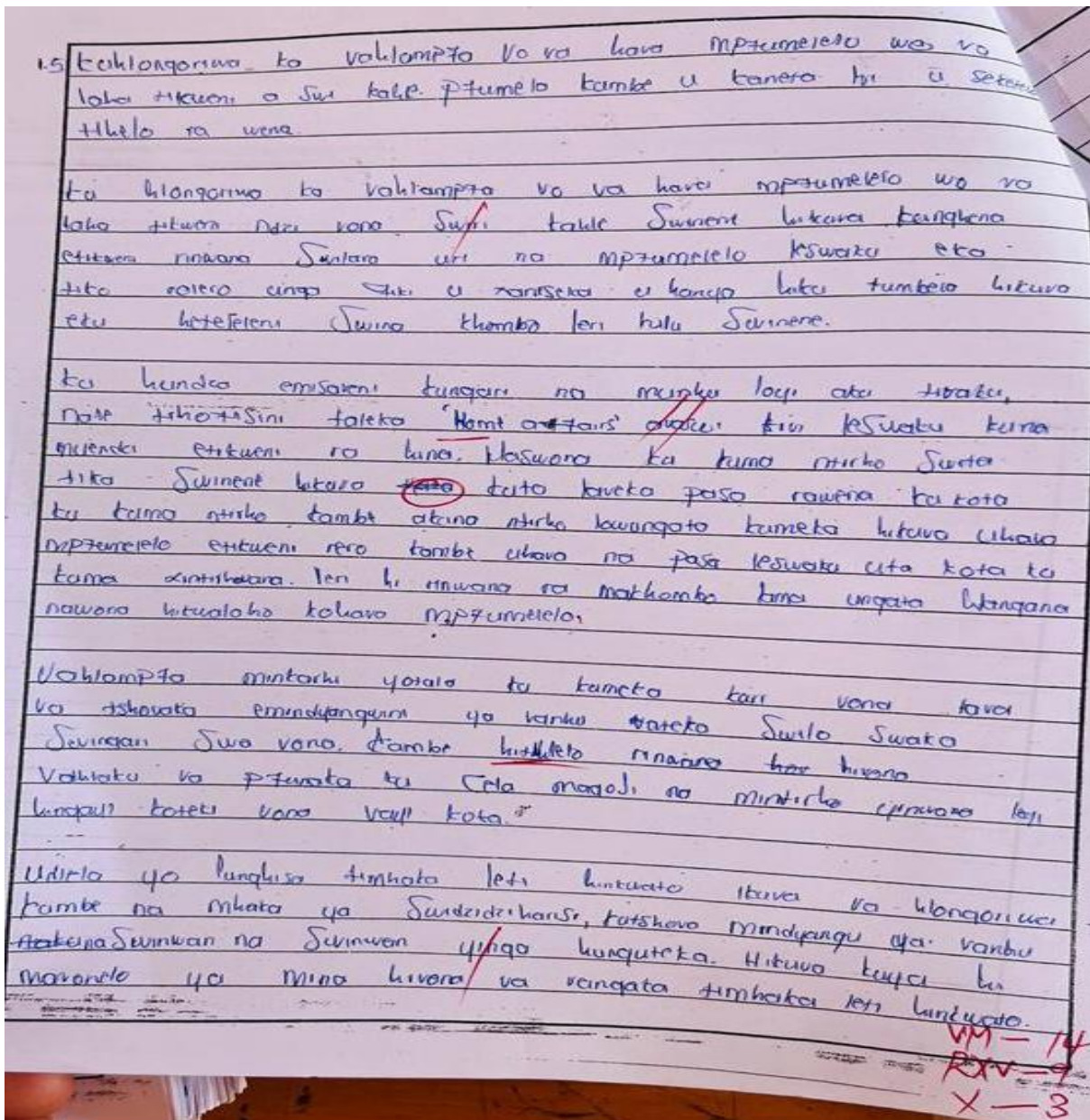
School B

In the second school, the researcher found that had two essay lessons in which they learned narrative and descriptive essays. Although the mentioned types of essays were not of interest to the researcher because the study focused on the challenges faced by the learners in argumentative essay writing, the researcher used one of the essays to examine the use of language within the essay in terms of good writing and structure.



In the learner's first writing step, the researcher found that the planning structure was appropriate where the learner used a mind map to plan their work. This was a discussive essay type that the educator chose to teach from the characters shown in Xitsonga CAPS document. According to CAPS (2011), the educator is expected to teach essays as follows: 1 x Essay: descriptive / narrative / argumentative. The educator was found to have chosen an opinion piece that they could write an assignment about in class.

The researcher found that the learner's essay contained spelling and punctuation errors. In the misspelling of words, the learner connected words that should not be connected, and regarding punctuations, the learner did not show the question mark (?) where it was required.



The above essay followed the right format, even though the beginning of the essay was not striking. Spelling errors were detected in the essay where most detached words were written as one. This made the learners' essay incoherent as the incorrect spelling of words distorted the context of the essay.

The researcher's findings on the learners' work clearly indicate that most learners had no interest in writing. This is evident from the fact that most learners from both schools wrote very short essays. Spelling errors were also a challenge to many learners. As such, learners' essays were found to be incomplete because they did not show all aspects of essay writing. For instance, in some of the reviewed argumentative essays,

learners pointed to one side of the topic, which turned their argumentative essays into discussive essays. Learners also expressed their feelings about the essay topic but tended to be one-sided, and this rendered their essays wrong.

Educators should correct learners when they make mistakes in forming words and sentences. This will encourage learners to write correct words and form meaningful sentences. Educators should practice sentence formation by giving learners specific words. This will prevent learners from failing to form meaningful sentences and to write complete essays. Educators should provide learners with more writing activities and create extra lessons to re-teach the writing skills that learners fall short of. Thus, learners need more discussion and reflective essays to develop meaningful writing skills.

➤ **Tests and examination papers**

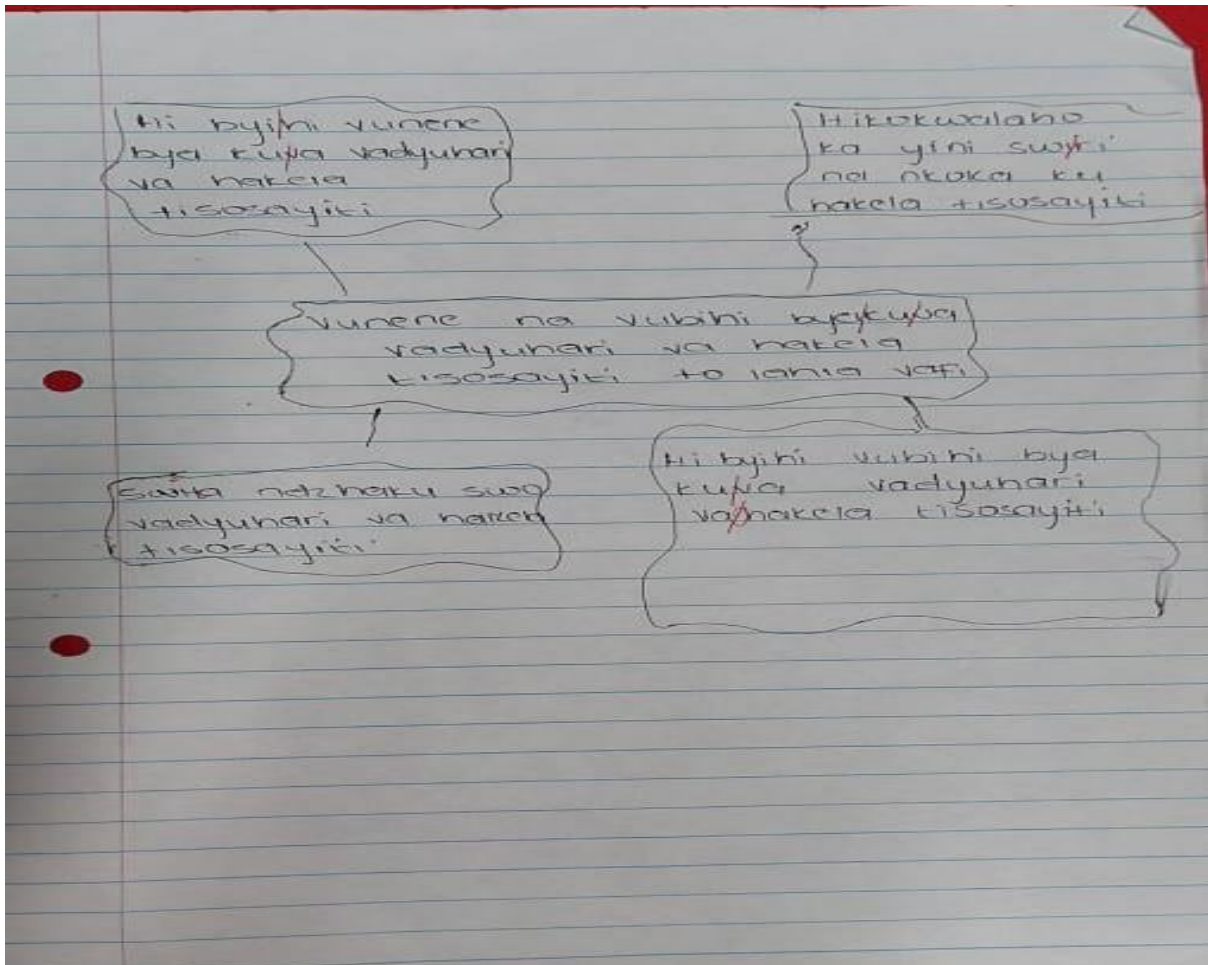
The Grade 11 learners who wrote essays in their examinations were ninety-eight (98) in School A and forty-three (43) in School B. The researcher took the exam papers of the learners in both schools and looked at their third paper results—the purpose of which was to examine the type of essays they mostly preferred to write and the difficulties thereof. Although the researcher also examined the learners' performance levels in both schools, the focal point of the evaluation of their examination scripts was on their syntax, spelling, grammar, and punctuations. Therefore, the study found that most learners passed the essay writing sections of the examinations and that most of their results ranged from 30 to 40 marks. However, the researcher found that most learners in both schools preferred to write narrative essays among the different types of essays they were given to choose from, such as argumentative essays. The study also found that in School A, only three learners opted to write argumentative essays, while in School B, only two learners opted for argumentative essays.

School A

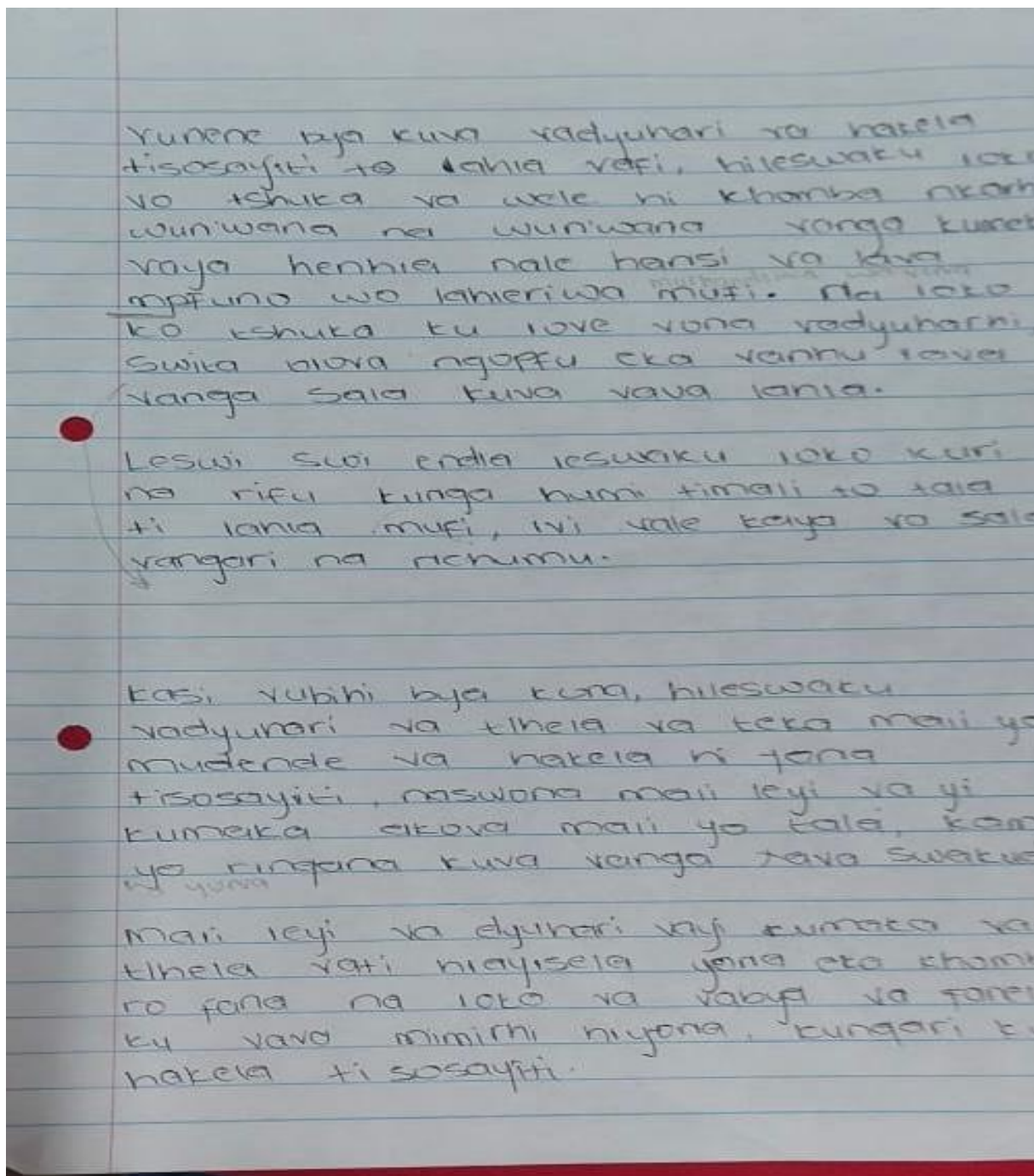
In the first school the researcher selected the learners' papers to analyse their argumentative essay writing skills. Since there were three learners who chose to write argumentative essays, the researcher sorted all the papers of the essays received.

The essay below is one of those scheduled for **task 5** of the year which was an essay task where eight questions were asked, and learners were expected to choose one topic they best understood.

The learner chose the topic of the discussion essay: **Vunene na vubihhi bya ku va vadyuhari va hakela tisosayiti to lahla vafi** .(The advantages and disadvantages of the elderly paying funeral societey)



The learner wrote the first step of her brainstorming essay where she used a mind map to plan her work. The researcher found that the learner's essay contained spelling and punctuation errors. Regarding incorrect spelling, the learner connected sentence conjunctions where they should not. For example, the learners wrote **byihhi** instead of **byi hi**, **swiri** instead of **swi ri**, **kuva** instead of **ku va**, **byakuva** instead of **bya ku va**. Regarding punctuation errors, the learner did not write a question mark (?) where necessary.



The learner attempted to follow the second step of writing an essay where the learner sketched the work and indicated that the work was corrected by fixing some spelling mistakes, and changed the word **vafi (deceased)** and corrected it to be **varhandziwa (beloved)**. The learner tried to correct himself where he pointed out the alternation of paragraphs by indicating their next turn to a new paragraph from the introduction.

Vunene na vubini bya kuva vadyuhari
va hakela kisasayiti ko lahia vafi.

Vunene bya kuva vadyuhari va hakela
kisasayiti ko lahia vafi, hileswaku
loko vo tshuka va wek hi khambo
narami wun'wana na wun'wana vahga
kumeki vaye henbia nale hansi va
lava mpfuna wo lahieriwa kumurhandiki
wa vana.

- Leswi swi endla kswaku loke ko tshuka
kuri na rifu kunga hami timali ta tata
ti lahia mufi. rila loke ko tshuka ku love
vana vadyuhari, swika olava ngopfu era
vanhu lava vahga sala kuva vafa lahia

Kasi vubini bya kuva, hileswaku vadyu-
hari va tihela va teka mali ya mudende
va hakela hi yona kisasayiti. Mali

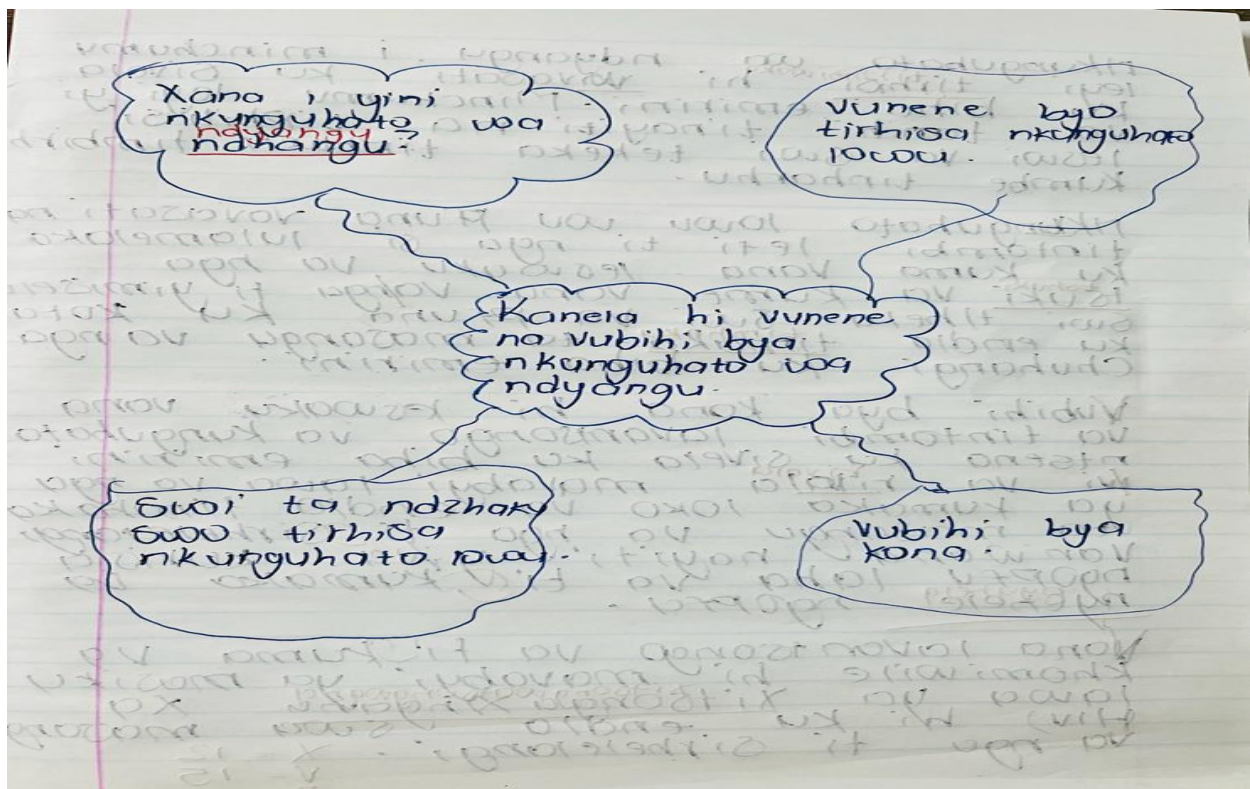
- leyi va yi kumaka akuya mali ya tata,
kambe yo ringana kuva vahga lava
swakuhya ni yona.

Mali ley, va dyuhari vayi kumaka
vahga tihela vafi hlayisela yona era
khambo ko fana na loke va vabye,
va fanele ku lava mimirhi hiyona,
kugofu ku hakela kisasayiti.

The learner appeared to experience difficulties in connecting words. The learner's essay was full of words that related to multiple conjunctions in sentences. This made the context of the learner's essay incomprehensible. The learner tried to show all aspects of the essay but the introduction to the essay was not appealing. The essay also had no conclusion.

School B

In School B, the researcher analysed the essays of two learners who had chosen to write argumentative essays. Since the problem of this study did not only centre around essay writing skills, but the researcher also examined some non-discursive aspects of learners' writing and analysed how the writing challenges affected essay writing skills. The essay below presents the researcher's findings on the argumentative essay and highlights the challenges learners face in writing this type of essay. The learner wrote the essay under the instruction: **Kanela hi vunene na vubihhi bya nkunguhato wa ndyangu.** (Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of family planning)



The learner planned in such a way that the structure of his plan was enticing. However, the learner wrote the wrong word **ndhangu** instead of **ndyangu** (family). The proposals were coherent according to the theme.

Nkunguhato wa ndyangu i minchumu
 leyi ^{ti tihisi waka} tihisi hi vavosati ku sivele
 ku biha emirini. Minchumu leyi y
 va tanihi tinayiti na tiphilis,
 leswi va swi tekeka tinhweti timbiri,
 kumbe tinharhu.

Nkunguhato lowu wu pfuna vavosati na
 tintombi leti ti nga si lulamelaka
 ku kuma vana leswaku va nga
^{tsuki} tsuki va kume vana vanga ti yimiserang.
 Swi tihela swi va pfuna ku kota
 ku endlo ^{timhaka} timhaka ta masangy va nga
 Chuhangi ku biha emirini.

Vubihhi bya kona hi leswaku vana
 va tintombi lavantsongo va kunguhato
 ntsena ku sivele ku biha emirini,
 wi va ^{nyaga} nyaga mavabyi lowu va nga
 ya kumaka ioko va endlo timhaka
 ta masangy va nga ti Sirhelelangi.
 Vanwana nayiti yiva kurisg
 ngopfu laha va ti kumaka va
^{nyehere} nyehere ngopfu.

Vana lavantsongo va ti kuma va
 khomiwile hi mavabyi ya masiky
 lowu ya ^{Xitsona Xingaru} Xitsona Xingaru Xg
 Hiv) Wi ku endlo swa masangy
 va nga ti Sirhelelangi.

X = 12
 V = 15
 R = 6

The learner wrote an argumentative essay where they had to show all aspects of the topic without crushing any of the aspects but did not express one's feelings in the essay. The learner experienced confusion in writing words, where sentences were confused and made the context of message incomplete and difficult to understand at first read.

The following words were written wrongly, resulting in the sentences being unintelligible. Family planning is the tools used by women to prevent physical harm. The learner used the word *tirhisi* instead of *tirhisiwaka* (used in the), and this word made the sentence incomprehensible.

Typographical errors were found in the words below:

Tsuki - tshuki.

Timaka - timhaka. (issues/news)

Rilala – rivala (forget)

Nyuhela - nyuhela.(chubby/fat)

Xitsongatsongana – xitsongwatsongwana (the virus)

The following words were mistakenly connected: ***vanga*** instead of ***va nga***. The researcher also found that the learner disconnected words that should be written as one word: e.g., ***ti sirhelelangi*** should have been ***tisirhelelangi***, and ***ti kuma*** should be written as ***tikuma***.

Many learners in both schools did not choose the argumentative essay question because educators focused more on narrative essay and descriptive essay when teaching essays. Learners who chose argumentative essays were unable to write complete argumentative essays according to the curriculum (CAPS) guidelines for argumentative essay writing. Argumentative essays are often balanced, and they present different aspects of a topic. However, the usual is to balance all sides when authors make arguments. Although emotionally charged language may be used, what makes an essay acceptable are supports that have acceptable context. The conclusion does not leave the reader in doubt as to see the side the author stands on (CAPS, 2011).

Educators should teach all types of essays covered in the term as stipulated in curriculum the policy document. This will help learners to acquire skills of writing different types of essays rather than those only understand. According to the CAPS (2011: 40- 45), the educator is expected to teach one of these: “1 x Essay: descriptive / narrative / argumentative in the first term and one of them in the second term”. This suggests that educators also contribute towards the challenges that learners face by not following what the curriculum requires them to teach.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter revealed that educators' teaching and learners' commitment to learning essays makes it impossible for essay writing skills to improve given the limited time allocation for teaching and learning these skills in the curriculum. This chapter also revealed that many learners struggle with paragraph coherence, good spelling, punctuation, and the use of appropriate words in sentences. The chapter revealed that educators teach essays and opinion pieces predominantly, but do not emphasise the discussion essay. As a result, this makes most learners afraid of attempting argumentative essays in fear of not achieving lower marks in the examination. Moreover, those who choose argumentative essays make the mistake of not balancing their arguments on two sides of the topic, resulting the distortion of essay context. The next chapter highlights recommendations from the study, the limitations of the study, and conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit. This chapter reports on the summary of the main findings in the study, significance of the findings and the contribution of the study, recommendations, limitations of the study and conclusion. This study investigated the challenges of teaching and learning the writing skills, with particular focus on spelling, grammar, communicative competence and meaning. These components are the most important skills of writing that often cause failures among learners to compile comprehensive texts.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The findings on each research questions are as follows:

What are the challenges experienced by learners in learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected schools?

In accordance with the main research question, teachers from the two selected schools were asked about the challenges learners face in writing argumentative essays. Learners were also asked about the challenges they experience in writing Xitsonga Home Language essays. This study found that learners from both schools faced challenges of not being able to construct meaningful sentences in Xitsonga language. This was influenced by the learners' background of lack of reading resources and Xitsonga grammar books. Thus, learners were found to experience challenges with essay structure, word choice in sentences, sentence construction, punctuations, word order within sentences, and expressive writing.

Learners indicated that they had difficulties with essay lessons because they are unable to form sentences, punctuate, organise words within sentences and apply good

writing. They confirmed that their works often contain many spelling errors that they struggle to improve on. Learners' responses to the question reveal that they are not able to write committedly because they cannot follow the writing steps. The most difficult stage of writing learners seemed to struggle with was preparing for writing as most of them did not have planning skills nor the ability to organise their thoughts. According to the researcher's results, all the participants claimed to be following the process approach, yet majority of them simply concentrated on brainstorming and editing. The researcher observed that learners continued to make the same grammatical mistakes, implying that the teachers' intervention strategies are not effective for addressing their writing challenges particularly those that involve syntax, spelling, grammar and punctuations.

Another reason for learners' underdevelopment of Xitsonga essay writing skills that they have not learned all types of essays because teachers tend to concentrate on one type of essay that they (educators) understand best. When students are asked to sketch, they first write the essay itself, and when they are given a prompt, they first write the prompt.

Which factors contribute to the challenges experienced by learners in the classroom regarding learning Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills?

The findings also reveal that not all process writing steps are followed by teachers. The study found that teachers are used to brainstorming, which to them seems to be the primary stage of Xitsonga essay writing. Most learners find it difficult to acquire the skills that the brainstorming stage seeks to equip them with. There should be no continuous thinking throughout the brainstorming phase; instead, learners should write all related thoughts they have. Ideas are written as they come to mind at this point and there is no sorting involved. Some of the ideas might be in the form of individual words, phrases, or sentences. Thus, this study found that teachers crosscut this process by moving right into drafting and editing after the brainstorming phase. The process approach states that organising, drafting, revising, and editing should be preceded by brainstorming. It's unclear whether the teachers are intentionally leaving out the other stages or if their ignorance is to blame.

Three learners from both schools responded to this question by stating that educators use inappropriate language, which results in learners failing to write properly. Another educator stated that the language used for instruction prevents learners from knowing which language they should write in, and this prevents learners from writing meaningfully in their Home Language. The inability of educators to instruct with comparative language is one of the causes of learners' poor performance.

Educators stated that the reason for learners' inability to write Xitsonga essays is that they are unable to follow the processes involved in writing, which include knowing what to do before writing, while writing and after writing. Lack of knowledge and study materials in schools prevents learners from learning how to write different types of essays and teachers from finding solutions to the writing challenges that learners encounter. The results show that the time allocated for teaching essays writing is short and that the language seems difficult for teachers to teach.

What strategies are used in teaching essay writing skills in the selected secondary schools?

The findings revealed that the methods used in both schools, especially at the beginning of essay writing lessons, are explanatory methods and the question-and-answer methods. The researcher observed that these methods allow educators to teach the steps of essay writing and to use multimodal resources such as charts to teach learners how to construct their essays. In the question-and-answer method, teachers indicated that they ask the learners questions about the step they were working on that day and then examine learners' levels of understanding through their answers.

Explanatory teaching is the most used method in Xitsonga essay lessons. Educators indicated that it is easy for them to explain a topic to learners while showing them how to write their essays. In addition, the teachers said that the explanatory methods enable them to explain all processes of the writing process particularly the planning stage. This was found to acquaint learners with the knowledge and skills of writing for meaning while following good plans.

The above findings reveal that the participant teachers use explanatory methods to teach Xitsonga essay writing with one teacher also using question-and-answer methods. The question-and-answer method used did not seem to be effective for teaching essays because most learners were found to still have difficulties in forming words. That is, learners cannot convert spoken language into written language, and thus continue to misspell words and commit punctuation errors.

How do teachers help learners to overcome the written language challenges of Xitsonga Home Language?

Because learners are not engaged in the learning process when balanced language is used, teachers utilise imbalanced language to help learners understand and to also have an impact on learning. Teachers mentioned that there are no disadvantages to the language when it comes to writing, however learners were found to have a problem when they must write in that they could not write word forms correctly.

Learners said that teachers had figurative conversations with them while helping them to use some examples of conversations to develop ideas for their essays. Learners explained that the teachers used methods such as asking questions first and using symbols on the chart to assess their thinking. As such, this helped learners to gain focus on learning when their minds seemed absent from the classroom.

The results from the learners interviews revealed that learners are not interested in learning to write, nor do they practice writing. Although the methods used to teach them to write encourage them and bring their ideas back to the classroom with the help of teachers, learners find it difficult to write correctly. For instance, most learners did not start sentences in capital letters, struggled in connecting words and used incorrect punctuation in their sentences. This alarmed the researcher that the teachers should practice reading with learners to familiarise them with good writing through exposure to how other writers write.

Learners were given the opportunity to form sentences in class. This helped learners to practice forming sentences in the essay on a regular basis. Teachers ensured that when learners make mistakes in forming sentences, the mistakes were corrected.

They further encouraged learners to form sentences and not be afraid of making mistakes in fear of being corrected.

What other methods of teaching can be used and how can they be used to enhance the essay writing skills of learners in Xitsonga?

Because of the depth literature syllabus, the explanatory teaching method does not allow for the teaching of language or essay writing. Most teachers' attempt to teach learners how to compose essays have failed because they continue to be critical of the same mistakes that have plagued their students ever since they began their lesson. As a result, the national department needs to give more attention to language education. The results show that many learners lack understanding of Xitsonga words. Because the Xitsonga language is growing daily and new terms are developed, it is important for learners to master the language with an emphasis on common words.

There was no indication in the selected essays that the suggested stages of the process writing approach have been adhered to. The educators indicated that the biggest issue was that learners ignored the planning phase of writing essays. The use of some words during the lesson that have not been permitted by the Department of Education prevents learners from writing because only permitted words must be used when writing. This therefore propels teacher to use a moderate language when educating learners.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends the following to the Department of Education, educators, and learners:

Regarding resources such as Xitsonga reading materials, the Department of Education must treat all subjects equally in consideration of the Grade 11 Xitsonga learners' unsatisfactory performance in essay writing in Mafarana Circuit. Competitions for Xitsonga essay writing must be introduced with prizes to stimulate learners' interest. The Department of Education should make it mandatory for educators of African languages, in this case Xitsonga, to have a major of the language

in their qualifications. Thus, the Department of Education can consider the above suggestions to enhance both the learners' performance and their essay-writing skills.

The feedback model checklist should be made available to teachers, the researcher recommends. The researcher further recommends using the feedback model checklist in conjunction with the DBE rubric to make the rubric more understandable. The study found that the rubric is very broad and requires that teachers be knowledgeable in the target language. The feedback model checklist aims to provide a practical interpretation of the DBE rubric. Thus, the researcher came to this conclusion after discovering that the teachers were unable to identify several errors in learners' essays.

The learners' expectations for the topic should be fully explained by the educators. In other words, the educators must teach the learners how to write a variety of essays using a variety of writing techniques. Before writing an essay, educators and learners must thoroughly brainstorm the topic. To supplement the previous suggestion, the researcher recommends that there be in-service training of the application of the process writing approach for teachers, where Xitsonga educators from different grades can also gather to share skills and teaching strategies. Teachers also need instruction on how to inspire learners to value planning.

The study recommends that teachers encourage their learners to share their essays in class to allow other learners to comment and promote peer learning. This will help learners to write with a 'reader sensitivity'. Instead of waiting to mark an essay that is littered with errors, teachers should allow learners to sit in groups and read their essays aloud for the groups for group members to make comments. This will not only assist the writer of the essay, but the whole class as mistakes and comments will be heard by all learners. This will therefore promote an interactive learning space in which learners will learn and improve from each other's mistakes.

The findings show that essay writing is covered once per term, with educators required to teach one of three essay types. The study recommends that Home Language curriculum be adjusted for Xitsonga essay writing lessons not be a one-time exercise. This will prevent teachers from teaching for the sake of exams, but to build lifelong writing skills among learners. Put more simply, there should be extension of time for

teaching Home Language essay writing skills in the curriculum to provide teachers and learners with enough time to enhance the teaching and learning of essay writing skills.

Xitsonga Home Language educators should teach learners to form meaningful sentences in all grades by providing more writing activities. This will help to prevent learners from failing to form meaningful sentences. Learners will thus become more actively involved in writing at school as well as at home.

The researcher recommends that the process approach writing steps must be taken into consideration because essay exercises require that steps be followed when writing to construct a complete essay. To write appropriately and avoid disputable mistakes, learners should be reminded of these steps regularly. Thus, the study recommends that learners be taught how to write argumentative sentences to enhance their argumentative essay writing skills. In closing remarks, learners should practice writing at school and at home to form sensible sentences as school learning and teaching time is limited.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that essay writing skills are not effectively taught at the investigated schools. Hence, learner performance in essay writing leaves much to be questioned. It is anticipated that the recommendations provided above will alter how learners use language, particularly when writing essays, and how teachers apply different strategies to teach essay writing skills. In summation, this chapter has succeeded in presenting the summary of findings, making practical recommendations and presenting the concluding remarks of this study.

6. REFERENCES

Abucayon, R.L., Bautista, Y.T. & Romano, J.M. (2016). 'Levels of Proficiency on the Essential Teaching Skills among the Pre-Service Teachers of the College of Education'. [Presentation]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313921099> Accessed on: 18 January 2021.

Astrini, F., Ratminingsih, N.M. & Utami, I.G.A.L.P. (2020). The model of strategies employed by English teachers in teaching writing skill in national plus schools. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 4(1), pp.59-62.

Botma, Y., Greef, M., Mulaudzi, F.M. & Wright S.C.D. (2016). *Research in Health Sciences*, 5th Ed. Pearson Cape Town.

Canagarajah, S. (2015). Shuttling between scales in the workplace: Re-examining policies and pedagogies for migrant professionals. *Linguistics and Education*, 34, 47–57.

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.

Cummins, J. (1979). Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question, and some other matters. *Papers on Bilingualism*, No. 19, 121-129: Norwell.

Daneshfar, S. & Moharami, M. (2018). Dynamic assessment in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory: Origins and main concepts. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(3), pp.600-607.

Department of Education. (2002). *Language in Education Policy*. Government Printers. Pretoria.

Department of Education. (2011, pp 40-53). *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)*. Government Printers. Pretoria.

Department of Education. (2012). *Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)*. Government Printers. Pretoria.

Dowling, T. & Krause, L. (2019). 'Ndifuna I am meaning yakhe': translingual morphology in English teaching in a South African township classroom. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 16(3), pp.205-225.

Eskalieva, S.A. & Jaksulikova, D. (2021). Importance of teaching writing as a language skill. *Polish Science Journal*, pp.120, 134-137.

Gorter, D. & Cenoz, J. (2017). Language education policy and multilingual assessment. *Language and Education*, 31(3), pp.231-248.

Kaschula, R. (2013). Multilingual teaching and learning models at South African Universities: Opportunities and challenges. Seminar presentation, University of KwaZulu-Natal March 2013.

Katto, M.P. (2018). Assessment of the use of language techniques that promote creative writing among secondary school students: A case of Tunduru district. Doctoral dissertation, The University of Dodoma.

Lewis, K., Sandilos, L., Scheffnerhammer, C., Sawyer, B. & Mendez, L. (2015). Relations among the home language and literacy environment and childrens language abilities: A study of head start dual language learners and their mothers. *Early Education and Development*.

Madiba, M. (2013). Multilingual education in South African universities: Policies, pedagogy, and Practicality. *Linguistics and Education* 24: 385–395.

Makalela, L. (2015). Moving out of linguistic boxes: The effects of translanguaging strategies for multilingual classrooms. *Language of Education*, 29(3), 200-217.

Marginson, S. & Dang, T.K.A. (2017). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in the context of globalization. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 37(1), pp.116-129.

Mohajan, H.K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7(1), pp.23-48.

Moser, A. & Korstjens, I. (2017). Series: practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 1: Introduction. *Eur J GenPract*: 23:271–273.

Motlhaka, H.A. & Makalela, L. (2016). Translanguaging in an academic writing class: Implications for a dialogic pedagogy. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 34(3), pp.251-260.

Nashirova, S.H. (2018). The importance of teaching writing to students. *Современные научные исследования и разработки*, (6), pp.24-26.

NSW Department of Education & Training. (2007). *Writing and spelling strategies*. Darlinghurst: NSW.

Torres, R.A. & Nyaga, D. (2021). Introduction: Critical Research Methodologies. In *Critical Research Methodologies* (pp. 1-4). Brill.

Torres, R.A. (2021). Research Methodologies: Histories, Issues, Tensions. In *Critical Research Methodologies* (pp. 24-32). Brill.

Turner, N. & Wildsmith-Cromarty, R. (2014). Challenges to the implementation of bilingual/multilingual language policies at tertiary institutions in South Africa (1995–2012). *Language Matters*, 45(3), pp.295-312.

Van der Berg, S. Spaul, H. Willis G. Gustafsson, M. & Kotzé, J. (2016). *Identifying the Binding Constraints in Education*. Department: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation: University of Stellenbosch.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1987). Thinking and speech. In R.W. Rieber & A.S. Carton (Eds.), *The collected works of L.S. Vygotsky, Volume 1: Problems of general psychology* (pp. 39–285). New York: Plenum Press. Original work published 193

Zahirul Islam, A.F.M. Moshir R & Khorshed A. (2019). Teaching EFL writing at the SSS level in bangladesh: challenges and considerations. *int. j. of adv. res.* 7 (aug). 855-860] (issn 2320-5407)

7 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO THE CIRCUIT

Inquiries: Hlungwane Hlayisani (Miss)
Cell: 073 082 6806
Email: hlayisanihlungwan95@gmail.com

P O Box 479
Mafarana
0886
19 September 2021

The circuit manager
Mafarana circuit office
1729 Bankuna road
Nkowankowa A
Letaba
0870

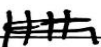
Dear MR

REQUEST FOR PERMISSIN TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT MAFARANA CIRCUIT

I Hlungwane Hlayisani a master education candidate from university of Limpopo. I hereby request a permission to conduct research at your respective circuit. The research will be focusing on the challenges experienced by leaners in grade 11 in Xitsonga essay writing skills. I promise to adhere to COVID19 regulations since I am aware of the challenges faced with the Corona Virus. I will follow all protocols when interacting with the participants. I have attached the copy of proposal for your perusal.

I look forward to your response

Yours faithfully



Hlungwane Hlayisani (Miss)

APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO THE SCHOOL

Inquiries: Hlungwane Hlayisani (Miss)

P O Box 479

Cell: 073 082 6806

Mafarana

Email: hlayisanihlungwan95@gmail.com

0886

Student number: 

19 September 2021

The Principal



Bonn village

Letsitele

0885


Dear MR

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSIN TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT P. 
 HIGH SCHOOL.**

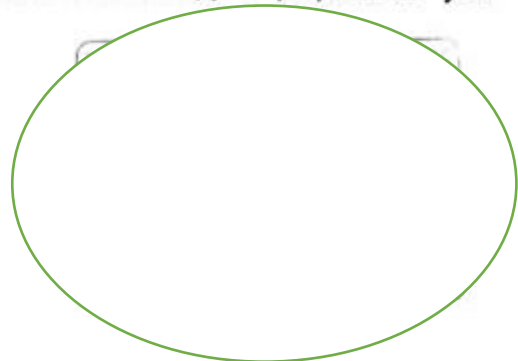
I Hlungwane Hlayisani a master education candidate from university of Limpopo. I hereby request a permission to conduct research at your respective school. The research will be focusing on the challenges experienced by leaners in grade 11 in Xitsonga essay writing skills. I promise to adhere to COVID19 regulations since I am aware of the challenges faced with the Corona Virus. I will follow all protocols when interacting with the participants. I have attached the copy of proposal for your perusal.

I look forward to your response


Yours faithfully



Hlungwane Hlayisani (Miss)



APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO THE SCHOOL

Inquiries: Hlungwane Hlayisani (Miss)
Cell: 073 082 6806
Email: hlayisanihlungwan95@gmail.com
Student number: 

P O Box 479
Mafarana
0886
19 September 2021

The principal

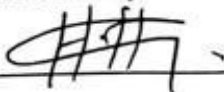

Mafarana village
Mafarana
0886
Dear Mrs

REQUEST FOR PERMISSIN TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT SCHOOL.

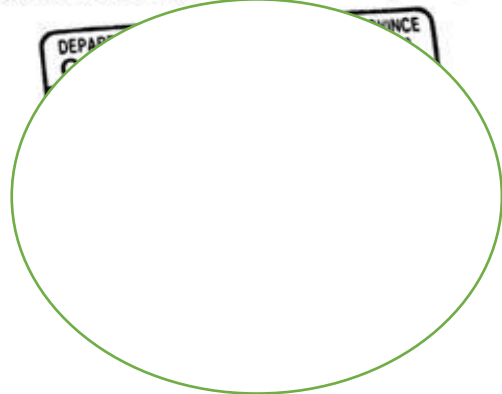
I, Hlungwane Hlayisani, am a master education student from university of Limpopo. I hereby request permission to conduct research at your respective school. The research will be focusing on the challenges experienced by leaners in grade 11 in Xitsonga essay writing skills. I promise to adhere to COVID19 regulations since I am aware of the challenges faced with the Corona Virus. I will follow all protocols when interacting with the participants. I have attached the copy of proposal for your perusal.

I look forward to your response

Yours faithfully



Hlungwane Hlayisani (Miss)



APPENDIX D: CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Title: Challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

Research question: What are the challenges experienced learners regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected school?

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners and teachers when learning and teaching Xitsonga essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

I hereby agree to participate in a research project to be conducted at my school by **HLUNGWANE HLAYISANI** from University of Limpopo.

1. I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
2. I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and information that identifies me will but private.
3. I have been given enough information about the research project.

I agree to take part in the research study

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature

_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Title: Challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

Research question: What are the challenges experienced learners regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected school?

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners and teachers when learning and teaching Xitsonga essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

I hereby agree to participate in a research project to be conducted at my school by **HLUNGWANE HLAYISANI** from University of Limpopo.

1. I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
2. I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and information that identifies me will be private.
3. I have been given enough information about the research project.

I agree to take part in the research study

Name of participant

08/11/2022
Date

Signature

Researcher

Hlungwane H.

08/11/2022
Date

Signature

Research question: What are the challenges experienced learners regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected school?

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners and teachers when learning and teaching Xitsonga essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.


I hereby agree to participate in a research project to be conducted at my school by **HLUNGWANE HLAYISANI** from University of Limpopo.

1. I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
2. I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and information that identifies me will but private.
3. I have been given enough information about the research project.

I agree to take part in the research study


Name of participant

01/11/2022
Date


Signature

Hlungwane H
Researcher

01/11/2022
Date


Signature

Title: Challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

Research question: What are the challenges experienced learners regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected school?

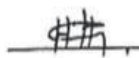
Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners and teachers when learning and teaching Xitsonga essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

I hereby agree to participate in a research project to be conducted at my school by **HLUNGWANE HLAYISANI** from University of Limpopo.

1. I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
2. I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and information that identifies me will but private.
3. I have been given enough information about the research project.

I agree to take part in the research study

	02/11/2022	
Name of participant	Date	Signature

Hlungwane H	03/11/2022	
Researcher	Date	Signature

Title: Challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.


Research question: What are the challenges experienced learners regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected school?

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners and teachers when learning and teaching Xitsonga essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

I hereby agree to participate in a research project to be conducted at my school by **HLUNGWANE HLAYISANI** from University of Limpopo.

1. I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
2. I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and information that identifies me will but private.
3. I have been given enough information about the research project.

I agree to take part in the research study

_____	01/11/2022	
Name of participant	Date	Signature
<u>Hlungwane H</u>	01/11/2022	<u>HH</u>
Researcher	Date	Signature

essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.



Research question: What are the challenges experienced learners regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected school?

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners and teachers when learning and teaching Xitsonga essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

I hereby agree to participate in a research project to be conducted at my school by **HLUNGWANE HLAYISANI** from University of Limpopo.

1. I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
2. I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and information that identifies me will but private.
3. I have been given enough information about the research project.

I agree to take part in the research study

_____	01/11/2022	
Name of participant	Date	Signature
HLungwane H	01/11/2022	
Researcher	Date	Signature

Title: Challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners in Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

Research question: What are the challenges experienced learners regarding learning Xitsonga Home language essay writing skills in the selected school?

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed study is to investigate the challenges experienced by Grade 11 learners and teachers when learning and teaching Xitsonga essay writing skills in Mafarana Circuit.

I hereby agree to participate in a research project to be conducted at my school by **HLUNGWANE HLAYISANI** from University of Limpopo.

1. I confirm that I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.
2. I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and information that identifies me will but private.
3. I have been given enough information about the research project.

I agree to take part in the research study

Name of participant

01/11/2022
Date


Signature

Hlungwane H
Researcher

01/11/2022
Date


Signature

APPENDIX E: LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

LESSON: WRITING AND PRESENTATION SKILLS

GRADE: 11

1. Content planning and format	Yes	No	Comments
1.1 How Xitsonga Home language writing skills lessons introduced?			
1.2 In what context does the writing skill appear?			
1.3 What kind of writing is assigned in the lesson?			
1.4 Do learners show understanding of the lesson?			
1.5 Did the educator prepare the lesson accurately?			

1. Content planning and format	Yes	No	Comments
1.1 How Xitsonga Home language writing skills lessons introduced?			the lesson was well planned, the educator used ^{mind} map with the objects to taught on the chart that was prepared. The chart with the mind map was use to remember ^{on that day} topics or what to be taught.
1.2 In what context does the writing skill appear?			learners were writing mind map where the sentence contraction by the learners were assessed by the educator.
1.3 What kind of writing is assigned in the lesson?			learners were given crosswork to write mind map where they were writing rough work about the topic given to them, to write an argumentative essay.
1.4 Do learners show understanding of the lesson?	✓		learners were showing understanding while the educator was teaching, but they showed more difficulties in writing essays when they were given task to write. understanding the lesson was fine, the challenge was to produce what they were to ^{in form of writing.}
1.5 Did the educator prepare the lesson accurately?	✓		the lesson was prepared the educator prepared a chart to assist in the lesson, where learners find it easy to understand.

1. Content planning and format	Yes	No	Comments
1.1 How Xitsonga Home language writing skills lessons introduced?			The educator used newsletters with reading information to show the structure of how to write paragraphs and how to structure the good writing. learners were attracted by new newsletters paragraphs where
1.2 In what context does the writing skill appear?			learners were forming sentences, after they write paragraphs in a form of introductory in an essay writing.
1.3 What kind of writing is assigned in the lesson?			A classwork of paragraph writing were given to learners to assess them when they are about to construct meaning sentences to form paragraphs.
1.4 Do learners show understanding of the lesson?	✓		on the lesson presentation learners were showing to understand the lesson, where they were answering the question ask by the educator to follow whether the learners was understanding what the educator was teaching them.
1.5 Did the educator prepare the lesson accurately?	✓		The lesson was well prepared. The educator introduced the lesson well with the support of the teaching aids that was prepared to assist

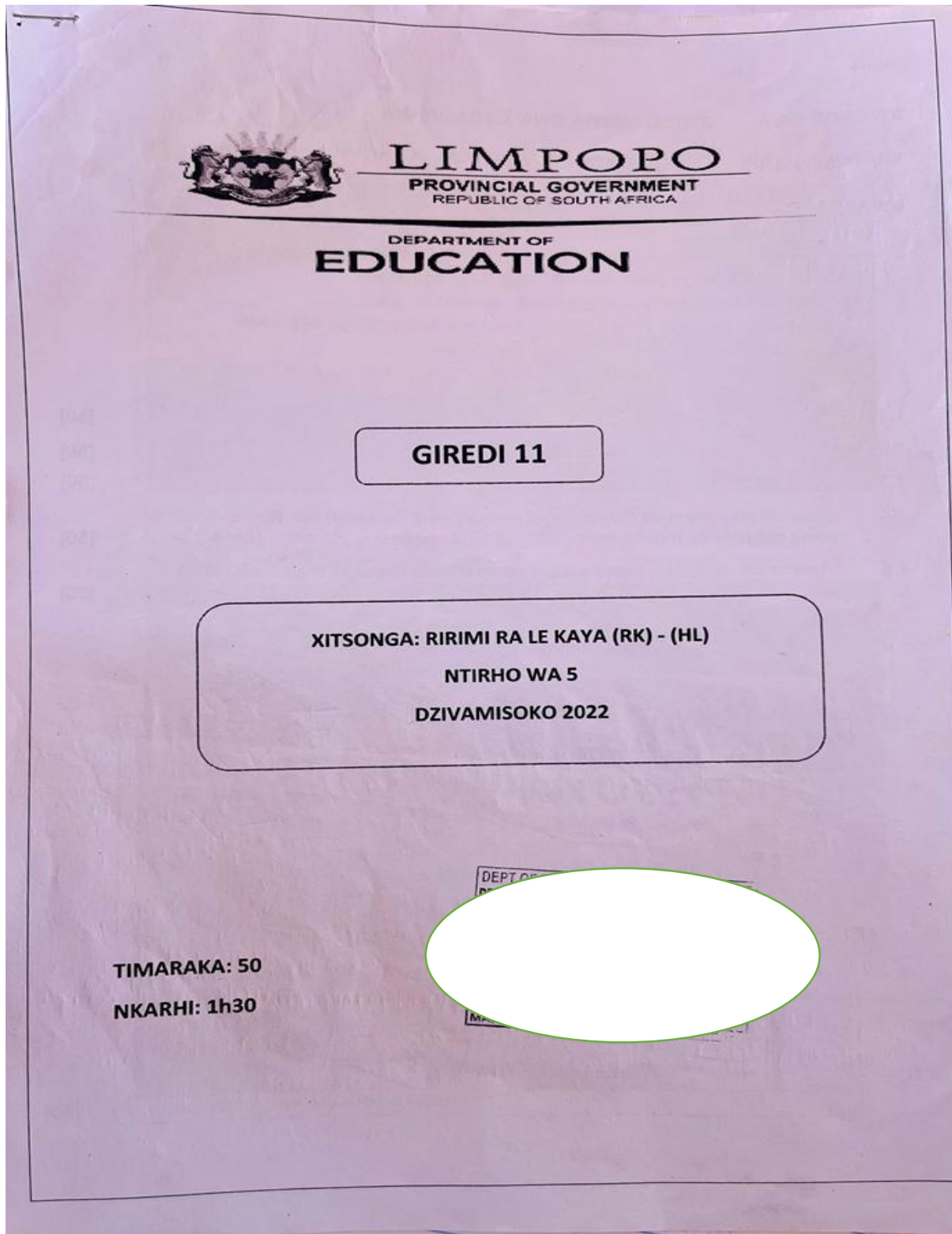
APPENDIX F: LEARNER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. How do teachers teach you educator Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills?
2. What challenges do you experience when writing essays in your Home Language?
3. How do such challenges affect your communication in writing?
4. How do teachers help you to overcome the challenges you face regarding writing essays in Xitsonga Home Language?
5. Are the intervention strategies effective? How?
6. What aspects of the Xitsonga Home Language essay writing lessons are interesting and understandable for you?
7. How does the educator assess you in essay writing lessons?

APPENDIX G: TEACHER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Is teaching of essay writing important? Why?
2. How do you prepare your Xitsonga essay writing lessons?
2. What teaching methods do you use in your essay writing lessons?
3. How do you assess learners' essay writing skills?
4. What challenges do you encounter when teaching Xitsonga Home Language essay writing skills?
5. What other methods do you think should be used in teaching essay writing?
6. How effective do you think they will be to address the challenges learners experience in writing essays?

APPENDIX H: QUESTION PAPERS



XIYENGE XA A:

SWITSHURIWA SWA XITSALWANA

XIVUTISO XA 1

*keba humelela yini
hi ikhonomi*

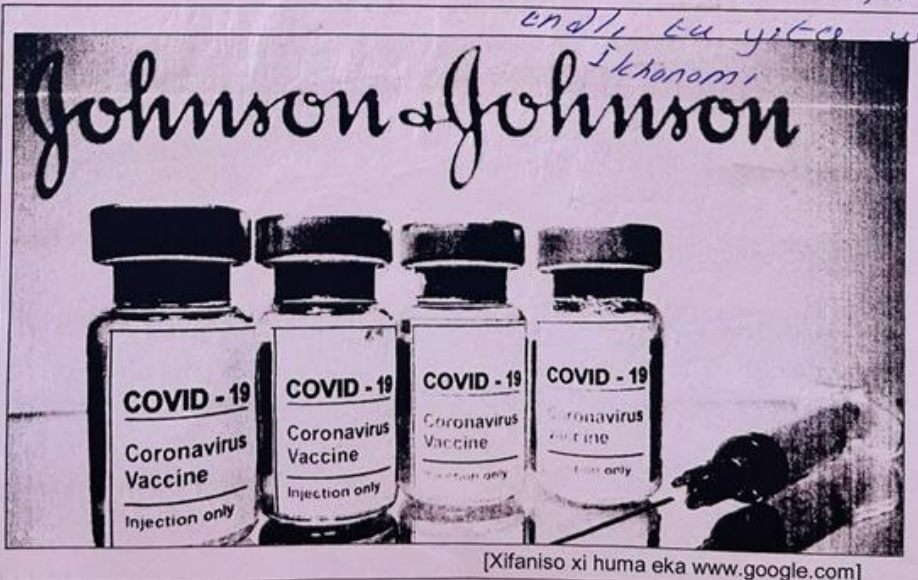
SWILETELO:

- Hlawula nhlokomhaka YIN'WE ntsena leyi u yi twisisaka swinene, kutani u tsala xitsalwana hi yona, kambe u nga humi emhakeni.
- Rhanga u endla nkunghato u nga si sungula ku tsala.
- Xitsalwana xa wena xi fanele ku va kwalomu ka marito ya 400 – 450.
- Sungula nhlamulo ya wena eka pheji yintshwa.

27 vafanele va endla yini

- 1.1 Hakunene munhu a nga tswali n'wana wa mahanyelo yo fana na ya yena. [50]
- 1.2 Vurimi byi na nkoka etikweni. *yika yini jahi endzhaku ka 2021* [50]
- 1.3 Leswi ikhonomi yi nga ta va xiswona endzhaku ka lembe ra 2021. [50]
- 1.4 Vavasati na vana a va hlayisekangi emavokweni ya vavanuna. Nyika vonelo ra wena ehenhla ka mhaka leyi. *vafanele ka endla* [50]
- 1.5 Vunene na vubih bya ku va vadyuhari va hakela tisosayiti to pfuna ku lahla vafi. *mitirho leswalu ikhonomi ya hira yikava kwahle* [50]
- 1.6 Xiya swifaniso leswi nga laha hansi, kutani u hlawula xin'we u tsala xitsalwana xa risima hi nhlokomhaka leyi u xi nyikeke yona.

1.6.1



[50]



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MOPANI WEST DISTRICT

GIREDI YA 11
XIKAMBELO XA HAFU YA LEMBE

XITSONGA RIRIMI RA LE KAYA (RK) - (HL)

PAPILA RA 3 (P3)

08 KHOTAVUXIKA 2022

TIMARAKA: 100

NKARHI: Tiawara ti3

Papila leri ri na tipheji ta ntlhanu (5).

XIYENGE XA A: SWITSHURIWA SWA SWITSALWANA

XIVUTISO XA 1

SWILERISO:

- Hlawula nhlokomhaka YIN'WE ntsena leyi u yi twisisaka swinene kutani u tsala xitsalwana hi yona kambe u nga humi emhakeni.
- Rhanga u endla nkunguhato u nga si sungula ku tsala.
- Xitsalwana xa wena xi fanele ku va na marito ya le xikarhi ka 400–450.

- 1.1 Siku rero a swi n'wi khele matluka [5]
- 1.2 Ku tlakuka ka nhlayo ya vantshwa lava tirhisaka swidzidziharisi ka chavisa. [5]
- 1.3 Leswi swi nga endliwaka ku hunguta ku xanisiwa ka vana na vavasati. [5]
- 1.4 Loko ndzo kuma ntirho lowu holelaka R100 000 hi n'hweti. [5]
- 1.5 Ku hlongoriwa ka vahlampfa vo va hava mpfumelelo wo va laha tikweni a swi kahle. Pfumela kumbe u kaneta ivi u seketela tlhelo ra wena. [5]
- 1.6 Xiyaxiya swifaniso leswi landzelaka laha hansi kutani u hlawula xin'we eka swona u tsala xitsalwana hi nhlokomhaka leyi u xi nyikeke yona.

1.6.1



(Xifaniso lexi i vutumbuluxi bya AntiMartina)

[5]

APPENDIX I: LEARNERS WRITTEN WORK

43
~~100~~

Vito	[Redacted]
Xi vango	[Redacted]
Giredi ya	[Redacted]
Sabwete	Xi Songa Ririmi rale kato
Xikolo	[Redacted]
Siku	08 Khotavuxika 2020

30
~~50~~

Xi tenge xa a

Xivutiso 1

Timpzaneio

Utomi i
Uhiwe.

Ku hongoriwo ka
~~hahampza~~ uo va hah
a mpzumelilo uo va la
ha tirweni aswi kahle.

Munhu i munhu
hi vaniwana.

Hi khomane
hiva ntandza
yiriwe.

i.s. Ku hongoriwo ka vahampza vo va hah mpzumelilo u
o va laha tirweni aswi kahle.

Mdza Pzumela ku hongoriwo ka vahampza uo va hah
mpzumelilo uo va laha tirweni aswi kahle.

Mdza Pzumela leswaku ku hongoriwo ka vahampza aswi
kahle hira va vahampza na vana vana lungelo to tshama

Leho na levaro koro, vahampye na uona va zanele va tshame
me laho va tsarelara ku tshame koro. leswo loro va
ora tira koro va uona vahampye vati tshamerile hiku zhu
la na mindangu tavona. vata va onkha aswi tshamise
kanga leswo va na xihawu hawu.

Vangave uzi kava Plumelero uo tshame kambe, na uona
i vanku va zanele va Plumelero ku tshame hikuve avo t
anga hi nimp; va te hiku zhu, koro avavoto hi nimp; ave
ta hongoriwo kha tikweni kambe sweswi vate hiku zhu
wila.

Aswi kabie leswo hongoria vahampye hikuve na vane
i vanku va zanele na hira. Vahampye va zanele loro va z
ka laho tikweni va amperitwa hi swiandla swimbirhi, va
zanele vavitwa uzi a rava, leswo loro vahampye vah
umelero laho tikweni hiva hongoria aswi tshamiseranga.

Muntu un'wana na un'wana una timanero una timzanero
to kante vutomi kbi abii tsarelara. tani hiva era tiro
ho zanele ku vumbana hiva xio xiniwe, hi zanele hi vumb
ana hiva ntandza zhu yiniwe. leswo hongoria vahampye
ingi kava timbana aswi tshamiserangi.

Loro uzi muntu uo kante kabie u zanele utshame kabi u
switico leswo ku vutomi i uhiwo. Muntu i muntu hi
vavona kutava muntu kbi anga hanlere ani tere an
ga hanti na van'wana vanku. koro u'ave ku uona le
swaku vutomi i uhiwo kante unga hanti na vanku vavona

Leswa kuno unhu wa kati wote vanga kuwa laha kweke
ni ahi swona. Kuliogorwa ko wahampito hiki wa hawa
Pumela laha kwani ahi swona, aswi kate leswa kiong
pia variwona unhu hiki mbare to wote mpumela.

Idca Pumela leswa Kuliogorwa ko wahampito laha ti
kuwa aswi tshamizang nara tsongo hikuwa na wote
vane timptoneo to kani kani hi unhu, ahi banteni hiki
wa variwona unhu.

VM -16

RXV -10

X-4

Uurimi byi na nkoka etikweni? Nko ri nwa
na rinwana ri fanele riri ~~ri~~ hiku Siku rinwa
hi ng'ono hlangana na ndala yo charisa
Swinere. Koko ku rimiwile ni ndala ku hawa.

Manti wu rinwa na wu nwa ~~ku~~ fanele kuwa
na ng'adi. Ku rimiwa timanga, tindluwa, Switaki?
Makhalabatta na Swirinwa na Swinwana kutani
ndala yita fambela ~~le~~ nale etikweni?

Loko ku rimiwile swakudya a swaha
xaviwi ngoptu ni ntiro wa mali uta vonaka
swakudya swate ntumbuluko swi? Kahle
ntirin wa munhu. Kumbi ku hlawurizwa
e ndhawu leyi kulu swinere.

Ka Vata koba ku rima e ndhawu ~~1349~~¹¹⁴⁹
fanele yiva kulu swinere vava Sabi
va ndhawu/tiko vava hlokula le masimani?
Kumbi ku thoriwa vanhu lava nga tshana
la makaya. Mubi wurwana na wu rinwana

Wu fanele ku ~~humpesina~~ humesa R30
hi niwketi ku tiko na hina rita koba
kura na swakudya swo ringhara
vanhu hi nkawo vate etikweni na hira

Dukhamba na wu ghesengha a Swita
hunguteka loko yo firisa ntwanano
Uurimi byi na nkoka etikweni? ndala
ya fambela ene yi fambela namakumu

liko fanele ni byaleriwa Swimilana
nini ~~handu~~ kutani? Kuba papalatiwa e
ndlala. Mhinti hi nkwayo yata tshamo
yi tsakini? nivu khambei byita hungutoka

Va hlakuri va masimu vata kuma madeleni?
hiku akuna munhu loyi anghater gira a firela
mahala ~~refanele~~ va hleketeriwa ku ve ngha
heli matimba

Endhavou leyi kutava ku rimiwile fanele kuve
nima Sekhurithi ku Switari ni lavo hona
va nga swi koti ku nghe va hona. ku fanele
ku tshama ku khasile hita kuma Swakudya
Swa kante

VM - 15

RxV - 7

X - 3