

**Exploration of Challenges Experienced By Learners When Reading Short
Stories in an EFAL Classroom**

By

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DECLARATION

I, SEBONE MAMOSHABA LOVEDALIA, declare that the study *Challenges faced by grade 8 learners when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom* is my work. All the sources used in this mini-dissertation have been acknowledged and referenced. This research has not been previously submitted for any degree at this or any other university.

SEBONE ML MISS

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Love always

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to determine challenges that are faced by Grade 8 learners when reading short stories with understanding using EFAL. The study made use of a research approach which is qualitative in nature to explore the reading challenges. It also used an interpretive paradigm. Schema Reading Theory was employed as the guide to which the study followed. This theory advocates that learners read a text having prior knowledge, which assists them to interpret it better. This chosen theory is relevant to the study as the study seeks to understand why learners cannot read. Therefore the theory assisted in determining whether learners have the necessary prior knowledge of the text they read in the classroom. The main findings of the study has indicated that learners have challenges to reading. There are recommendations addressed to learners, parents, teachers and department of education. In conclusion, teachers assured to initiate reading programmes such as focused, independent and guided reading, with the hope to curb challenges towards reading.

KEYWORDS: EFAL, Reading, Barriers, Short stories, Native language, Target language, Schema Reading Theory, Communicative Approach.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

English as a first additional language is widely used in South Africa for teaching and learning. Research shows that EFAL is very important as it serves as a medium of instruction in most subjects such as Life Sciences, Geography, Physical sciences etc., in South Africa. The statement above is supported by Gough, Oliver and Thomas (2018) which outlines that learners use EFAL for academic learning across the curriculum. While EFAL is vital, as it plays the role of lingua franca for students who speak various languages within academic learning, learners in rural areas still experience barriers when reading in EFAL. The barriers encountered by learners include; accent, fluency, pronunciation, audibility, reading skills, punctuation marks, use of non-verbal language, understanding of text, self-confidence and time management (Kothari and Garg 2019).

The reading competencies of primary schools' learners have been a challenge since curriculum transformation was embarked upon in 1994 in South Africa. The National Reading Strategy (2017) brought forth evidence to show that learners in South African schools are failing to perform tasks such as reading suitable for their age group. This inability to read at expected levels of performance has transcended into secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Lefty and Fraser (2020) explain that this situation compelled the Department of Basic Education to make a review emerging with the launch of the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC) in March 2008. This campaign has identified factors that stimulate reading proficiency such as language exposure.

Early reading proficiency and factors that promote them are fundamental; therefore, they should be identified by learners, parents, teachers and policy makers. Scholars such as Johnson (2018) indicated in the study (Reading Proficiency) that learner's reading understanding is directly and indirectly negatively affected by lack of reading motivation. Intensive and extensive book reading on a regular basis enhances learner's reading proficiency; it also enables the development of the four reading skills such as reading, writing, listening and language conventions and structures

(Killoran and Denning 2020). Moreover, parents' active participation and involvement in their learners' reading assessments, activities and discussions are of greater importance. These will encourage learners to participate in reading related activities actively and critically. Therefore, learner-centred and autonomous reading can increase reading ability of children (Edwards 2015).

The limited fundamental resources of teaching and learning like libraries, text books and software in the rural areas intensify the level of imbalance in literacy and reading, which is found in schools. In addition, Moeletsi and Mlachila (2019) link learners' inability to read, especially at the end of Grade 4, to the vast inequalities between South African language groups. According to Martin, Drucker and Foy, (2012), the average performance of African language learners remains lower than the first language speakers, who learn in English. The second language speakers such as Xhosas, Swati's, Tswanas, Zulus, Ndebeles and Sothos might have been possibly categorised as the groups who were not able to read at the expected levels at school.

To corroborate this, Veriava, Thom, and Hodgson(2017) present that the PIRLS outcomes revealed that fifty per cent of the 4th grade learners, who use Tshivenda, Sepedi, Xitsonga as first language were unable to read texts written in their first language during their final formal assessments. "If that is the situation in their home language, how much more is it the case in their Second Language (L2), which normally happens to be English? (Hodgson 2017). It should be noted that the three language groups mentioned above are found in the rural areas of former black homelands of apartheid South Africa, which were formerly known as Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu. Hence, Manthalu and Waghid (2019) sustain that inadequate delivery of learning resources and periods of negligence by colonial and apartheid government, who put aside these regions educationally, still have an impact on language learning.

The research studies discussed below done on reading challenges have focused on younger children at primary level and older people in tertiary institutions, whereas there is little focus on children in Grade 8 (Edwards 2015). In a study conducted by Lemmer and Manyike's (2017) in Tzaneen within the Letsitele area of the Limpopo Province, it was found that learners in that area use English as a second language

(Lemmer and Manyike's 2017). Guthrie states that "a number of students in South Africa's tertiary institutions do not only lack appropriate reading strategies but also have low motivation and little or no love of reading," (Guthrie 2008). In another study conducted by Kaufman (2018), the research project focused on Grade 1-3 teachers from 11 schools in Gauteng, South Africa. These Foundation Phase teachers seemed to have a challenge in mediating language content and struggling to properly teach learners to read due to the language spoken by learners and other teachers (Kaufman 2018). Therefore, all the three studies mentioned above emphasise on the challenges encountered by learners in primary schools and older persons in tertiary institutions when reading during EFAL classrooms.

The proposed study focuses attention on determining challenges encountered by Grade 8 learners when reading short stories in EFAL. The choice of this topic is driven by the alarming number of children that are not able to read in Grade 8. Short stories were chosen amongst other genres to determine learners' reading challenges because they can be contextualised, therefore learners can enjoy a variety of short stories which they can relate to and extract meaningful information from them. When learners read texts which interrelate with their real life situations, this cultivates their reading ability; they tend to read with understanding.

The inability of these learners on reading is quite disturbing because it slows down the academic performance of individual learners and the school. Every learner should develop the reading skills, to understand the tasks assigned to them. This is because reading is a basic skill which all learners should have before learning how to write and present. The motivation behind the topic of this study is to be able to gain acquaintance on the challenges that learners come across when they read short stories in the classroom, particularly reading in EFAL. Based on the research done by Snow, Burn and Griffin (2003), it appears that the challenges of reading are not fully understood by some learners, teachers and parents. Some children in Grade 8 have reading problems, but they are not aware of them (Snow, Burns, and Griffin 2003).

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The Grade 8 learners of the sampled school in Mogodumo circuit, Capricorn South District, do experience reading challenges in EFAL. The reading challenges that learners are faced with are; accent, pronunciation and audibility, fluency and reading skills, punctuation marks and understanding of text, use of non-verbal language, self-confidence and time management. Furthermore, there are contextual and non-contextual challenges in implementing reading strategies such as; language barrier, lack of reading materials, overcrowded classrooms, lack of parental involvement, child headed families and economic background, teaching methods. The non-contextual challenges mentioned are particularly evident in the EFAL classroom literature, such as short stories. Despite the provision of the much-needed learning and teaching resources by the Department of Basic Education, the supply of books remains insufficient as learners still share books. Bullard (2014) argues that learners in rural areas are coming from home environments in which reading is not encouraged, and learners lack motivation as the parents or guardians have little education or knowledge, the schools themselves have little or no reading resources and facilities such as internet, a variety of text books and a library to encourage the learners to learn.

Learners in senior phase are performing poorly in reading assessments; this has been a continuous problem (Ramalepe 2013). This problem is a result of the inability to grasp reading in abstract levels, which allow for exploration on the variety of vocabulary taught in class. Jensen (2010) argues that English readers do not engage in deep reading processes, therefore, they read without a clear understanding of meaning entailed in the text. It becomes difficult to make sense of what they read. This trend of reading with little understanding of text is notorious amongst second language speakers. Learners, who use English as a second language, struggle to extract meaning when reading. This is caused by lack of exposure to English as a second language (Adger, Snow, and Christian 2018).

Few countries such as Botswana, China and Nigeria still consider reading as a major problem and South Africa is also experiencing reading problems and low literacy levels. The Department of Education on a national level has undergone evaluation to determine the causes of low levels of literacy and reading. The results of evaluation have revealed that EFAL learners, who are not English speakers, have performed

below their respective levels. The evaluation focused on reading in an EFAL classroom in which over 80 per cent of learners do not use English as their first language. International bodies, together with Department of Education in a provincial level, agree with National Department of Education by adding that only fourteen per cent of EFAL learners were excellent in English language competency (Gronlund 2014).

3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1. Purpose

The study purpose is determining the challenges faced by learners when reading short stories for comprehension in an EFAL classroom. These reading challenges of senior phase learners will be investigated in this study.

3.2. Research questions

Main research question

- What challenges do grade 8 learners come across when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom?

Sub questions

- How can learners' reading skills be developed as outlined in the curriculum?
- What makes learners' home environment impede on the reading ability?
- What measures can be put in place to overcome challenges experienced by learners when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom?

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study approach to be used is qualitative. This approach is subjective in nature because it inculcates peoples' interaction, whereby they are free to share their personal opinions, ideas, experiences, beliefs and attitudes (Green and Maurer 2015). The study will be based upon the qualitative approach to explore the different views about the topic at hand. The aim of exploring peoples' views is to understand

and consider their view points about the proposed topic How People Learn (2017). As the study is under a constructivism it will adopt Creswell's approach which is qualitative in nature. This approach is explained as a process in which the researcher makes enquiries based on the acquired knowledge. This study will enquire about the challenges that learners' face when reading short stories in a Grade 8 EFAL classroom. This will be done in a qualitative manner so that participants can feel free to explore themselves in terms of what they think might be the cause of reading challenges faced by grade 8 learners (Gray 2018). It will assist in gaining new insight concerning problems encountered when reading short stories.

4.1. Research design

Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explain research design as a well organised structure that deals with basic assumptions in philosophy and respondents in a specific selection. Further, it explains how data will be gathered and analysed. The study is located under the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm proposes that reality and truth are viewed in different ways, for instance, one concept might be understood by different people in different ways and can convey multiple meanings (McGregor 2018). The paradigm explained above will be used to study the understanding of learners about reading. For instance, what impedes them from reading short stories fluently and how can they apply prior knowledge in understanding vocabulary in the short stories. This research is based on an interpretivist assumption because the data collected through observations and interviews will be audio, video-taped and interpreted. The results will be explained from a subjective point of view to grasp the meaning of data collected.

4.2. Population

The population of the study is based in Mogodumo circuit in Capricorn South district, Limpopo Province. This circuit has eleven secondary schools. The eleven schools fall under quintile two, including the sampled school. The school has 266 learners and nine teachers, including the principal. It has five grades, which are grade 8 to twelve. There are 78 learners and two English teachers in grade 8. The selected grade will be interviewed to fulfil the study purpose.

4.3. Sampling

Participants who have adequate information based on certain characteristics, first-hand experience, and informed knowledge relevant to the proposed topic, are identified using purposive sampling (Guest, Namey, and Mitchell 2013). This type of sampling was convenient in selecting a sample, and grade 8 learners will be sampled from the entire population of learners faced by the current problem. The choice of this sampling is guided by Gronlund (2014) who affirms that the researcher is required to have prior knowledge based on the purpose of the study so that they can properly choose and approach eligible participants.

Purposive sampling strategy was employed to sample only Grade 8 learners of the school. This was done since these learners are the ones who are faced with reading barriers, precisely reading short stories. Some learners in other grades also have reading problems, but Grade 8 has most learners who cannot read and the reading problems are rooted in this grade as far as secondary school is concerned (Cole 2001). This grade serves as the suitable study sample. Only grade 8 learners as well as their two teachers served as participants of the study.

The sampled school is a quintile two school, like the rest of the schools in the circuit; it has sufficient resources for enrolled learners, therefore, can cater for all learners from different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. The circuit office has direct contact with all principals, teachers and schools, offering educational support timeously. The study sample is practically involved with all the quintile two schools in the circuit. These schools have a common denominator, that being their grade 8 learners are faced with the reading challenges, particularly in reading short stories. The circuit provides all the schools with the same learning and teaching materials in accordance with enrolment of each school. Their language teaching and learning are guided by the same curriculum. Teachers have a feasible amount of contact time with learners, as outlined in the CAPS.

4.4. DATA COLLECTION

The researcher started by seeking permission from the school administrators as well as the principal to involve the teachers and learners to take part in the study. Once approval had been granted, the researcher informed the participants (teachers and learners), about the aim and objective of the research before collecting data and

made sure they were aware of any harm or risk that may take place. The data collection included a three-step general procedure: entry and greetings, self-introduction, explaining purpose and objective as well as assuring both teachers and learners of confidentiality and seeking permission to collect and gather data.

Data collection took a form of observation in which the researcher observed the English lesson. Data was also collected using document analysis and group discussions. In the section below, these data collection instruments are discussed.

4.4.1. Classroom observations

The first instrument to be used in collecting data was classroom observation. The naturalistic approach was adopted to study the strategies used to teach learners reading techniques in EFAL classroom. The researcher aimed to gain insights into the kind of reading techniques teachers employed when teaching learners to read short stories by observing the English reading lessons. Classroom observations served as a central method of collecting qualitative data in research. Additionally, it is confirmed by Flick, Metzler, and Scott (2014) that observation offers real life and first-hand experience on incidences currently taking place. Document analysis, observations and interviews can be intertwined to produce a universal explanation of the phenomena (Flick, Metzler, and Scott 2014).

Prior to observations, teachers and learners were formally greeted and asked by the researcher to sit in and observe the reading lesson. The researcher explains to the participants that the lesson would be audio taped and video recorded for authentic analysis. The observation schedule attached (See appendix six) was used during classroom observations. This tool was used for reading aloud and learners read the short story titled *The Old Woman by Bessie Head*. This short story was amongst the prescribed short stories for grade 8 learners. The choice of sampling was driven by contextual factors such as old people and younger children living in the rural areas. Most learners would relate to and find this story interesting and educative since they lived with their grandmothers and cared for them. Substantially, the contents in the story granted an opportunity to develop learners' use of volume, clarity, fluency, expression and posture during reading. This assisted in focusing on aspects to be investigated in the classroom before, during and after the lesson. The observation schedule addressed emerging themes emanating from the strategies used while

reading, which are pre, during and post reading. It sought to determine whether the strategies were applied by teachers during teaching and learners when learning how to read. Classroom practices were observed to gain understanding on how reading skills were developed in learners. As alluded in population and sampling sections, the school had 78 grade 8 learners; there was only one grade 8 class in the school. Observation was conducted in that one class.

Classroom observation assisted the researcher to link the research objectives with the study. As a non-participant observer, this allowed the researcher the opportunity to get first-hand experience on classroom communication without altering processes of learning and teaching. These information rich observations assisted in revealing what the teachers were doing rather than what they said they were doing. The audiotape could be replayed to make a review on teaching methods and strategies employed during reading lessons and asked clarity seeking questions. The data collected through observations was arranged according to themes, coded and recorded.

4.4.4. Focus group interviews

A well-organized and planned group of interviews provides informed details and wide range of information of the phenomena. This is mainly because participants are assured of confidentiality and they become at ease to reveal their insights. Moreover, the environment accommodates participants' various views and ideas; in essence, they can express themselves using their own words and give meaning to their utterances (Guest, Namey, and Mitchell 2013). This type of interview was conducted with six (6) learners with different learning abilities. These six learners were sampled according to the English subject profiling of learners in grade 8. English class performance list, which was categorized into three cognitive levels such as high, middle and low order was considered. By bringing together small groups of learners with various learning abilities, the information regarding the nature of strategies to be implemented at this school with respect to the research questions was obtained. It was hoped that through interactions and probing of questions, the conversations within the focus groups would develop naturally. The session was estimated to last between 30 to 90 minutes long.

Before conducting interviews, learners were given consent forms since they were all under 18 years of age. The learners were instructed to give the consent forms to their parents and guardians so that they could grant the learners permission to take part in the study (See appendix one and five). The information contained in the forms explicitly explained to them the purpose of the study. If the parents and guardians did not wish their children should take part in the study, they were asked to clearly indicate so on the consent form because they will be participating voluntarily.

The participants were interviewed to get information that could not be directly accessed from either the classroom observation or the focus group discussions. The respondents' behaviour, feelings and thoughts about the topic under study was audio recorded. Participants were also interviewed in a conversational manner guided by the main study purpose. The focus group interview tool was analysed based on appendix nine, comprising of open-ended questions which were directed to learners. Thematic analysis was applied to analyse themes that emerged from responses of participants. Follow up questions would arise, depending on the responses of participants. The interview questions were flexible, to enable freedom of participation and in-depth responses. Learners' responses were arranged according to questions on the interview list as reflected in appendix nine. This tool sought to address the various issues learners had around reading. Data was analysed in terms of focus group interview questions and their responses.

4.4.5. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were organised with two English teachers within the selected school. The participants were informed of the type and main purpose entailed in it before the study commenced. Consent for recording interviews was obtained from participants and they were assured of the confidentiality. Teachers were offered consent or permission forms before the interview commenced. The two English teachers were interviewed before and after teaching with the hope that they would talk freely, without interruptions. Therefore, this would assist in balancing the questions in focus group and semi-structured interviews. The interview questions in this setting would elicit participants' opinions, beliefs, thoughts and understanding of the use of teaching methods, strategies and communicative approach to the

teaching of reading short stories. The questions in the set-up included questions regarding strategies that could assist learners to read proficiently, an understanding of the language teaching method that could be used by the teachers; and the way communicative approach in teaching assisted to attain learning and teaching goals.

Some questions were asked after the interview sessions, the questions took the form of conversational analysis and discussions. Questions about the types of strategies that are employed during teaching short stories were also asked, particularly on how to read them and activities given to learners in the grade class. Although the researcher was aware that taking down notes could seem intimidating for the participants, she made them aware that she would be taking some notes of what she had observed during the process which will later be analysed when drawing up some conclusions.

4.5. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is defined as a process that works with data, organizes it, breaks it down into manageable units, and synthesizes it while searching for patterns (Saldaña, 2016). Data was analyzed according to the instruments employed in this study, such as observations, interviews and lesson plans. Analysis of data from observation instrument adopted the thematic analysis to analyse the emerging themes from classroom lessons.

4.6. QUALITY CRITERIA

Schreier postulates that reliability in qualitative research can be classified into four categories such as credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. These four categories used to classify reliability will be considered throughout the study to collect and investigate trustworthiness of information Schreier (2013).

4.6.1. Credibility

Credibility is when results of the research are established as credible and believable by the participants (Mills, Durepos, and Wiebe 2010). Likewise, Silverman (2017) adds that credibility is based on integrating respondents' opinions and ideas with characteristics of research contents explained by the researcher. To ensure credibility, the data collected from observations was recorded using audio and video-

tapes to maintain authenticity and certainty. Also, the interviews were audio-taped; the results were not manipulated as original records were kept safe as evidence and for verification.

4.6.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of the research are transferable to other locations or circumstances (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). To enable transferability, thick description of data is crucial for readers to judge the degree of transferability of the results (Bloomberg and Volpe 2019). Additionally, purposive sampling is another strategy used to explain in detail how and why the site and the participants were chosen, which makes them more amenable for comparison to other research findings elsewhere. The results of observation and interviews could be transferred to other schools in the Mogodumo circuit because the schools have a common problem which is the subject under study.

4.6.3. Dependability

Dependability can be referred to as reliability. This suggests that the study can be replicated in the same site and yield the same results (Bloomberg and Volpe 2019). In the same vein Brennen (2017) asserts that dependability and credibility are inseparable, thus the study cannot be dependable without being reliable. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) authenticate whether the results are dependable or not by using inquiry audit. The research procedures are examined by an auditor using observation schedules, field data, and interview notes and data analysis. It is lastly confirming that all the methods, interpretations and findings are coherent and consistent. The research processes was reported in detail, so that other researchers would be able to reproduce the study elsewhere without necessarily obtaining the same results, using this study a 'prototype model' (Brennen 2017).

4.6.4. Confirmability

Confirmability of research results is dependent on the perspectives of others towards the results. Various criteria could be used by the researcher to confirm the results, such as member checking and peer checking (Bloomberg and Volpe 2019). It displays the extent to which the research findings were not biased, or did not reflect

any undue bias by the researcher, but that they really focused on the research. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) refers to confirmability as the 'audit trail'. The research study could be confirmed by other researchers, the Department of Languages and Social Sciences, the School of Education, or the Faculty of Humanities.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings could assist all schools under quintile two which have learners who are experiencing reading problems. These schools would understand and effectively implement the necessary methods, approaches and techniques in teaching reading skills in an EFAL classroom. Furthermore, the discoveries may possibly benefit teachers to explore, determine and identify challenges they encounter when they engage in the current teaching methods and strategies as amended by the CAPS. They could also improve their teaching skills, particularly in reading. In addition, the conclusions may help teachers and subject and curriculum advisers to design learning programmes that are CAPS compliant and train teachers to use approaches that inculcate the three reading processes such as pre, during and post reading.

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical clearance is important due to the urgency ethical issues come with, in any research study, particularly one that involves human beings. The researcher needs to ensure that the study complies with all ethical issues or considerations to protect respondents Kruger, Ndebele, and Horn (2014). The research permission letter from the Research Ethics committee of the University of Limpopo was requested. Assent forms were provided for learners who were less than eighteen years old. Then the consent forms were given to teachers, the head of department and the principal of the school where the study was conducted. In the section below there are ethical issues that are relevant and were addressed in the proposed study. The sections include voluntary participation, confidentiality and consent forms.

6.1. Voluntary participation

Participation in the study was voluntary; this was explained in detail to respondents so that they could become aware that if they felt the need to pull out of the study,

they would be welcome to do so. The participants firstly familiarised themselves with the nature of the instrument, i.e. observations and interview questions. As indicated above, learners who are younger than eighteen were given assent forms to fill at home with the help of their parents or guardians or persons above age. Most importantly, the participants were treated with respect during the study with information guaranteed to remain confidential.

6.1.2. Privacy and Confidentiality

Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were respected under all circumstances. This was done by assuring that the information shared was kept confidential in a password protected folder. The information was only accessed by the researcher, the supervisor and the co-supervisor. A way to ensure anonymity for the participants was adhered to through assurance that no name would be presented in the thesis document. It was of great importance that the researcher makes sure that the participants had a full understanding of this so that they would be comfortable and at ease with the information they shared. The respondents were also informed about the outcomes of the research. The respondents' privacy, autonomy, dignity, and basic human rights as individuals were respected.

6.1.3 Consent and assent forms

The researcher informed the participants on the research topic and explained it in detail so as they could comprehend what was required of them in relation to the proposed study. The teachers were handed the consent form and learners the assent forms. The researcher asked for their permission and assured them that their participation would be anonymous. The researcher also asked the parents' permission to conduct research with their children as the participants. Lastly, she asked grade 8 learners' permission to ask them research questions and observe them during their English reading lessons. Every individual was respected.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter has explored challenges towards reading in an EFAL classroom. It comprises theoretical framework that guided the study and presents the literature relevant to reading challenges faced by learners in grade 8. There are many scholars such as Maree, (2012); Ramalepe, (2013); Foyal-Adebayo (2014); Chaka (2015) and Moletji (2016), who have written their studies in relation to the topic of reading in a South African school context and around the world, but not on Grade 8 learners. The existing gap on research outlined in the previous chapter is that there is minimal research done on the topic which focuses on learners' reading challenges based on short stories in grade 8. Additionally, the sample population where this study is located has not been well studied, particularly at the school under study. As a result, some learners might not be aware that they have a reading problem, teachers as well might not be able to identify this problem during lessons where they read short stories. It is hoped that both teachers and learners will identify those reading barriers so that the teaching and learning materials, strategies and approaches will be implemented in accordance with CAPS to enhance reading.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that guided this study is Schema Reading Theory. Theoretical framework shows and guides the beliefs and the researcher's worldview while defining the position the researcher takes in accounting for knowledge interpretation and knowledge making (Given 2008). Further, Given (2008) further asserts that "theoretical framework serves as a structure that guides research by relying on a theory constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of phenomena". This study is underpinned by the Schema Reading Theory.

2.2.1. Schema Reading Theory

The term schema was introduced and coined by the theorist Jean Piaget who defines it as a category of knowledge and the process of acquiring that knowledge (Piaget, 1936). This theory is based on the belief that people learn new things through acquiring information, which enables them to adapt to the new environment. New schemas are developed and old schemas are modified, as new information is presented and experiences occur (Humphreys, 2019).

The schema philosophy suggests students have varied concepts and perceptions that enhance understanding of what is being read (Chunk, 2020). They read a text having a certain mind set which leads them to various interpretations and comprehension. In interactive reading processes such as top down and bottom up schemata is being applied by proficient readers. It offers a set of ideas, beliefs and opinions to assist students in tracking the level of text understanding. Also, it assists in investigation of concepts they are not familiar with and enables students to gather clear understanding of text (Epstein, 2019). Proficient readers make use of previously learned knowledge of various concepts and link it with present information to design a meaningful text (Groesch and Davis, 2016). In schema reading theory, readers associate their own contextual knowledge with the information in a text to understand that text. All readers carry different background information and these are also frequently culture-specific.

Texts that relate to learners' background and culture are vital for teaching reading and testing their reading levels. This is in line with one of the research questions: how reading levels of grade 8 learners can be assessed. Schemata theory is the relevant framework upon which to base this study as it shows the importance of previously learned information, in essence, prior knowledge is regarded as a fundamental strategy in reading. It also advocates for pre-reading tasks which assist in building or activating the learner's schemata. Most learners come to school having different schemata, therefore the theory will assist in modifying the learner's various schema, and enabling them to adapt to the reading environment through learning new vocabulary and reading short stories (Stevenson, 2013).

2.2.2 Types of Schema: Formal, content and linguistic schema.

2.2.2.1. Formal schema

The preceding subheading indicates that there are three categories in which schema can be categorised into, such schema includes formal schema, content schema and linguistic schema (Carrell, 1984). Carrel posits that formal schema is “theoretical, internalised and coded coherent patterns of meta-linguistic, discoursed, and textual organization that guide expectations in our attempts to understand a meaningful piece of language”. Further, it is the acquaintance of various genres such as short stories, poems, drama etc., and how they are particularly organised according to language structure, grammar and lexicon. Carrell, Devine and Eskey (2002) add that formal schema is perceived as the understanding of grammatical structuring of written texts and the knowledge of how those texts can be converted into a meaningful language using specific types of genres.

2.2.2.2. Content schema

Content schema refers to learner’s cognition, which is the background knowledge of the subject area in which a text is involved (Carrel, Devine and Eskey, 2002). It can be explained as a set of flexible common experiences that occur occasions. For instance, in a grade 8 short story lesson, the schema could include a text that contains a story with a topic, setting, subheadings, paragraphs, main themes, characters, plot, together with reading strategies such as pre-reading, during reading and post-reading. This type of schema contains numerous aspects such as topic familiarity, previous practices, and cultural awareness. Culture is defined by UNESCO (2009) as a whole set of attitudes, beliefs, customs, social habits and behaviour carried out in a specific community. The aspect of cultural knowledge is of central importance to learners as it serves as a guide to core understanding of the presented text. It increases the chances of learners to make good choices on cultural contexts.

2.2.2.3. Linguistic schema

Linguistic or language schema is defined by Holmes and Wilson (2017) as the reader's knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and semantics. This type of schema is fundamental to content and formal schema as it forms the foundation of them all. Its fundamental role is to enable readers to have ample understanding when reading a text. Linguistic schema deals with conversion of a text into a meaningful and comprehensive language to construct a grammatically sound sentence. It is not possible to have a clear understanding of text without linguistic or language schemata. Consequently, a higher level of linguistic schemata in a reader's mind results in an advanced cognisance of information and a well-grounded understanding (Choudhary, 2019).

2.2.3. Functions of Schema in Reading

According to White (2019), the cognitive framework of schema adopts that abstract knowledge models such as understanding and learning that are stored in a persons' memory. In line with White, Ruddell (2003) adds that when the stored knowledge is applied, it can assist learners to develop their reading skills and have the necessary knowledge of any given passage. Finding meaning of the passage during reading requires the link between unconsciously acquired knowledge from social stimuli and consciously learned information from a formal classroom setting. Written, spoken and non-spoken texts are significant in schema theory of reading. For example, in a grade 8 English class, the picture of the old woman walking with a stick swaying side to side, can provide a clue of what the story is about. Learners should be given a chance to predict what the short story is about. This will assist them to produce new ideas about the story. Furthermore, they will be linking previously learned knowledge with the existing information presented to them in the classroom.

Choudhary (2019) explains the process of extracting meaning from a passage, interrelating it to a learners' background knowledge and indicating understanding as comprehension. Further, Choudhary elucidates that learners who are good readers usually offer more information about the text than the text itself. For instance, if a teacher assigns learners to read a phrase "village people", and explains its meaning

using a sentence, most learners will explain it in paragraphs using different ideas. Learners who read different reading materials have a wide range of vocabulary. When they read, they can indulge other stimulus beyond the text they are reading and associate them with the concepts stored in the memory.

2.2.4. Application of Schema Theory to teaching EFAL

2.2.4.1. Schema construction

Initially, language schema should be introduced. The knowledge of language is fundamental as it is essential for learners to have informed background information of a text (Bruns and Luque 2015). In their study, Bruns and Luque indicate that most learners in EFAL class find it difficult to gather vocabulary. According to them memorising unfamiliar words consumes a lot of their study time and is pointless, as it is not effective. Bruns and Luque (2015) claim, that memorising is not effective because learners lack the required memorising techniques. During the teaching process, teachers should encourage learners to link the newly -learned words with the ones they memorised to activate their prior knowledge and enhance the linguistic schema. When teaching learners new words, the context in which words appear should be emphasised so that learners understand that same words can appear in different contexts.

2.2.4.2. Grammar collection

The knowledge of collecting and arranging words to form accurate sentences is an integral part of reading as reading and writing are interdependent. Teachers should be able to teach grammar and explain to learners how words are arranged together to form sentences, hence activating learners' schema. Additionally, the background information of a short story should be introduced, this will activate learners' content schema (Moeletsi and Mlachila 2019). They should have the essential cultural background knowledge of "The old woman", so that they can adequately understand the short story and how the language is used; this will develop and improve their linguistic schemata. In other words, if learners do not have sufficient cultural background of the short story, it will be difficult for them to understand and master

the story line even though they have knowledge of grammar and vocabulary used in the text. Teachers should offer learners a variety of reading materials that are culture specific and encourage them to study their background information. This will enable learners to link culture and language and relate it to the short stories.

2.2.5. Schema's activation through application of the three reading strategies.

2.2.5.1 Pre-reading activities

At pre-reading stage teachers should assign learners activities that will activate their prior knowledge or schema. According to Schema theory, previous schema regulates learners' comprehension in the reading process. Thus, learners should be equipped with texts that provide sufficient information so that they can store in their minds the necessary schema (Bransford 2004). When analysing a short story the pre reading activities for learners include skimming and scanning features of a short story such as story title, sub headings, graphic information and visual elements. Learners might also be asked to predict what the story is about based on the information they gathered from the text features. By participating in these activities, learners might encounter unfamiliar words which build their vocabulary.

The mentioned activities should be facilitated using a question and answer method. This will create a productive learning environment where learners will be encouraged to participate actively with constructive inputs. Their prior schema will be aroused by the healthy environment and they will show more interest in reading. Teachers as designers of learning materials should creatively construct questions that will meet all learners' needs and accommodate each learner in the classroom. Learning activities should be planned so as to amount the teacher time to reflect on teaching methods and approaches suitable for each lesson. Preparing questions in advance assists learners to familiarise themselves with the activities and decide on which learning activities they will use to complete their assessment tasks (Moeletsi and Mlachila 2019).

2.2.5.2. During reading activities

Reading is an active process that requires learners to participate actively and critically without being passive recipients of information (Choudhary 2019). To enable this, teachers should give learners an opportunity to learn autonomously using the learner-centred method. This can be achieved by giving learners activities that requires them to brainstorm ideas. For example, learners could be asked to write a summary of the story using their own words. Summary writing will help them practise language structure skills. Secondly, the picture of the old woman in the story could be used to test their comprehension of graphic information. They could be asked questions such as:

- (a) What emotion is shown in this picture?
- (b) What material is used to show the woman is old?
- (c) Explain the difference in the attire of the old woman and the boy.

As learners brainstorm ideas, the teacher should facilitate learning to monitor the learning process. The answers to these questions could be presented in a class discussion method to maintain time management. Class discussions activate learners' communication skills and boost their confidence in peer teaching. Therefore, active participation becomes effective and the language schema is enhanced. Learners can be grouped in small groups of six so that they can speak in turns, with each member representing the collective ideas of their groups. The teacher will then gauge how much information learners have regarding the short story and add to their current schema (Howard & Beyers (2020).

2.2.5.3. Post reading activities.

Schema theory suggests that learners gather more schemas during the first and second stages of reading (Bender, 2012). When they enter post reading stage, they should have more schemas to solidify and widen their learned knowledge. The challenges encountered by learners in pre-reading and during-reading should be identified and cleared. Teachers can play a critical role of outlining mistakes made during the lesson and work with learners to make corrections. Before writing corrections, the content of the story should be fully analysed and discussed with different contextual examples. When analysing a short story, learners should be given a chance to ask clarity-seeking questions. The main themes and ideas of the

passage should be clearly outlined. This might assist learners to broaden their understanding of other contextual features such as layout and key words. They might also be motivated to write their own summaries using their own words (Bender, 2012).

2.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review according to Rich (2018) shows the outline of previously published studies that are related to the current one. Ridley (2013) is of the view that it helps the researcher understand the existing literature and discussions relevant to the topic under study and adds to the previous knowledge by filling the gaps. It also assists in revealing the significance of the study problem and offers guidance to the relevant research design in relation to a specific topic. This study explored challenges encountered by learners when reading short stories in EFAL, which happens to be a language of instruction in South African schools and worldwide.

2.3.1. Explanation of reading

Mackay, Bailey and Damerow (2014) elucidate reading as an active process rather than a product which encompasses partial language cues from the reader's conceptual input guided by their reading expectations. The processing of the partial language cues information aids a reader to refine, reject or confirm his or her uncertain decisions. Mountford (1979), explain the above statement as follows:

Firstly, the definition assumes that reading is an active process. The reader forms a preliminary expectation about the material, and then selects the fewest, most productive cues necessary to confirm or reject that explanation. This is a sampling process in which the reader takes the advantage of his knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, and the real world. The second inference, closely tied to the first, is that reading must be viewed as a twofold phenomenon involving process-comprehending- and product-comprehension. Third, reading involves, an interaction between thought and language. The reader brings to the task a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes and beliefs. This knowledge, coupled with the ability to make linguistic predictions, determines the expectations the reader will develop as he or she reads. A skill in reading depends on the efficient interaction between

linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world. Binkley (1989) shares the same views with Bailey and Damerow (2014) they both view reading as a process of constructing meaning from either written or non-written material. The reader should therefore have the background knowledge of the material they are engaged with, and interrelate it with the information at hand according to its context; and create meaning out of it (Binkley 1989).

2.3.3. Short stories

A short story is defined by Filho (2018), “as a narrative that can be read at one sitting of one-half hour to two hours, and that is limited to “a certain unique or single effect,” to which every detail is subordinate”. In the grade 8 literary genres, short stories are the highest applicable to use for teaching learners to read in an EFAL classroom, this is because they are short and easy to read. Amongst the four literary genres, such as novel, drama, poetry and short stories, learners’ attitudes indicate that they prefer reading and learning about short stories more than the other three. They claim that this genre is less difficult to understand and interesting to engage in. This notion is supported by Žukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė (2018), who assert that most short stories are contextual and have an element of pragmatism. Learners can easily relate to the texts when presented to them in class, this makes learning effective and progressive. The length of short stories encourages learners to take ownership of their own learning since they are short, precise, and comprehensible. Teaching reading becomes conducive and feasible as the teacher’s main role in the classroom becomes that of a facilitator.

2.3.3.1. How to choose a suitable text

Classroom texts as one of the EFAL learning materials should inculcate learners to make use of previously learnt information; this also encourages learner centeredness (Lewis & Reinders 2008). The teacher continues to facilitate learning in a communicative approach. In teaching reading classes, teachers might choose a short story within the phase range which is senior phase and the age cohort which is fourteen years of age. For instance, in grade 8 class there are a variety of prescribed short stories, but the researcher chose “The Old Woman by Bessie Head”; this story is suitable as learners find it easy to understand and can significantly relate to it. The

story has reading activities to activate learners' prior knowledge, urges them to apply the "during reading" knowledge and make a summary of what they have learned. Bransford and Donovan (2005) assert that the criteria of selecting the appropriate text such as the learning ability and needs of learners, required background information and language and register used in a short story.

2.3.3.2. Development of language skills in short stories

The use of short stories when teaching reading encourages integration and development of the four language skills, namely: reading, speaking, writing and language convention and structures. August and Shanahan (2012) stipulate that when short stories are carefully chosen, they can produce content which enhances learners' proficiency in the EFAL learning environment. Short stories can be constructive learning resources for classroom or group discussions, writing and presenting activities, and dialogue activities. These activities should be carried out in an approach that is learner centred and allows for various styles and levels of learning that accommodate all learners in the EFAL classroom (Lewis and Reinders 2008).

2.3.4. EFAL

English is a universal and well-known spoken language worldwide; therefore its significance is shared globally as it carries the role of being the international lingua Franca (Jenkins 2014). Most countries such as Nigeria, America, India, and South Africa use English as a language of instruction. It is presumed in the CAPS that foundation phase learners enter school level with little or no knowledge of the First Additional Language. Learners in the foundation phase should be taught literacy skills, where one of the main focuses is to develop into learners the ability to read and understand the language at school level. In grade three, the previously learned knowledge is applied when learners start to connect the learned second language with their home language to reinforce their literacy and communication skills (Department of Education 2013).

In the second phase, that is, the intermediate phase, grade four learners must be adequately exposed to the language four skills; reading, listening, speaking and writing. At this phase more emphasis is put on the EFAL. All the abovementioned skills are taught through the medium of instruction and the majority of learners learn in English. The more exposure they get, the greater chances of learning, thinking and reasoning in English. This also increases their chances of improving their EFAL reading ability (Department of Education 2013).

While EFAL is vital as it plays the role of Linguafranca for students who speak various languages within academic learning, learners in rural areas still experience barriers when reading (Stevenson 2013). The reading competencies of primary schools' learners have been a challenge since curriculum transformation was embarked upon in 1994 in South Africa. The National Reading Strategy (2017) brought forth evidence that learners in South African schools are failing to perform tasks such as reading suitable for their age group. This inability to read at expected levels of performance has transcended into secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. Gause (2017) explains that this situation compelled the Department of Basic Education to make a review of how learners are taught to read, emerging with the launch of the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC) in March 2008. This campaign has identified factors that stimulate reading proficiency such as language exposure.

2.3.5. Reading challenges

Several studies undertaken based on reading, have focused on learners in tertiary levels and younger children who are in lower primary; grade one to grade four whereas there is minimal focus on children in grade 8 (Allen and Kelly 2015). The existing gap on the reading researches outlined in the problem statement above is that there is minimal research done on the topic which focuses on learners' reading challenges based on short stories in grade 8. Additionally, the sampled population where this study is located has not been well studied, particularly at the school focused on. As a result, some learners might not be aware that they have a reading problem; teachers as well might not be able to identify this problem during lessons when they teach learners how to read short stories.

2.3.5.1. Language barrier

In a study conducted by Lemmer and Manyike (2012) in Tzaneen in the Letsitele area of the Limpopo Province, it has been reported that learners in that area use English as the second language (Lemmer and Manyike 2012). Their first language is Xitsonga; therefore, it becomes a challenge for learners from this area to read texts written in English. The population of the study consisted of Grade 7 learners from four different types of primary schools in the rural area, where the learners' first language (L1) is Xitsonga, with English being the second language (ESL), i.e. the language considered as the medium of instruction (Lemmer and Manyike 2012). It was concluded that the type of school as well as the limited reading materials for ESL learners have implications for acquiring English proficiency in a rural setting (Lemmer and Manyike 2012).

2.3.5.2. Learning to read

On a national level, many countries such as Nigeria, Australia, China, Botswana and South Africa, reading problem is an on-going major concern. To remedy this problem, scholars such as Dyson and Weddle (2008) asserts that learners should be taught how to read using English reading strategies and techniques at early stages of learning Dyson & Weddle (2008). The idea on reading at an early age are supported by Borba (2017), who adds that a child should learn how to read with understanding during the early years to prevent reading difficulties at school level.

2.3.5.3. Teaching learners how to read

In a study, focused on Grade 1-3 teachers in 11 schools in Gauteng, it is revealed that teachers in Foundation Phase struggle to properly teach learners to read due to the language spoken by learners and teachers. Furthermore, it was also found that a lack of “vernacular” teaching materials in the classrooms adds to the problem of effective teaching (Hugo 2010). In Gauteng Province, in another study conducted by Van Rooyen and Jordaan (2009), it was indicated that learners spent too much time watching television, playing video- or computer games instead of reading. This was found to be a problem for the learning capabilities of the learners, further suggesting that additional reading could facilitate better language comprehension skills (Van Rooyen and Jordaan 2009). The studies and findings above show that training and

work shopping teachers should be implemented to enable them to be innovative and use various strategies, methods and techniques in their classrooms to accommodate all different kinds of learners with different learning abilities.

2.3.5.4. Conducive learning and teaching environment

Allocated time for teaching literacy in senior phase, which is grade seven to nine, is recorded to be forty per cent in the annual teaching plan (ATP) (Department of Education 2002). In Senior Phase, learners are taught how to read critically with clear understanding for instance, in Grade 8 English classes, learners may be assigned to read a short story “They sold my sister” by Leteipa Ole Sunkuli. In this short story learners should distinguish fact and opinion and explain the stereotypes. These activity questions will enable learners to develop comprehension and knowledge of text, which is higher than that of grade four to six, in Intermediate Phase. In Grade 8, learners are expected to read texts with understanding and link information with prior knowledge, this will help them to create their own texts. Reading should be done frequently so that learners can have the ability of extracting meaning of any given text and critically analyse it (Anderson & Smith 2018).

2.3.5.5. Comprehension reading skills.

Academic underperformance in South Africa has been as the result of reading without comprehension (Rief 2016). Cloete, Sheppard and Mouton (2015) argue that most of the South African learners enter higher education underprepared for the reading loads expected from them. It has been reported in South African studies that reading comprehension skills are underdeveloped in secondary school learners (Drucker & Martin 2012). The above mentioned issue may emanate from the fact that primary school learners exit to secondary schools without developed reading skills, hence they are unable to comprehend the texts when presented to them in the classroom.

2.4. Reading techniques and their application to teaching

Three techniques such as independent reading, guided reading and shared reading are used when teaching learners how to read short stories for meaning and understanding. Throughout teaching, teachers should focus their attention on phonics and phonological awareness to amount learners ample time of grasping the context in which the short story applies and an opportunity to enjoy the content (Beacco, Fleming and Goullier, 2016).

2.4.1. Independent reading.

The independent reading technique is informed by learner-centred approach by (Ellis, 1994). In this technique, learners become active agents in that they come to class having their own schema of reading. They choose a short story of their own choice from a range of other existing texts in the classroom. Their past experiences, ideas and education on reading short stories drives them to choose the one they can relate to and enjoy (August & Shanahan ,2012). Learners read their respective short stories quietly during the lesson, using the (SSS) sustained silent reading method. Another method of reading learners might use is (DEAR) Drop Everything and Read (Gardiner, 2006). The teacher monitors and facilitates the reading processes by walking around the classroom checking developments arising from individual learners. The aim is to accommodate all learners with various socio-cultural backgrounds and learning needs so that they can learn to read in. While reading, listening and writing skills may also be developed and integrated to the reading process.

The amount of time spent on actively engaging and connecting with different meaningful reading materials can enable a learner to experience countless reading achievements. They can also develop language proficiency which reinforces reading skills such as fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, thus encouraging them to have greater interest in reading. Learners are more actively involved in learning the language when they find interest in reading. As reading skills improve, their schema develops and they are urged to comprehend additional reading materials and learning areas (Gardiner, 2006).

In line with Ellis, Brown (2001) adds that learner-centred approach involves:

- Techniques that accounts for learners' learning needs, goals and styles.
- Techniques that allows for learners' authoritative reading.
- Curriculum that aligns with learners' socio-cultural background needs.
- Techniques that inculcate and develop reading schema in a critical and creative manner.
- Techniques that develop learners' reading proficiency and fluency.

2.4.2. Guided reading

Guided reading technique is supported by the notion of Zone of Proximal Development by a Russian psychologist Vygotsky (1978). As per this theory, "zone of proximal development is the breach between the schema that the learner already has acquainted as determined by independent reading skills and the level of potential development she/he has to achieve through teacher's educational guidance." Thus the zone of proximal development occurs when a learner links previously learned knowledge with the unknown (Veraksa 2018). Reading becomes easy when learners are engaged and guided by the teacher in EFAL short story lessons. In a classroom setting, guided reading can be enabled when the teacher and a group of four to six learners discuss contents of short stories before reading them. Learners are grouped according to their reading needs and cognitive levels. After discussion, each learner reads their story to the teacher. This is done using an instructional approach where the teacher supports learners and assists them to develop their independent reading strategies (Chaka 2015). It is postulated that pre-reading strategies have helped learners to transform from reading without meaning to a greater percentage of understanding lexicons and self-correcting their errors during reading (Veraksa 2018).

Bruner (1978) shares the same views as (Vygotsky 1978). The theory of scaffolding was informed by Vygotsky's theories as a social constructivist. Bruner asserts that learners need a guided support from teachers to learn new concepts. Initially, learners depend on teachers to learn how to read, through the teacher's continued

instructional strategies, they become independent readers. When they reach the level of independence in reading, the teachers' support is deemed unnecessary.

2.5. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING READING STRATEGY

2.5.1. Teacher training

Most South African school teachers, especially in the discipline of languages, have slight understanding of how to teach reading in an EFAL classroom context. (Mulkeen, 2008). They are well-conversant with the teaching methods, but in most cases, their methods do not match the learning content and learners' different learning styles and needs. For instance, when teaching reading, learners need a variety of learning materials such as projector, pictures, posters, articles, videos, and audios. These materials should be used interchangeably to accommodate all learners. Gipe and Richards (2019) add that teachers lack the skill of stimulating reading in the classroom and outside. They further explain that teachers have a misconception of their role as facilitators, it is thought that facilitating learning means learners will have to teach themselves how to read whereas the teacher "facilitates". According to National Curriculum Statement (2005), one of teachers' roles is to design learning programmes and teaching materials. This role vexed teachers as they mainly depended on textbooks for teaching; they lacked experience in designing teaching and learning materials.

It is stated in the South African Constitution (1996) and the South African School Act (1996) that every learner has the right to learn and access learning facilities and educational opportunities. Unfortunately, for many learners in rural schools, this is not the case. National Academies Press (2010) states that most teachers in the Foundation Phase are not adequately trained to teach reading as per the current curriculum. Therefore, they still use the traditional methods which emphasise rote teaching and memorisation. Learners are taught to memorise texts without understanding their meaning and application to real-life situations. Bergan and Damian (2010) discover that learners who were taught by teachers who had adequate training in some of the schools in Iraq had higher levels of successful academic progress when compared to those who were not trained to teach English. The concern of untrained and under-qualified teachers in primary schools hinder the

progress of learners to secondary education; most learners who manage to enter secondary school do so without being able to read. Teachers' competency in rural schools is average because in most cases they are short-staffed and must teach multiple subjects in various grades. Consequently, this deprives teachers' time to plan the lessons, design learning programmes and align them with the relevant teaching methods outlined in the CAPS curriculum (Weinberger and Libman, 2018).

2.5.2. Methods of teaching and learning

Epstein (2019) believes that teachers should acknowledge learner diversity in the classroom and incorporate them in planning the teaching methods. These include cultural, linguistic, social, ethnic, gender, physical, academic and cognitive diversities. For instance, for teachers to plan a successful reading lesson, cultural diversity and academic level of learners should be considered when choosing a short story. In a study conducted by Molosiwa and Moswela (2013) in an intermediate phase in Botswana, it was indicated that teachers were using the teacher-centred method that does not accommodate learners' diversities. Learners were given notes about the short stories which were not discussed in detail and clarified, to cram and reproduce them; their learning needs were therefore not met during the lesson. Another finding is that some teachers were not employing the three reading strategies when they were teaching learners how to read. Other teachers were reading Setswana short stories during EFAL lesson; it consumed time to translate the story into English and learners were passively writing down the notes (Odimegwu, 2020).

2.5.3. Teaching and learning materials

Schools which are sufficiently equipped with educational facilities such as administrative building, laboratory, research facility and library as well as instructional resources such as guides, pamphlets, podcast, slides, videos and computers produce better results than those without resources (OECD 2019). Teacher effectiveness towards teaching reading is motivated by the availability of these above-mentioned materials. They can plan their lessons in advance because they have the relevant classroom support system in place. Even so learners might

still achieve below average if the available resources are underutilised due to lack of pedagogical and didactic skills in teachers.

Tabenskyn and Matthews (2015) maintain that learners who have access to instructional materials and utilise them efficiently achieve outstanding reading levels than those who do not. In essence this alludes that learning materials that match learners' educational needs ignite them to obtain maximum results in their studies. Fredriksen, Brar and Trucano (2015) suggest that providing each individual learner with a textbook for all their subjects has a greater impact on their academic performance. The quality of text books and their usage are the constituents of education quality. The provision of text books alone does not determine the education level but how teachers mediate its contents to learners.

2.5.4. Curriculum delivery

The methods of delivering curriculum across teaching EFAL play a crucial role in accomplishing sustained proficiency in reading (Bruns and Luque 2015). Nonetheless, Mertler (2009) contend that an inflexible and stiff curriculum that does not cater for learner diversity, this might be the learning barrier. The curriculum should be flexible enough to reach all learners, especially in the remote schools which are poverty stricken. Factors such as classroom mismanagement, strict teaching styles, inappropriate teaching materials, lack of knowledge in subject content and unfair assessments impact negatively on education. Croft (2017), states that in some schools that implement inclusive education, such as the school under study, they are still using the old curriculum which was out-dated and did not consider the wide-ranging array of learning needs. For example, when teaching reading using only a text book, some learners who learn best by viewing pictures and touching objects will be left behind (Croft 2017).

2.5.5. Libraries

Libraries are a necessity in all schools as they enrich the ability of learners to interact with practical and information that is relevant to their everyday life (Real 2018). They are important to the curriculum, learners and teachers' daily lives as their main aim is to provide them with learning and teaching resources; they also improve curriculum delivery. Mojapelo (2008) adds that the utilisation of information resources and the

library supports learners and develop their effective and creative skills. Nonetheless, the Department of Education (2013) records an insignificant percentage of 7.2% of South African schools with well-designed and serviced school libraries. Most of the schools within this percentage are positioned in former model C schools. Bank (2008) posits that in rural areas of developing countries such as Malawi, Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda and Lesotho, learners are facing difficulties as there are few or no libraries in these areas. This is also the case in remote areas of Limpopo Province, particularly where the study was based.

2.5.6. Overcrowded classrooms

Pretorius (2017) postulates that some of the significant factors to consider when setting classroom performance are learner- educator ratio and school infrastructure. Pretorius asserts that these factors have a major effect on the academic performance and quality of education. Pretorius (2017) adds that, dilapidated and overcrowded classrooms, lack of enough space, poor ventilation, noise pollution and lack of school furniture are factors which indirectly contribute to unfortunate learning conditions. These poor learning conditions are believed to deprive learners the opportunity to learn effectively as they cannot be attentive. The PIRLS most recent tests have provided evidence by sharing teachers' feedback concerning their unfavourable working environments. They gave reports on the problems they encountered daily such as, learning materials, reinforcement of school infrastructure, and overcrowding. Contrary to these reports, there are teachers who reported that they hardly experienced challenges in their working conditions and their learners had a record of high achievements in reading.

The Department of Education is in the same vein with Pretorius (2017); they presume that dilapidated and congested classrooms deter teaching and learning as well as the implementation of the CAPS. The department also highlights the issues of teacher-learner ratio; it is argued that "high learner-educator ratios, combined with poor physical conditions and inadequate facilities for teaching and learning, such as inadequate instructional support materials, make it even more difficult to deliver quality education" Department of Education (2013).

2.5.7. Parental involvement

Epstein (2019) believes that parents' involvement on their children's learning has a major positive effect on their achievement. Additionally, research on parental involvement indicates that learner's performance increases, level of school absenteeism is reduced and their confidence is improved because of parents' involvement. When parents are involved in their children's education, those learners have improved social skills and behaviour, have a high academic achievement and work well with other learners (Fennelly et al. 2014). Contrary to this, McCarthy (2019) postulates that some parents, especially in remote areas, are facing financial crisis whereby they get low wages and must work two jobs at the same time. Thus they are deprived a chance to get actively and effectively involved in their children's education. This challenge creates a barrier to learning as learners go to school without being motivated to learn and achieve better results; teachers are left with a burden of producing quality results whereas learners are not mentally equipped to work hard for those results. Other scholars such as Deger and Frank (2021) argue that in most rural and poverty stricken areas parents are not involved in their children's school affairs as there are no direct links between parents and school. As a result parents do not receive timely feedback concerning their children's school performance. The above situation is aggravated by the fact that most parents are illiterate and only understand their native language; this becomes a major challenge for them to communicate with the teachers and assist learners with school work.

2.5.8. Language barrier

In a study conducted by Lemmer and Manyike (2012) in Tzaneen in the Letsitele area of the Limpopo Province, it was reported that learners in that area used English as the second language (Lemmer and Manyike, 2012). Their first language was Xitsonga, therefore, it became a challenge for learners from this area to read texts written in English. The population of the study consisted of Grade 7 learners from four different types of primary schools in the rural area, where the learners' first language (L1) was Xitsonga, with English being the second language (ESL), i.e. the language considered as the medium of instruction of (Lemmer & Manyike, 2012). It was concluded that the type of school as well as the limited reading materials for ESL learners had implications for acquiring English proficiency in a rural setting

(Lemmer and Manyike 2012).The above statements prove that Education Language Policy of 1997 has not fully been implemented in all South African schools including in Limpopo Province. It is evident that most learners were still not awarded an opportunity to learn in their native language (Veriava et al., 2017).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, different literatures were reviewed to convey to the researcher what knowledge and ideas have been established on the research topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are by guiding concept on the research objectives, and the research problem under discussion. The aim of the chapter was to build a broader understanding about the nature and meaning of the research problem by discussing and distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done. This chapter describes the methodological approach that was adopted in this study. It justifies the qualitative design, which was adopted. It presents a brief discussion of the sample population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data analysis tools used in this study. The overall aim of this study is to determine the challenges faced by learners when reading short stories for comprehension in an EFAL classroom. The research methodology facilitated the attainment of the following research questions:

- What challenges do grade eight learners come across when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom?
- How can learners' reading skills be developed as outlined in the curriculum?
- What makes learners' home environment impede on the reading ability?

3.2. Research methodology

The study approach used was qualitative. This approach is subjective in nature because it inculcates peoples' interaction in whereby they are free to share their personal opinions, ideas, experiences, beliefs and attitudes (Creswell 2018). In addition, (Guest et al. 2013) state that through qualitative approach, participants' experiences are studied as they occur naturally. They further argue that the use of qualitative approaches offers the researcher an opportunity to get first-hand experience which is informative, because they obtain data using observations and interviews. Qualitative research aims to explore and discover issues about reading as a problem in the study (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delpont, 2005). Brikci (2007) argues that "qualitative research aims at understanding the experiences and attitudes of teachers with regard to exploring reading as literacy skills in EFAL". Hence the qualitative approach was used with the intention of asking clarity seeking questions such as how, why and what concerning the reading phenomenon at hand.

The study was based upon the qualitative approach to explore the challenges faced by learners when reading short stories in EFAL classroom lessons. Participants' views about the reading challenges have also been explored in detail. The aim of exploring participants' views was to understand and consider their viewpoints about the reading challenges (Maree 2017). As an interpretivist, the researcher implemented Creswell's method which is qualitative in nature. It is explained as a process whereby the researcher use acquired knowledge to make claims. In this study, the researcher enquired about the challenges that learners face when reading short stories in a Grade 8 EFAL classroom. This was done in a qualitative manner so that participants can feel free to explore what they think might be cause of reading challenges faced by Grade 8 learners (Mouton and Marais, 2015). It assisted in gaining new insight concerning problems encountered when reading short stories.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Maree (2017) explains research design as a well organised structure that deals with basic assumptions in philosophy and respondents in a specific selection. Further, it explains how data will be gathered and analysed. The study was located under the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm holds a belief that reality and truth is viewed in different ways, for instance, one concept might be understood by different people in

different ways and can convey multiple meanings (Cohen et al. 2018). The paradigm was suitably applicable in this study because it offered the diversity of views from the phenomenon and allowed the researcher to describe and interpret the behaviour of humans and the events that occur in a natural setting. It also enabled me to understand the relationship of participants with their social context. Secondly, through its application, further, the researcher was able to prompt and investigate matters that cannot be observed for example; she identified some of the issues learners have which might be the contributing factors to their reading problems. Some learners through focus group interviews seemed not to be aware that they could not read English short stories, they claimed that they read the way they were taught and most of their short stories they read were taught in Sepedi lessons. The paradigm explained above was applied to study the understanding of learners with regard to reading. They were interviewed, focusing on some of the research questions. For instance, they were asked what impeded them from reading short stories fluently and how they could apply prior knowledge in understanding vocabulary in the short stories.

3.3.1. Research design

Case study

A case study is an in-depth and detailed exploration of a conduct and relationships of a certain organisation or society (McNamee and Hosking 2012). This case study was descriptive because it was based on Schema Reading Theory. This theory suggests that language readers carries various theoretical backgrounds, called schemata, they bring the schema to the classroom and can interpret the meaning carried within the text. (Pathak 2013). Guided by this theory, learners were observed as they read the short stories and then data was collected and linked to the existing theory. Based on scope, a case study is an intensive examination of a current phenomenon in real-life situation. In this case a sampled group of learners served as instruments for data collection since they experienced the challenges to reading in their daily lives during English lessons. They have been chosen so that the phenomenon could be closely examined. The use of a case study is justified when the context is related to the phenomenon. For instance, this study is about the exploration of challenges

encountered by Grade 8 learners when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom; the phenomenon is challenges encountered by learners when reading short stories and the context is Grade 8 learners in an EFAL classroom.

3.4. POPULATION

Research population can be referred to as a set of people who are taking part in the study; they are mostly called participants (Kothari and Garg, 2019). The participants are usually a group of individuals who portrays characteristics. The population of the study was based in Mogodumo circuit in Capricorn South district, Limpopo province. This circuit had eleven secondary schools. The eleven schools fell under quintile two, including the sampled school. The school had 288 total numbers of learners and nine teachers, including the principal. It had five grades, which were grade 8 to twelve. There were 72 learners and two English teachers in grade 8. There were 61 learners in grade nine, 55 learners in grade 10, 53 learners in grade 11 and 47 learners in grade 12. The selected grade was interviewed to fulfil the study purpose. The total population size is six grade 8 learners and two EFAL teachers.

3.5. Sampling

This study used purposive sampling to select participants. According to Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013) purposive sampling refers to a selection of a part of a population or participants who have adequate information based on certain characteristics, first-hand experience, and informed knowledge relevant to the proposed topic. This type of sampling was used because it is convenient for the study, and grade 8 learners were sampled from the entire population of learners faced by the current problem. The choice of this sampling is guided by (Gronlund 2014), who affirms that the researcher is required to have prior knowledge based on the purpose of the study so that they can properly choose and approach eligible participants.

Purposive sampling strategy was employed to sample only grade 8 learners of the school. This was done since these learners were the ones who were faced with reading barriers, precisely reading short stories. As a researcher was also an English

educator in this school, these reading problems were known to her since she mostly had contact reading lessons with grade 8 learners. Six (6) learners with different learning abilities and knowledge were sampled according to the English subject profiling of learners in grade 8. The English class performance list which was categorized into three cognitive levels such as high, middle and low order was considered. Some learners in other grades also had reading problems, but grade 8 had most learners who could not read, and the reading problems are rooted in this grade as far as secondary school is concerned (Cole 2001). The two English teachers were also sampled to be part of the study, they were sampled because they are directly involved with these learners through teaching EFAL in grade 8. This grade served as the suitable study sample. Only grade 8 learners as well as their two teachers served as participants of the study. The total sample size is two EFAL teachers and six grade 8 learners.

3.6. DATA COLLECTION

Data collection took a form of observations in which the researcher observed the English reading lessons. Data was also collected using document analysis which where the lesson plans and observation schedules were analyzed as well as through group discussions. The section below discusses these data collection instruments.

3.5.1. Classroom observation

Firstly, data was collected using classroom observation. This data collection instrument was used three times since three lessons were observed. The first lesson focused on the reading strategies used by learners when reading short stories. The second lesson was based on the research question “How can learners’ reading skills be developed as outlined in the curriculum”? The last lesson focused on research question “What makes learners’ home environment impede on the reading ability”? The researcher aimed to gain insights into the kind of reading strategies learners used to read short stories and how their reading skills could be enhanced. Lastly, the researcher sought to understand how learners’ home environment impedes their reading. Classroom observations serve as a central method of collecting qualitative data in research. Additionally, it has been confirmed by Flick,

Metzler, and Scott (2014) that observation offers real life and first-hand experience on incidences currently taking place.

Classroom observation assisted the researcher to link the research objectives with the study. As an observer, this granted the researcher an opportunity to get first-hand experience on classroom communication without altering processes of learning and teaching. These information rich observations assisted in revealing what the teachers were doing rather than what they said they were doing. The audiotape could be replayed to make a review on the reading strategies employed by learners during reading lessons and ask clarity seeking questions. The data collected through observations was arranged according to themes, coded and recorded. For instance, all the data collected through observations in the three lessons was grouped and analyzed according to the themes that emerged during the whole process of teaching and learning. This included themes such as lack of teaching and learning materials, language barriers and teaching methods which were not in line with the current curriculum.

3.5.2. Focus group interviews

According to Guest et al, this is a well-organized and planned group of interviews that provides informed details and wide range of information of the phenomena. This is mainly because when using focus group interview participants are assured of confidentiality and they become at ease to reveal their insights. Moreover, the environment whereby participants are engaged in a focus group accommodates their various views and ideas; in essence, they can express themselves using their own words and give meaning to their utterances (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013). This type of interview was conducted with six (6) learners with different learning abilities and understanding. These six learners were sampled according to the English subject profiling of learners in grade 8. The English class performance list which is categorized into three cognitive levels such as high, middle and low order was considered. By bringing together small groups of learners with various learning abilities, the information regarding the nature of strategies to be implemented at this school in respect to the research questions was obtained. It is hoped that through

interactions and probing of questions, the conversations within the focus groups would develop naturally. The session was estimated to last between 30 minutes to 90 minutes.

Before conducting interviews, learners were given consent forms since they were all under 18 years of age. The learners were instructed to give the consent forms to their parents and guardians so that they could grant the learners permission to take part in the study (See appendix one and five). The information contained in the forms explicitly explained to them the purpose of the study.

The participants were interviewed to get information that could not be directly accessed from neither the classroom observation nor the focus group discussions. The respondents' behaviour, feelings and thoughts about the topic under study were audio recorded. Participants were interviewed in a conversational manner guided by the main study purpose. The interview questions were flexible to enable freedom of participation and in-depth responses. Learners' responses were arranged according to questions on the interview list as reflected in appendix nine. This tool sought to address the various issues learners had with reading.

3.5.3. Semi-structured interviews

This type of interview affords transferable and reliable data and outline clear research instructions set for participants (Reber, 2016). They are often conducted after observations and focus group interviews so that the researcher can have ample time to understand the study topic and develop meaningful and pertinent questions for semi-structured interviews (Pope and Mays, 2020). The questions in this interview were often open-ended.

Interviews that are semi-structured were organised with two English teachers within the selected school. The participants were informed of the type and main purpose entailed in it before the study commenced. Consent for recording interviews was obtained from participants and were assured of the confidentiality. Teachers were offered consent or permission forms before the interview commenced. The two English teachers were interviewed before and after teaching in the hopes that they would talk freely, without interruptions. Therefore, this assisted in balancing the questions in the focus group and semi-structured interviews. The interview questions

in this setting elicited participants' opinions, beliefs, thoughts and understanding of the use of teaching methods, strategies and communicative approach to the teaching of reading short stories. The questions in the set-up included questions regarding strategies that could assist learners to read proficiently; an understanding of the language teaching method that was used by the teachers and the manner in which communicative approach in teaching assisted to attain learning and teaching goals.

Some questions were asked after the interview sessions; the questions took a form of a conversational analysis and discussions. Questions were also asked about the types of strategies that are employed during the teaching of short stories, particularly on how to read them and activities given to learners in the grade class. Although the researcher was aware that taking down notes might seem intimidating for the participants, she made them aware that she would be taking down some notes of what she had observed during the process which would later be analysed when drawing up some conclusions.

3.5.4. Lesson plan and observation schedule

Lesson plan was used as a data analysis tool, it was used to determine its effectiveness during teaching and how teachers integrate reading skills during teaching reading. The lesson plan analysis has addressed; the type of teaching and learning materials used to teach learners how to read, teaching and learning strategies, the allocated teaching time and reading activities. The observation schedule attached (See appendix six) was used during classroom observations. This tool was for reading strategies and learners were asked questions by their English teachers during the lesson based on the reading strategies on the short story titled *The Old Woman by Bessie Head*. The researcher was a non-participant observer. This short story was amongst others prescribed for grade 8 learners, the choice of its sampling was driven by the contextual factors such as old people and younger children living in the rural areas. Most learners would relate to and find this story interesting and educative since they lived with their grandmothers and care for them.

Substantially, the contents in the story granted an opportunity to develop learners' use of the three reading strategies to have an in-depth understanding of the short story. This assisted in focusing on aspects to be investigated in the classroom

before, during and after the lesson. The observation schedule addressed emerging themes that emanated from the answers provided by learners in response to questions asked, based on the reading strategies used by learners when reading, which are; pre, during and post reading. Some of the themes from the observations were prior knowledge, text comprehension, prediction and summary. The use of observation schedule sought to determine whether the strategies are applied by learners when learning how to read. Classroom practices were observed to gain understanding on how reading skills are developed into learners. As alluded in population and sampling sections, the school had 72 grade 8 learners; there was only one grade 8 class in this school. Observations were conducted in this one class on three occasions, concentrating on reading short stories.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is defined as a process that works with data, organizes it, breaks it down into manageable units, and synthesizes it while searching for patterns (Saldaña, 2016). Data analysis methods used is thematic analysis, the purpose of applying this method was to identify the themes that emerge repeatedly from data collection instruments such as observations, interviews and lesson plans. The themes that emerged from these instruments were arranged and analyzed in subheadings. The thematic analysis has assisted the researcher to:

- Identify the challenges learners have on reading
- Identify how teachers teach reading
- Enable the researcher to interpret learners' challenges to reading
- Determine themes or patterns that are similar from participants' responses.
- To enhance the understanding of learners' challenges to reading.

Data obtained through observation schedules addressed learners' reading difficulties and their behavior during reading. Additionally, data from observations addressed contextual and non-contextual factors such as language barrier and overcrowding, which affect reading. Data obtained through interviews addressed teachers' and learners' views and opinions on what hinder learners from reading. Lastly, data obtained through lesson plans addressed how teachers were teaching learners to read and what they were using to teach.

3.7. QUALITY CRITERIA

Schreier (Year) postulates that reliability in qualitative research can be classified into four categories such as credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. These four categories were used to classify reliability, which was considered throughout the study to collect and investigate trustworthiness of information (Schreier, 2013).

3.7.1. Credibility

Credibility is when results of the research are established as credible and believable by the participants (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe, 2010). Likewise, Silverman (2017) adds that credibility is based on integrating respondents' opinions and ideas with characteristics of research contents explained by the researcher. To ensure credibility, the data collected from observation was recorded using audio and video-tapes to maintain authenticity and certainty. Also, the interviews were audio-taped; the results were not manipulated, as original records were kept safe as evidence and for verifications.

3.7.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of the research are transferable to other locations or circumstances (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). To enable transferability, thick description of data is crucial for readers to judge the degree of transferability of the results (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2019). Additionally, purposive sampling is another strategy used to explain in detail how and why the site and the participants were chosen, which makes them more amenable for comparison to other research findings elsewhere. The results of observation and interviews can be transferred to other schools in the Mogodumo circuit because the schools had a common problem which is the subject under study.

3.7.3. Dependability

Dependability can be referred to as reliability. This suggests that the study can be replicated in the same site and yield the same results. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) are in the same vein with Brennen (2017) who asserts that dependability and credibility are inseparable, thus, a study cannot be dependable without being

reliable. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) authenticate whether the results are dependable or not by using inquiry audit. The research procedures are examined by an auditor using observation schedules, field data, and interview notes and data analysis. Lastly the auditor confirms that all the methods, interpretations and findings are coherent and consistent. The research processes were reported in detail, in case other researchers might see the need of conducting another study of the same topic elsewhere, using this study only as a 'prototype model' (Brennen, 2017).

3.7.4. Confirmability

Confirmability of research results is dependent on the perspective of others towards the results. Various criteria could be used by the researcher to confirm the results, such as member checking and peer checking (Bloomberg and Volpe (2019). It displays the extent to which the research findings were not biased, or do not reflect any undue bias by the researcher, but that they really focus on the research. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) refer to confirmability as the 'audit trail'. The research study could be confirmed by other researchers, the Department of Languages and Social Sciences, the School of Education, or the Faculty of Humanities.

3.8. SEEKING PERMISSION

Ethical clearance is important due to the great respect and urgency ethical issues come with, in any research study, particularly one that involves human beings. The researcher needed to ensure that she complied with all ethical issues or considerations to protect respondents (Kruger, Ndebele, and Horn, 2014). The research permission letters from the Research Ethics committee of the University of Limpopo were requested. Assent forms were provided for learners who were less than eighteen years old. Then the consent forms were given to teachers, the Head of Department and the Principal of the school where the study was conducted. In the section below are ethical issues that are relevant and were be addressed in the proposed study. The sections include Voluntary participation, confidentiality and consent forms.

3.9. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in the study was voluntary; this was explained in detail to respondents so that they became aware that should they feel they needed to pull out of the study, they were welcome to do so. The participants first familiarised themselves with the nature of the instrument, i.e. observations and interview questions. As indicated above, learners who were younger than eighteen were given assent forms to fill at home with the help of parents, guardians or persons above age. Most importantly, the participants were treated with respect during the study, with information guaranteed to remain confidential.

3.10. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were respected under all circumstances. This was done by assuring them that the information shared was kept confidential in a password protected folder. The information was accessed by the researcher, the supervisor and the co-supervisor. A way to ensure anonymity for the participants was adhered to through assurance that no name would be presented in the thesis document. It was very important that the researcher make sure that the participants had a full understanding of this so that they would be comfortable and at ease with the information they shared. The respondents were also informed about the outcomes of the research. The respondents' privacy, autonomy, dignity, and basic human rights as individuals were respected.

3.11. CONSENT AND ASSENT FORMS

The researcher informed the participants about the research topic and explained it in detail so as they could comprehend what was required of them in relation to the proposed study. The teachers were handed the consent form and learners the assent forms. The researchers asked for their permission and assured them that their participation would be anonymous. Further, she asked parents for permission to conduct research with their children as the participants. Lastly, she asked grade 8 learners' permission to ask them research questions and observe them during their English reading lessons. Every individual was respected.

3.12. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was applied in accordance with the exploration of challenges faces by learners when they read. The paradigm as well as the research design was explained with contextual examples to enable the reader to understand the plan and design of the entire research. Data collections tools such as observations, interviews, document analysis and audio tape were used and analysed accordingly. Teachers were interviewed through semi-structured interviews while learners were interviewed through focus group interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the qualitative data and analyses the findings gathered through exploration. The data collection took a form of classroom observations, focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, which is the lesson plans. As already mentioned, documents such as lesson plan and observation schedules were as well used to collect data. The processes of data collection were guided by the purpose and research questions of the study. This is supported by Braun et al (2017) by saying data collection should be persuaded by the study purpose. In pursuit of the real challenges faced by learners when reading, teachers and learners were observed during lessons and asked questions through interviews. Teachers and learners were also used for observations, interviews and document analysis such as lesson plan.

Teachers' lesson plans were analysed to explore whether the lesson presentations is coherent with the lesson plans. The aspects of the lesson plan that were analysed are; teaching time, resources, teaching methods and reading skills. There were two lesson plans which were supposed to cover two lessons. Due to mismanagement of time, and many grade eight learners in one class, lesson plan number two which is labelled appendix 6.2 was used for two days.

4.2. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF EFAL TEACHERS

It is of paramount importance to indicate the biographical information of teachers to understand the purpose of selecting them for the study. The analysis and interpretation is based on the table below. The table was analysed in terms of age, gender, qualifications and teaching experience. Two teachers from the school that was used as a sample were observed while they were teaching learners how to read. These teachers were also interviewed using semi-structured interviews. One teacher was interviewed as an English teacher and as a Head of Department in languages. The two teachers both taught English in grade 8 and they were qualified to teach senior phase but their qualifications and teaching experience differed. They also differed in age. Teacher one was trained through OBE, hence he preferred to use the old teaching styles. He was 52 years of age, had a teaching experience of about 30 years and had a STD teaching diploma. Teacher two was trained through CAPS; she preferred to implement various teaching approaches and methods that were in line with the current curriculum. She was 27 years old and had been teaching for five years. She had a B.Ed. and honours degrees in language education.

Table 1. Biographical information of teachers

Teacher	Age	Gender	Qualification	Teaching experience
Teacher one	52 years	Male	STD	30 years
Teacher two	27 years	Female	B.Ed.; Hons	5 years

4.3. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF LEARNERS

The analysis and interpretation is based on the table below. All learners were from the same school as their two English teachers. Their age group ranged from 14 years to 15 years of age. The appropriate age to be in grade 8 was 14, but in this school, there were learners who are 15 years. The selected learners were observed in three EFAL lessons and interviewed using the focus group interview. The reading aloud observation tool on appendix 6.2 was used to obtain information about how learners were reading; their reading performance were thence recorded in this tool. The learners were observed in the same classroom with the same reading materials.

Table 2. Learner profile

Learners	Gender	Age
Learner one	Male	15
Learner two	Female	14
Learner three	Male	14
Learner four	Female	14
Learner five	Male	15
Learner six	Female	15

4.4. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Flick, Metzler, and Scott (2014) proposes that observation is a data instrument tool that offers real life and first-hand experience on incidences currently taking place. This study was centred upon the challenges faced by learners when they read short stories, particularly in EFAL. During the observations in all the three lessons, the researcher observed that learners in the class used English as a second language and there were two groups of learners, those who spoke Sepedi and those who spoke XiTsonga as a mother tongue. Learners were not necessarily grouped as per their mother tongue, this was recognised when their teachers asked questions during teaching and they were constantly code switching.

During the classroom lessons, these learners and teachers used English as a medium of instruction although they had different language backgrounds. The use of English throughout the lesson seemed to be a hindrance to most learners. They were commonly making noise and teacher one said: *boys and girls keep quiet, you are making noise, hey! quiet!*. This large number of learners in one class was almost difficult to control, they continuously made noise and this disturbed the lessons. The teacher was shouting "*hey, keep quiet!*", but learners at the back seats still continued to make noise until they were removed from their seats and taken to the front row. Thereafter, there was quietness in the classroom. The study has showed that learners have challenges to reading short stories, these challenges included; accent,

pronunciation and audibility, fluency and reading skills, punctuation marks and understanding of text, use of non-verbal language, self-confidence and time management.

4.4.1. INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF LESSON OBSERVATIONS

4.4.1.1. Teaching and learning materials

In lesson one as shown from the lesson plans in the appendix section, teachers used a traditional method of teaching. Teachers encouraged learners to listen attentively and keep quiet during lessons, unless they are asked to speak. Most learners were passive during the English lessons while the minority that was actively involved would first wait to be called upon; the study observed that the small group of learners who participated were the ones who did not have reading challenges. The passive learners were not attentive, they appeared to be somewhat distracted by people who were outside the classroom. The teacher realised this and called on them to listen attentively so that they could be able to read. The teacher said: *other learners are reading and you are looking outside, what is wrong with you?* Then one learner raised a hand, *sir, but we don't have text books and these copies are dark, we cannot see what is written.* The teacher distributed five text books from his table and gave them to the learners. Still the other two side rows and those at the back had no text books. Lack of text books is one of the issues that impeded learners' reading because they had nowhere to refer to, the photocopies made for learners were dark, and it was hard to read from them. This is supported by Gipe (2019) by saying that learners should be provided with relevant learning materials that will enable them to read effectively. Teacher two taught implementing the Communicative Approach. Teacher two's lessons were observed and mainly focused on the learner's reading ability guided by the attached rubric (appendix 10). These lessons were different from the first one, not only because they were delivered by a different teacher, but because learners had warmed up to the reading sessions. Six learners were selected to read aloud and were assessed through the reading aloud rubric provided.

4.4.1.2. Reading strategies

Through observations the study indicated that the three reading strategies were not fully understood by learners and they did not apply them in their reading. Learners read the Old Woman short story without following pre, during and post reading

strategies. Teachers were also relying on the text book teaching method which did not match with the lesson. The lesson was supposed to be more communicative since it was reading based; therefore it was expected to adopt the communicative approach, rather than text approach, Munson and Lague (2017) support the idea of using Communicative Approach during reading. According to observations, the learners' passiveness during the reading lesson could have led to this unmatched approach. Learners were not given ample time to go through the reading activities Kaufman (2018).

In the following lessons there seemed to be a change in energy on the learners' side, the classroom participation level had increased. Although they were still reading the same short story, the perspective of learners had somehow changed positively. Teachers asked learners to sit in groups of four so that they could share the text book, *everyone, gather around those two tables so that you can be able to read*. Shared reading seemed to have enhanced most learners' ability to read independently, Crévola and Vineis (2008), are in the same vein with this study because they postulate that learners learn best when they read and exchange ideas in groups, they use the knowledge acquired when they are reading independently, Learners were now actively involved in reading. Learners were reading in groups of five and some in groups of six. They were encouraged to seek help when they encountered unfamiliar words. Teacher two was simply monitoring learning as learners read in groups.

4.4.2. Interpretation and analysis of observation schedule

Two observation schedules were used to observe how learners were taught to read and how they read. The first observation schedule focused mainly on how learners were taught to read and whether teachers were applying the reading strategies which are pre reading, during reading and post reading. It is named "Lesson Observation Schedule". The researcher observed the teachers teaching learners how to read. The three reading skills were not satisfactorily applied by both teachers. They both mainly focused their attention of teaching reading on the "during reading stage" in which learners were given activities. The second observation schedule is a "reading aloud rubric" (appendix 6.2) that was used to assess learners' reading ability. The rubric entails factors such as punctuation, pronunciation, fluency, use of

gestures, accent, audibility, self-confidence, time management and understanding of the text.

4.4.3. Learners' reading interpretation and analysis

South African English is inclined to a British accent. This finding is supported by Bossenbroek, (2018) by saying English was brought into South Africa by the British in the Cape during 1806. The study showed that some learners were reading an English story with Sepedi accent, for example, the word *them* was read out as *tlemo*. Mary & Young (2020) are in the same vein with Bossenbroek, they added that learners' home language affect their accent during reading short stories, particularly because learners are used to communicating with their home language in the classroom. The use of incorrect accent also influenced how learners were pronouncing some words.

Observations revealed that learners' pronunciation was not satisfactory, for instance, a certain learner pronounced the word *swayed* as *swear-year-d*. The general understanding of the text was lacking. This is also supported by the focus group interviews wherein learners explained that they don't understand the short story they were given to read. Eye contact, self-confidence, punctuation marks, and time management were not used adequately. For instance, teachers failed to finish lesson on stipulated time and learners were reading their assigned passages for far too long. This study also indicated that learners lacked self-confidence because they were not audible and could not in most cases practice eye, contact, this is supported by Anderson (2018) who proposes that when learners are not exposed to a wide range of vocabulary, they tend to lack self-confidence when they read in front of their peers and they fail to do eye contact.

According to the classroom observations, most learners do not have necessary knowledge of the language content, Amann (2015) is of the view that most teachers are still teaching on the basis of old curriculums, hence learners are unable to acquire the necessary EFAL content. While they were taught in the classroom, they showed lack of understanding of what is being taught. Both teachers taught learners how to read short stories. Most learners could not read proficiently. All learners in the classroom were given a chance to read individually, but it was tough for most of them as they struggled to pronounce words which seemed unfamiliar to them. The

reading challenges observed using observation schedule are as follows; accent, pronunciation and audibility, fluency and reading skills, punctuation marks and understanding of text, use of non-verbal language, self-confidence and time management.

4.5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEWS

The two forms of interviews were used to obtain information from HoD, teachers and learners, which are semi-structured and focus group. Semi structured interviews were used as an information tool to gather information from teachers and HoD on separate occasions. These one on one interviews allowed teachers a chance to elucidate on why and how they apply certain teaching methods, approaches and strategies in their classroom lessons, this finding is also supported by Wallace & Roberson (2013), who is of the view that interview give first-hand experience of the phenomenon. It also gave the researcher a greater prospect of previous lesson observations and an opportunity to find out whether teachers are aware that they should align their teaching with the curriculum. One of the English teachers is also a head of department, so he was later interviewed again as HoD.

Largely, the responses from all participants contributed valuable data for this study. Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews focused mainly on the premeditated set of interview questions. The questions embrace the purpose of the study and the main research question. Additionally there were questions that emanated naturally apart from the ones that were set. Some of the questions were driven by what had occurred in the EFAL lessons, while others were asked before the lesson to obtain information about teachers teaching experience and their respective qualifications.

4.5.1. Analysis and interpretation of semi-structured interviews

The two English teachers were interviewed using this form of interview. The interviews are centred upon their views based on how and why they teach the way they do, and how they can assist learners to read short stories.

4.5.1.1. *What do you think impede your grade 8 learners to read short stories?*

This question seeks to determine the reading barriers that learners in grade 8 are faced when they read EFAL short stories. The respondents have indicated the barriers of grade 8 learners towards reading EFAL short stories as follows;

Extract 1 *Our learners are from this village, it's very rural. There is no library. People in this village do not believe in education. They read only at school.*

Our learners enter grade 8 without the basic reading skills. They lack EFAL foundation. They are used to be taught in Sepedi.

Extract 2 *parents do not track their children's' school work. Some of them write home works during lessons. There is no one monitoring their work at home. Parents do not come to school when they are called.*

The findings of this study indicate that learners are from remote rural areas where they lack resources such as library. The culture of reading is not imbedded in most of the people living in this area. They are only exposed to reading when they enter the classroom; this is unfortunate because at this level they should be able to read. The findings suggest that these learners do not have a good foundation of English language; they struggle to read because they prefer to be taught in their mother tongue. They claim that in most subjects they are taught in Sepedi. This is supported by Bank (2008), who said that majority of remote areas in African countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Uganda, Malawi and Tanzania are having a barrier towards reading because of lack of libraries.

Furthermore, the study reveals that lack of parental involvement is a dominating factor in most families. These children go to bed without their books being checked whether there's homework or not. When these learners are given assessments to complete at home, most of them come back on due date without even attempting to answer one question. When asked to call the parents, they come with neighbors, claiming that their parents are at work. Some learners bring their old grandmothers. Deger & Frank (2021) agree with extract 2, they posit that parents who have poverty stricken backgrounds tend to neglect their children's schoolwork.

4.5.1.2. *Do you attend EFAL reading workshop, and how does it affect teaching reading?*

This question is about teacher training workshop, it seeks to discover whether teachers are attending EFAL reading workshop or not. Their responses are as follows;

Extract 1: *Well, we do go for workshops from time to time, more especially at the beginning of a new term. But the challenge is that they are held during the week, I, with the experience I have, I mostly weigh my options on whether I should go to class or the workshop, because the workload here is too much. In the workshops we do same thing every year, that's why I feel no pressure of attending because I know how to teach my learners. But hey, with the group of learners we have these years, you never know how to teach them.*

Extract 2: *workshops are very important in the teaching profession; they give us guidance on the relevant teaching. I am a novice teacher with less than five years teaching experience, these workshops helps me a lot because I get to learn how other teachers in different schools teach. This profession has given the “experienced teachers” everything. We can learn a lot from them when it comes to classroom management.*

The findings of the study reveal that some teachers go for workshops from time to time while others attend sometimes. EFAL teachers revealed that workshops are held during the week when teachers are supposed to be in class teaching learners how to read. Additionally, the findings of the study indicated that during the workshops, they focus on same aspects each year thus, making teachers to have no pressure of attending.

On the contrary, the study has revealed that workshops are very important in the teaching profession; they provide teachers with guidance on the relevant teaching methods and approaches as well as the type of materials to use during reading (Solak et al. 2019). It revealed that the novice teacher with less than five years teaching experience has found teacher training workshops important as they supported her amicably since she got to learn how other teachers in different schools teach. The study further indicated that the teaching profession has given the

“experienced teachers” everything, through the trainings and the newly appointed teachers can learn a lot from them when it comes to classroom management.

4.5.1.3. *Which teaching methods do you use when you teach learners how to read short stories?*

The question seeks to discover the type of teaching methods teachers use when they teach learners how to read short stories in EFAL class. The participants’ responses are as follows:

Extract 1: *There is, yes, a method, which one has to use, but it is not set up, it depends on your experience as a teacher on your approach you understanding? You look at the type of learner and you decide on the approach it depends on the type of learners that you are teaching, if you understand them to be slow, you will go with their pace and what is important is not to leave them behind make sure that they understand.*

Extract 2: *with these learners, it’s imperative to use an approach that will accommodate all of them. In EFAL reading lessons I usually implement the communicative approach and question and answer method, they help a great deal because they encourage learners to be actively involved.*

The study indicates that there is no specific method of teaching learners how to read. Additionally, it is revealed that some teachers use their teaching experience to teach learners how to read short stories. The findings suggested that learners were taught according to their level of learning and were all accommodated in learning process. Manship et al. (2016) concur with the study findings, they recommended that teachers ought to ensure that all learners having various learning levels should be accommodated in reading lessons so that they can be able to read comprehensively.

Furthermore, other teachers make use of communicative approach and question and answer method to teach learners how to read. The study indicate that teachers shares the same sentiments about being attentive of learners learning needs, they both agree that learners should be accommodated in a lesson, they should not be left behind. It is explained that the group of learners they have, urges them to be

vigilant of their learning needs so it is imperative to use an approach that will accommodate all of them.

4.5.1.4. Which resources are available for use during reading lesson?

The question seeks to determine the teaching and learning resources that are available to be used by both teachers and learners. The responses are as follows:

Extract 1: *We do not have the prescribed text books, so we mostly borrow from our neighbouring schools, sometimes we buy from our own pockets because the school does not have enough money. We heavily rely on making copies from time to time; in turn the papers are mostly finished.*

Extract 2: *It takes time to make copies because even the machine run out of ink or they jam, this affects our periods very badly because we end up writing on the board.*

The study indicate that the school has limited reading resources, even learners' text books, study guides and teacher's guides that were borrowed from other schools, were still not enough. Learners still shared text books and photocopies. Making photocopies was a daily routine, this affected the teaching time, and teachers in turn could not fully adhere to time and classroom management (Dowd and Green 2019).

4.5.1.5. Teachers were asked if they implement CAPS, and to elaborate their answers. This question seeks to explore whether teachers implement CAPS when they teach learners how to read short stories.

They responded as follows:

Extract 1: *We do implement some aspect of it, not all of it, you see, we don't have the technology that matches with the curriculum.*

Extract 2: *Not always, it's difficult to implement it, our school resources are inadequate, and it limits us from implementing the CAPS.*

The study suggest that to adequately implement CAPS there should be provision of digital teaching and learning resources such as computers, projectors, white boards and cell phones that aligns with it Mopeli (2017) is in agreement with the above statements. It is claimed that it is challenging to work with learners because they are used to computers and phones. It is also revealed that inadequate reading resources limit them from implementing CAPS.

4.5.1.6. Teachers were asked, *what do you think makes learners' home environment impede on the reading ability?*

This question seeks to explore the challenges of reading that result from learners' home environment. The participants responded as follows;

Extract 1: *Most learners are from families wherein they themselves are parents. No one encourages them to go to school or to read.*

Extract 2: *The learners are from poor and unstable economic background. They bunk school to go work for the younger ones in the family. Their main source of income is grant.*

It is indicated that majority of learners are from child headed families where they are not encouraged by anyone to read. There is a high level of absenteeism in this school, as for the grade eights; they see no need to come to school. The study reveal that learners perceive themselves as parents because they carry parental duties, reading is the last thing they think about, Deger and Frank (2021) added that majority of learners in rural areas have no parental support or guidance, hence they have lack of basic reading skills.

Furthermore, the study has revealed that economic backgrounds of the learners are the major challenge. Additionally, there were learners who bunk school to go and sell firewood to the neighbouring villages, others are working in the local town during school hours, and they claim they need money since there is no one working at home. Most of the learners in this study depend on grant and food parcels from the school.

4.5.1.7. *Does the lesson plan link with the allocated teaching time?*

Extract one : *Yes, it does, but we do have a challenge when it comes to time management, because as I've said earlier on, our learners need to be taught one topic several times.*

Extract two: *Our lesson plans from the departmental head for grade ten to twelve does not have time allocation per activities, so even mine does not have since I borrowed from them. I am aware that the EFAL teaching time per week is 4.5 hours. So I take it from there. It hard to follow the lesson plans because we lack necessary teaching materials and our lesson are of middle and low cognitive levels.*

The findings of the study indicated that the teaching lesson plans has the same teaching time allocation as the one on the EFAL grade eight CAPS. By contrast, EFAL teachers claimed that there is a challenge of managing the time set for a lesson. This is because of teaching same topic multiple times to reach all learners considering their learning levels. He further claimed that one hour per lesson is not enough since learners lack background knowledge of the four skills, as such; comprehension, vocabulary, and phonic awareness he makes sure to teach the basic reading skills before tackling the aspects in the lesson plan (Alberts 2016).

The study has indicated that teachers understood the allocated teaching time in grade eight is four hours and thirty minutes per week, Department of Education (2013). The lessons were planned according to the stipulate teaching time, but during teaching, teachers consumed a lot of time than the one which was set for a period. The reason for not being able to manage time was said to be having a class which was comprised of learners who fall under two cognitive levels. The learning cognitive levels are two and three, there is no level one, therefore this reason forces her to emphasise same topic multiple time so that learners could understand what they were being taught.

4.5.1.8. What strategies can assist learners to read proficiently?

Extract one: *I think providing learners with different textbooks that interest them. Teach them to read during extra lessons. Create reading programs where learners read both intensively and extensively. A library will be helpful for such a program.*

Extract two: *The three reading strategies; that is pre-reading, during reading and post reading.*

The findings show that using different textbooks will make learners to learn how to read short stories differently. EFAL teachers explained that introducing reading lessons afterschool will make learners to get used to reading. EFAL teachers suggested that if the school can organize a spelling bee and have grade 8 learners compete with other grade, this will create an interest in reading. Learners can also write tongue twisters such as *she sells the seashell by the seashore*. Encourage independent reading.

The study further suggested that teachers should incorporate the four reading skills when they teach learners how to read so that they can learn how the English words are written and how to read them (Lefty and Fraser 2020). Teachers are of the view that the use of Communicative Approach could encourage them to read more texts because before speaking in class during presentations, they will have to read those texts. EFAL teachers added that there should be language achievement programs such as storytelling, debate, speech and reading aloud.

4.5.2. Analysis and interpretation of Semi-structured interviews for HoD

The Head of Department in the school's department of languages was also interviewed using semi-structured interview. The questions asked during the interview are based on the availability of teaching and learning materials that enhance reading.

4.5.2.1. *What do you do in case of lack of teaching reading resources? How does this affect your teaching and learners' reading?*

The question above seeks to explore the techniques that teachers employ to ensure that learners have access to EFAL reading materials. It as well seeks to discover how the lack of reading resources affects reading. The response was as follows:

Teacher 1: We borrow from other schools within the circuit and other districts. It affects our learners badly because they have no reading materials they can rely on for assessments.

The study's findings indicates that there was insufficient teaching and learning resources, teachers used English text books that were provided by the department of education, but it was enough. Most learners shared one text book in a group of three to four. The study revealed that further added that, to survive the situation, they resorted to making photocopies of the reading materials from other schools. In addition, they downloaded the reading materials and made copies for all individual learners. They also out-sourced the necessary text books from other schools within the circuit. The study apparent that the lack of teaching reading resources affected learners' progress in a sense that, during lessons, I observed that some learners have lost their copies and were not participating in reading activities. This hindered the teachers from finishing the lesson on time (Khosrow-Pour 2020).

4.5.2.2. Who is responsible for creating time tables, assessment activities and lesson plans?

The purpose of this question is to explore the role of teachers as designers and creators of EFAL learning programmes and materials.

Response:

Teacher 1: It is the responsibility of each teacher to create their lesson plans that suit their teaching approaches. Even so, the language department does provide grade 10 to twelve teachers with EFAL lesson plans and activities that match those lesson plans. As for time tables, the school has a general timetable, but teachers are encouraged to draw their own from the main one. The curriculum advisors has promised to

provide us with teaching and learning programmes and assessments. But to this date we are still waiting.

The study alluded that teachers were provided with daily lesson plans and teaching activities only in grade ten to twelve. In grade 8, each individual teacher had to create their own lesson plans. EFAL Teachers claimed that during teacher training workshops they were promised that language Curriculum Advisors would form a group of teachers and collaborate with them to plan and set daily teaching activities and lesson plans, teaching programmes, term question papers and send them to all teachers across the circuit via electronic mails. The findings of the study indicated that teachers were disappointed as they are still waiting for teaching and learning support materials. Besides being dependent on the provision of teaching resources from the department, EFAL teachers explained that they had reading programmes at the school in the previous years. The reading programmes took place in the afternoons where learners volunteered to join the group and were taught how to read. They read various short stories such as 'Agnes finds me', 'My father my monster' and 'Wednesday morning. Currently because of Covid-19, the reading programmes had been suspended. Learners learned to read in class, since there was no library.

4.5.2.3. Do you encounter any problems when using those methods explained earlier on? Explain

This question is a follow up question from interviews with both teachers. It seeks to explore the challenge that teachers are faced with concerning the type of teaching methods they used in grade 8 EFAL lessons.

Response;

Teacher 1: It depends on the type of learners I have, but in these recent years, I've experienced numerous challenges. The thing is these learners are more exposed to computers than books. They are not interested in reading books. They want to listen to audios and watch videos.

The response regarding this question revealed that grade 8 EFAL teachers did encounter numerous challenges when they used traditional methods and teacher

centred approaches to teach reading. The study alluded that learners were not interested in reading books but rather enjoyed watching videos and listening to audios. It would benefit both teachers and learners if the teachers paid attention to learners' learning styles. The findings of the study indicated that the group of learners in grade 8 had learned best by listening to audios and watching videos in which they saw how other learners in different schools across the globe learned to read. Some of the teaching methods, such as traditional methods applied by teachers were not in line with CAPS, hence learners were struggling to learn with this out-dated teaching method (Mopeli, 2017).

4.5.2.4. The fourth question was; is the progress of learners on the same pace as the ATP? Explain.

The question was aimed at examining learner' progress in terms of reading in a grade 8 classroom level. Also, the question aimed at checking whether learners' reading skills are at the appropriate level per their grade cohort.

Response;

Teacher 1: We've attempted to teach learners according to the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) but our learners do not study at their own time. We do pace our teaching with ATP, but they remain behind because they need to be taught one topic several times. This tempers with allocated teaching time and other learning activities. Learners end up reading one passage for too long and teachers end up focusing much of the attention of during reading activities.

The study has pessimistically indicated that learners' progress was far behind. Through semi-structured interviews, there was a discovery that most aspects of the lesson plans were not engaged in. Both the teachers spent ample time teaching same aspects of the lesson such as teaching them how to read the lessons were centred on teachers and learners' activities. Most lessons were started by tasking learners to read aloud from the photocopies they were provided with. There were no pre-reading activities in most lesson. On the lesson plan there was no time allocation for activities hence, learners took excessively lengthy amount of time reading their

respective extract. Teachers started lessons by giving learners a reading task. The first five learners who were called out to read did so for a long time as they were repeating most words from the passage. Learners from the grade 8 class showed a tendency of repeating words as they read. The lessons went beyond its allocated time which was one hour; the bell rang in the middle of the lesson and the teachers asked learners to keep the photocopies for the next lesson.

4.5.2.5. *What are the impacts of workshops and teacher training programmes on teaching reading?*

The fifth question was about attending teacher training workshops and their importance on teaching.

The response is as follows:

Teacher 1; Workshops have a great impact on teaching, although I do not attend all of them, but they are important. With a good plan and strategizing, workshops can be beneficial to teachers. They are set during the week so the timing is not perfect. Nothing much is taught at the workshops; we are just given details on the type of teaching material and how to get them.

It has been explained that at the beginning of each term their circuit office provided teachers with circulars of workshop attendance. Teachers' view of workshop attendance seemed to have shifted to the positive side, earlier on when both teachers were interviewed, EFAL teachers argued that teacher training workshops had fewer positive responses. By contrast, the responses to this question has shed some light on the importance of workshops although not all of them were attended. In addition, the workshops were still considered to be one of the important pillars in the education system. The findings of the study indicated that should the workshops be well executed, they could empower most teachers to be great teachers and produce learners who were prominent in all subjects. The study revealed that the issue of timing was a major challenge. Teachers were of the view that workshops were not conducted at a right time. In their circuit the EFAL workshops were mostly held at around 08h30 to 11h00 in the morning, on Tuesdays or Thursdays. In the

workshops they are allegedly not taught how to teach reading, their main concern were learners' results. The curriculum advisers sent them a list of materials to use during teaching.

4.5.2.6. *What are your recommendations for improving teaching, particularly reading lessons?*

The sixth question was about teacher's recommendations towards improving teaching learners how to read.

It was responded thus:

Teacher 1: We should be given materials and the CAPS document. In the workshops we should be taught how to teach reading and share the teaching methods or strategies. We should be given lesson plans so that we do not deviate from the content. If we are provided with the relevant teaching and learning materials, we will reach the set pass target for EFAL.

In response, EFAL teachers suggested that the Department of Education should provide them with teaching materials that were aligned with the curriculum so that they could be better equipped to teach learners accordingly. EFAL teachers also suggested that in the workshops they could introduce a channel where teachers taught one another how to teach reading. In essence, he was alluding they should all learn from one another in terms of the teaching methods, and approaches to be implemented in EFAL classrooms. The CAPS should as well clearly explain how reading should be taught. This could be complemented by the provision of lesson plans that included all the aspects that were needed in teaching and learning processes such as teaching method, teaching material, learning resources, time allocation and assessment activities. This could assist teachers to improve teaching. It was concluded by saying teachers could be able to produce the target results by the school and the circuit.

Analysis and interpretation of responses from focus group interviews with learners.

4.5.3.1. How would you explain reading?

This question required learners to show their understanding of the term reading. The aim of asking this question was to lay a foundation of the knowledge of reading. Learners gave various responses which were analysed as composite.

Learner 1: *Reading is saying out words written on paper. Or it may be explained as extracting meaning from text.*

Learner 2: *I understand it as a process of uttering the letters and sentences in a meaningful way. It is also how you understand symbols pictures and words*

Learner 3: *Reading is presenting written words by means of verbal communication. It can be explained as finding meaning out of a text.*

The responses towards the question above regarding explanation of reading were quite remarkable considering that the learners were categorised under cognitive level two and three. They presented a rather open-minded understanding of reading. They had corresponding opinions of what reading was, for example learners elucidated reading as pronouncing words, letters and sentences in an articulate manner. In addition learners explained reading as the discovery of meaning in a text. Others explained it as understanding of words, pictures and symbols. Lastly, some considered reading as presenting text such as short stories through verbal communication.

4.5.3.2. What impede you from reading short stories with a clear understanding?

This is the main question of the study which aims at exploring challenges faced by each individual learner towards reading short stories.

Learner 1: *English is not my mother tongue, so it is difficult for me to read English short stories. There are many of us in the class, I mean we are overcrowded, it's difficult to focus, and the noise is too much.*

Learner 2: *Nobody speaks English at home; they simply don't know the language. At home there is no one to help me to read. I can't read English. my challenge is lack of understanding, I don't understand when my English teacher is teaching, so I'm failing to read English short stories because I don't understand what I'm being taught. I sleep without reading, and my parents don't check or help me with my homework. I am failing to understand when sir is teaching us, I only read them here at school, at home there's always something to do. My grandmother cannot read.*

Learner 3: *When Sepedi teacher reads short stories and explain for us, I understand, but in English class sir teaches differently. When I read English short stories, I first write the unfamiliar words down in Sepedi and then translate it to English because I am not competent in English. I can't say I don't understand what I read; I'm just struggling to explain what I read in English.*

Their obstacles towards reading were language barriers, overcrowding, lack of parental involvement, child headed families, economic background and teaching method. Their responses were interpreted and analyzed under these emerged themes. The themes were arranged below in paragraph forms with the subheadings.

4.5.3.3. Does the language teaching method used by the teachers encourage you to read fluently?

The third question that learners were asked and responded to is about the language teaching methods used in an EFAL classroom by teacher one and two. The question

seeks to find out whether the teaching methods practiced in their grade 8 EFAL lessons encourage learners to read or not.

Learner 1: *Not really, I try to pay attention when they are teaching but I just do not understand. The way sir is teaching us is a bit confusing, but with ma'am I try my best to learn about the things she taught.*

Learner 2: *Sir teaches us by using old methods that we are unable to learn with. I enjoy attending English lessons because ma'am encourages us to communicate amongst ourselves and with other teachers, so her methods do encourage us to read more often.*

Learner 3: *The teaching methods used by ma'am are the one that encourages me to read. I enjoy sir's lessons because I feel free to participate. I get lost when sir is teaching us, ma'am speaks a lot of English, and I also don't understand her.*

Based on learners' responses, it was patent that some teachers used an irrelevant teaching method that did not encourage learners to learn EFAL proficiently. Some learners claimed that they tried to be attentive during lessons but still struggled to understand because of how they were taught. Majority of learners said they got confused during the lesson as some teachers taught using a confusing approach. Minority of learners, on the brighter side, explained that they enjoyed EFAL reading lessons because they were encouraged to be actively involved in their learning and communicate well with others.

4.5.3.4. *Does the text provided activate your prior knowledge? Why?*

Focus group question number four is about testing learners' prior knowledge based on the recent short stories they read before the one at hand. Responses are as follows:

Learner 1: *Yes, it makes me remember what a short story is. Yes, when I look at the picture of the old woman. I remember the stories we were taught in grade seven.*

Learner 2: *Yes, the story provided makes me recall yesterday's lesson about elements of short stories. Yes, the text does activate my prior knowledge because I remember clearly what we were taught about reading a short story.*

Learner 3: *Yes, last week we read a short story but it was different from this one. Yes, but I have forgotten the tittle of last week's short story, I just remember that we were reading in groups.*

Majority of learners except one learner showed that the text activated their prior knowledge. They recalled what was taught previously, especially about short stories. This learner who claimed that the short story did not activate her prior knowledge, later on explained that she remembered the short story they read the previous week but had forgotten its tittle.

4.5.3.5. *Are you able to predict what the short story "the old woman is about"?*

Responses:

Learner 1: *Yes, it is about a woman who is old and is having trouble walking. Yes, by skimming the title and paragraphs I think the short story is about an old woman who cannot walk without a stick.*

Learner 2: *The title and pictures used here helps me to predict what the story will be about. I skimmed and scanned the whole text, I also used the tittle and pictures to guess what is happening in this short story.*

Learner three: *Yes, "The old woman" is about a woman in her old age stage. She cannot walk properly without the use of a walking stick, she is old, hungry and thirsty, and she needs water. I see an old woman with a stick; I think the short story is about old people who cannot walk.*

The study revealed that learners have adequate understanding of making predictions about the short story. One learner explained that it is about a woman who has difficulties in walking because she is old. Others Learner showed an understanding of reading techniques, they indicated that skimming and scanning the title, paragraphs, and pictures assisted them to predict what the story is about. They said it is about the old woman who cannot walk properly without a walking stick. Lastly, they predicted that the short story is about a woman who has reached her old age stage, she appeared to be hungry and thirsty as she was swaying this way and that way.

4.5.3.6. What is the message conveyed in the story?

The sixth question is about learner's understanding and the message carried through the short story they read and were observed during several lessons. The study discovered that most of them enjoyed the underlying meaning of the story and ideas carried within. They seemed only happy to passively listen to the teacher narrating and analysing every step of the short story. Their participation was not satisfactory. Even so, their responses revealed that they had a fair understanding of the underlying message portrayed.

Responses:

Learner 1: *The message is to respect old people. Is to love and respect our grandmothers.*

Learner 2: *It is to help one another as neighbours. The message is to look after and care for each other and our old loved ones.*

Learner 3: *The message is to help each other alleviate poverty as a community. Is to give old people water and food when they are thirsty and hungry.*

The responses are interpreted as follows:

The trending words towards responding this question are: love, humility, respect, family, old people, poverty and struggle. Therefore, grade 8 learners suggested that the short story is based on African rural communities where there is poverty and young and old people are struggling to survive because they are the most vulnerable citizens. Some learners suggested that the message portrayed was about caring and respecting the older citizens and showing them love. Others talked of lending a helping hand to those who need it most, which are our grandmothers. Learner five was of the view that the message is on needing to assist one another as members of a community, to eradicate poverty. Lastly, some learners thought it is about giving people the basic needs such as food and water.

4.5.3.6. *What challenges do you encounter when reading this story?*

Responses:

Learner 1: *I never read this short story before until yesterday; I only listen when my teachers and other learners are reading. I enjoy listening to ma'am because she explains everything.*

Learner 2: *I love reading short stories, I have read this one several times, and I love it because I can relate to it. Even so, I did not understand some words like frail, swayed, clutched, knobbled and hedge. My English teacher helped me to understand them. She landed me her dictionary so that I can search their meaning.*

Learner 2: *I have a challenge of reading in front of the whole class, but I do understand the short story because when I read, I use a dictionary. I often ask ma'am and sir to explain to me when I get stuck. My challenge is that I am used to translating Sepedi words to English, now I had to do the opposite. I spent much time translating words from English to Sepedi. Another challenge is that it took me a lot of time to understand what this story is about. And with other genres I also take time to understand what they mean.*

The study has indicated that most learners said they never read the short story before, for them to understand it, they needed to read it several times and listen to other learners reading and sharing their ideas about it. Other learners, on the contrary, had read the story numerously and could relate to it, the challenge was that during reading they encountered unfamiliar words. With the help of teachers they managed to find the meaning of unfamiliar words from their dictionary. One learner had a challenge of eye contact and self-confidence; he explained that he could not read in front of the class. Other learners talked of translation, they explained that they were used to translating words from their mother tongue to the target language they used Grammar Translation Method which was applied by some of the teachers during teaching. The challenging part was when learners had to translate English words written in the short story to Sepedi to understand them (Sibeko 2021). Other challenges were language barriers which are explained in detail under its theme.

4.5.3.7. *Is your home language a barrier towards your reading performance?*

This question seeks to explore how their home language affect reading.

Learners' responses;

Learner 1: *No, I read both home language and English novels to train my reading performance. My home language is not a barrier to my reading performance; the more I read Sepedi short stories, the better understanding I have for English. I use a multilingual*

dictionary to learn words I don't understand in both home language and English.

Learner 2: *No, I can read English without making mistakes, but my reading performance is not perfect. I think my home language is helping me to improve my reading because I make sure I translate every Sepedi word I know to English language.*

Learner 3: *Sometimes, because words in English are difficult to understand and in class we read in English, my home language does not help me because we don't use it. Yes, it is a barrier because I cannot translate English words into my language, so I will not get the meaning of what I am reading.*

Towards answering this question, some participants were inflexible, they took time to respond. It was as if they were afraid to express their views based on their home language. Their responses are interpreted and analysed as follows:

Through focus group interviews, the study has discovered that learners' home language has an impact on reading short stories. Majority of learners explained that they read to get meaning from the text, consequently, their language became a barrier to reading because they could not read English with understanding. Few learners had a different response, they showed to have engaged themselves with other genres like novels. They claimed to have used a multilingual dictionary to learn words in other languages. Additionally, some learners claimed their home language was not a reading barrier; it was just that their reading performance was below average. Learners further explained that learners' home language was not a barrier towards their reading because reading short stories in their mother tongue enabled them to have a greater chance at learning English as well.

4.6. THEMES FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Some of the emerged themes in observations and interviews from respondents are corresponding, although they are discussed, presented and analysed separately. These corresponding themes include; teacher training, methods of teaching, teaching and learning resources, curriculum delivery, overcrowded classrooms,

parental involvement and language barrier which emerged in both learners and teachers' responses of focus group, semi structured interviews and observations.

4.6.1. Teacher training

Teacher one was of the view that teacher training was more or less important depending on the teacher's experience in the field. He explained that he had more experience in teaching, therefore, when it came to attending in service training, he "weighs his options". According to my interpretation of this phrase, it indicates that he does not prioritise workshops over teaching learners. He further elucidated that teacher training workshops were held during working hours, so he often decided whether to attend his English class or the workshop. He indicated that the teaching load was too much, this was supported by the number of learners he had in one class, which is Grade 8. Another interesting fact is that the teacher claimed that during the training they did the same thing every year. The curriculum advisors did not teach them how to teach reading; hence he did not have a full understanding of how to teach reading. This is supported by Mulkeen (2008), who assert that most of language teachers especially in South African schools have little understanding on how to teach reading in an EFAL classroom.

Teacher two had a positive view of workshops and their great value... She said that they enhanced her teaching, as she was able to learn other teaching approaches from different teachers across the circuits. She added that although workshops took place during working hours, she made sure to attend them because that was where she got information and clarity on how and what to teach. *I improvise by designing extra lessons to cover the time lost.* Teacher two acknowledged the knowledge and experience she got from teachers who were long in the system before her. During the second lesson observation, it showed that teacher two was trained to teach reading. Her lesson presentation accommodated most learners as they were also participating in large numbers.

4.6.2. Teaching method

Teacher one revealed that the traditional teaching method worked for him because he incorporates it with other teaching approaches that suited the learners' needs. The lesson observation indicated that his teaching was guided by the teacher-centred method. He asserted that learners were not actively involved in the lesson because they lacked necessary background knowledge and their learning needs and

levels differed. He added that the type of learners he had influenced his choice of teaching methods and approaches. He explained that there was diversity in his class since learners were from various socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. His role of being a mediator of learning urged him to accommodate all learners' different learning needs and cognitive levels. He claimed that that was the reason for using different approaches.

Teacher two claims that she uses a communicative approach so that learners could feel free to take ownership of their own learning. This teacher seemed to align her EFAL reading lessons with CAPS. She showed understanding of the importance of learners' active participation in her reading lessons. She claimed that learners learned best through communication, which is why she implemented communicative approach in most of her lessons. She also used question and answer method, which she claimed enhanced learners' ability to reason and substantiate their answers.

The above discussions on using various teaching strategies are supported by philosophers such as (Carrell, Devine and Eskey 2002). They are of the view that educators are advised to employ different methods in one lesson to accommodate all learners. Tomlinson (2017) postulates that a "method should be regarded as static classroom practice which does not allow for variation, and that there is therefore a need to move from method to post-method approaches to teaching". In the same vein, Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) mention that a method is an umbrella term which encompasses approach, design and procedure.

4.6.3. Teaching and learning resources

The findings of the study indicated that the school lacked text books; this compelled the teacher to make copies from different textbooks that contained the same text she intended to use in her English classes. This is supported by Tomlinson (2017) who states that "teachers are to engage the learners with topics that are relevant to their lives and to choose topics that are related to the Critical and Developmental Outcomes."

The researcher realised through observations that both teacher one and two relied on photocopies during their lessons. At some point, teacher two said: "*I handed out enough papers for all of you, put them on the table*", she said this because some of the learners were not having papers on their tables. The study revealed that that

teachers depended on photocopies throughout their lessons. Learners also seem to not have text books at all because when they lost their copies they had nowhere to refer to. Although they depended on these prints, they were all over the floor, meanwhile the teachers told them to paste them in their note books.

4.6.4. Curriculum

The two English teachers claimed that CAPS did not clearly stipulate how teaching reading should be done in an EFAL classroom. They argued that the policy was difficult to implement because their classroom context was unique, for instance, they had many learners in one class, and they lacked resources such as text books, library and advanced technology. Moreover, Karten (2015) posits that most schools are not well grounded in terms of policy versus practice; there is a lack of competence in the implementation of curriculum policy and the teaching theories concerned. Similarly, Hedlley (2013) asserts that teacher training does not offer adequate lessons on the type of theories that reinforce reading, as well as how to appropriately implement the reading theories in the classroom.

In view of participants' responses, their school context impeded them from implementing the recommended teaching, theories, methods and approaches in EFAL lessons. They added that they lacked necessary teaching resources and learning materials. They proclaimed that they should be provided with sufficient teaching and learning materials that met the curriculum needs to implement it. They mentioned some of their roles as designer and interpreter of materials for learning, mediators of learning, researchers and assessors. These educator's roles can be actualised in a classroom that was sufficiently equipped to teach EFAL learners (Spaull & Jansen, 2019).

4.7. THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS.

4.7.1. Language barrier.

Learners one, five, and six had different responses on the question of what impeded them from reading short stories with understanding. Their responses were about language as a learning barrier. Learner, one explained that English was not his mother tongue, which made reading English short stories difficult. He added when he got home, he asked his aunt to assist him to read, but the aunt could not read in

English. Learner five said he understood when he is being taught in his mother tongue because the short stories, they teach them were fully explained in a language he understood. This is supported by Bester et al., (2019). Learner six said he had a little bit of understanding of the short story but, he could not exactly explain it to someone or in front of the class.

4.7.2. Overcrowding

Learner two had a different opinion of what impeded her and other learners from reading. She talked of “big number of learners in one class”. She explained that there were many learners in her class and in most lessons, it was difficult to focus on the text being read because learners made noise while others were reading. The issue of overcrowding was indeed a hindrance towards reading. The study observed that most learners were not paying careful attention as others were reading in front of the class but rather on making noise during the lessons. There was a lot of noise and teacher two kept on saying, *boys and girls keep quiet, you are making noise, hey! Quiet!* Learners would continuously make noise and it seemed as if it was hard to control the noise and manage the classroom. Finally, teacher two asked one learner to write a list of noise-makers on the piece of paper, from then there was quietness in the classroom. The class was at least manageable (Lent 2012).

4.7.3. Lack of parental involvement

Learner three claimed that lack of parental involvement was the major factor that impeded him from reading. He elaborated that at his home he stayed with his parents and two siblings. His parents are illiterate and the siblings much younger than him, so this practically made him an older brother. He said, “*At home there is no one to help me to read. I can’t read English*”, there is no culture of reading at this learner’s home. He continued to say, “*I sleep without reading, and my parents don’t check or help me with my homework.*” The parents did not help him to read and did not monitor his progress. Learner four also talked of lack of parental involvement as a reading barrier. He said, “*I only read them here at school, at home there’s always something to do.*” This one said she only read short stories at school because at home there was a lot of work to do which was not school related. It can be said that the parents did not get involved in their children’s learning; they did not teach them how to read. They went to bed without reading books and were only exposed to

reading at school, hence they did not understand the language used as a medium of instruction (Lara 2019).

4.7.4. Child headed families

Child-headed households affect learner's reading ability because of high level of absenteeism. Mainly, learners absent themselves from school to cater for their siblings and households. Epstein et al. (2019) postulate that learners from child-headed families tend to drop out of school because they need time to take care of their household's responsibility. Moreover, another underlying factor of child-headed households that affected learning, particularly reading, was inadequate school material such as textbooks and school uniform. During the interviews, learners explained that they could not learn to read without books. At school they shared one text book in a group of three to four; this became a major barrier to reading.

4.7.5. Economic background

Teacher two explained that few learners from the rural areas around the school had employed relatives' or family members who are working to earn an income in their families who in most cases are younger than eighteen. She further explained that some learners worked in the local town during school hours. Derman et al. (2013) posit that social grants are a major source of income for most children in the remote areas found in provinces such as Limpopo. Learners from this school were not an exception; they also depended on social grants. The learners' economic background affected their school work and academic performance; hence they could not read.

4.8. LESSON PLAN ANALYSIS

The format of these lesson plans was like the one provided by the English department (see appendix 10). The lesson plans outlined teaching and learning strategies, resources used assessment tools, assessment methods, and types of assessments, teacher's activities and learner's activities. The aspects outlined in these lesson plans somehow aligned with the observation schedule for the first lesson. Teachers provided these lesson plans as their guide during the EFAL classes. Surprisingly, through observations. The researcher noticed that the lessons were not presented according to the lesson plans; there was an unanticipated mismatch between lesson presentations and its plan. The allocated time for teaching

was not shown on the lesson plan; hence the reading activities took more time than teaching activities (Bullard 2014).

4.9. CONCLUSION

Teachers and learners' responses regarding the problems of reading were discussed and analysed in a qualitative approach. Reading is a challenge not only to the learners at the Mogodumo Circuit, but to South Africa and globally. Irrespective of the government's provision of the much needed scholastic materials, some schools still lack text books and reading libraries. This makes reading to be a continued problem to the most disadvantaged learners.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECONMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter outlines the summary, recommendations, and conclusions of the study. The study purpose was to explore the challenges faced by learners when reading short stories for comprehension in an EFAL classroom. The study implemented the qualitative method and the interpretive paradigm. The use of qualitative approach assisted the researcher to attain the appropriate methods that were used in this research to meet the purpose of the study. The case study was used to explore learners' reading challenges.

The study sought to explore challenges that hinder learners from reading short stories with a clear understanding, particularly in grade 8. This final chapter presents the summary of findings that were collected through data collection tools such as observations, interviews and lesson plan analysis. The summary of findings concerning research questions, objectives, main research problem were also taken into considerations. The recommendations of the study findings presented in this chapter, suggest areas for future research. The qualitative approach was used to explore learners' reading challenges considering the study purpose and research questions mentioned in chapter one. The study was conducted in Boikhutjong Secondary School, which is under Mogodumo Circuit in Capricorn South District, Limpopo province. The study was in pursuit of finding solutions to the problems addressed to concur a solution in terms of improving grade 8 learners reading ability, hoping that this will ultimately improve their academic performance. The study's main research questions addressed is;

- What challenges do grade 8 learners come across, when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom?

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS IN THE STUDY

Learners and teachers were both interviewed to find out the barriers that hinder grade 8 learners from reading short stories with understanding. Observations were also carried out to determine whether teachers teach learners in a manner that enhances their reading ability. Also, teachers and learners were observed to acquire first-hand experience of reading challenges from the classroom level. The findings on the research questions and observations are thus:

5.2.1. Accent

It was difficult for most learners to learn to read in a second language as they were used to reading in their native language throughout their primary school level. Learners claimed that it was their first time to learn to read short stories using only English at school, in the previous grades they used to read short stories in Sepedi, which was the native language for most of them. Learners' accent may have been influenced by their use of native language in the classroom. During reading, some learners asked if they could bring other short stories written in Sepedi because they had knowledge of the language and could understand it better. They were resisting learning to read in English hence their accent was influenced by their dialects. They sounded as if they were reading Sepedi although they were reading English short stories (Coffi 2017).

5.2.2. Pronunciation and audibility

Learners scored low on pronunciation, most probably because they were not audible enough. What compelled the researcher to continue sitting in the classroom and observing them as they read was the fact that she wanted to find out whether audibility during reading can affect pronunciation. As it was, the researcher could

hardly hear what some learners were reading. They were not audible. Therefore, it was hard to detect their level of pronunciation. Generally, most words were incorrectly pronounced (Rodriguez 2014).

5.2.3. Fluency and reading skills

There were certain learners who caught the researcher's attention as they started to read. They read so well that their level of fluency was so high. They wished they could read all day and teach their class mates how to read and share their secrets on how they managed to read so well. In pursuit of improving learners' reading ability and skills, the researcher requested those few learners who read proficiently to assist the low achievers. Arrangements with the grade 8 English teachers were made to allow fluent readers to share their reading strategies with the rest of the class. In the after school extra lessons, learners were arranged into groups of five wherein the fluent readers were the group leaders. They did the following in groups:

- Grade 8 learners spread into three classrooms to create a healthy learning to read environment.
- They read *The Old Woman* short story three times.
- Each learner had an opportunity to read aloud alone.
- The lead learners ensured that all learners followed these strategies.

This reading activity was interesting and educative at the same time. It was observed that when learners were being monitored and supported, they could work well individually and in groups. The English teachers gave learners the support they needed in order to accomplish this reading experience. Ultimately, the second and third reading lessons showed a bit of an improvement in fluency level for the grade 8 class in general. The fluency improvement was not great but satisfactory as compared to the beginning of the observations. This indicated that they needed more of these reading exposures (Chaka 2015).

5.2.4. Punctuation marks and understanding of text

Punctuation marks were not observed by most learners. Disregarding punctuation marks made their reading to lack meaning. They were not pausing for commas and full stops. They simply read without meaning. As punctuation marks were not used,

their sentences were not read clearly. This resulted in sentences which had no meaning. Thus, it also showed a lack of understanding of the short story. The problem of punctuation marks stems from how learners were taught to read. During reading processes, more especially in teacher one lessons, the teaching approach implemented did not develop learners' knowledge of punctuation marks, how and when to use them. The teacher was narrating a story and learners sat and listened passively (Polani 2012).

It cannot be said that they understood the short story because only a few did. Those who were previously selected as group leaders showed a fair understanding of the short story. Others were excited about the new reading adventure they participated in after a long time since they entered grade 8, also because it was outside their usual classroom setting. The lack of understanding of the text was evident through their way of reading, they could not do the following; use body language where possible, use eye contact when reading and they could not apply punctuation marks accordingly. This proved that there was a need for implementing other reading strategies that would engage learners into active reading. Teacher two suggested the use of projectors to teach reading. During the interviews, some learners claimed they learned best by viewing, if the use of projectors for reading became a success, it could provide many learners with a great opportunity to learn to read effectively. The English teachers confirmed that the school had projectors although they are mostly used for grades 10 to 12 in other subjects. Even so, they agreed to arrange with other educators to use projectors for EFAL lessons so as to accommodate visual learners (Souto-Manning 2016).

5.2.5. Use of non-verbal language

Due to little or no understanding of the short story; it was a challenge for learners to apply the necessary non-verbal languages. The short story had many incidences where learners could apply non-verbal language like when the old woman was said to “sway this way and that way”; when she appeared “tired and hungry” and how she reacted when she was given food. None of these incidences were shown when learners were reading. The use of eye-contact was also lacking as most learners were reading either covering their faces with a book or looking down until they had finished reading (Rodriguez 2012).

5.2.6. Self confidence

When learners were reading out loud in the classroom, they were being corrected for pronunciation and punctuation marks. Some learners did not seem to accept their teachers' feedback; they were also not reading with ease. Their self-confidence was low and they were shy to read audibly. To reinforce reading, teacher two did not want to push learners too hard; instead she read and instructed them to read after her. She walked through the tables to check if all learners were reading. Few learners were reluctant to read in class, she gave them an opportunity to read privately in the staffroom. It was found that few learners were not able to read, they could not spell or pronounce words in a text. The learners were taken to read for a different audience being other teachers in other staffroom, they still could not read. It was evident that self-confidence was not the only issue but reading in particular.

To curb the reading challenge, teacher one and two collaborated and designed a reading programme that included all learners from grade 8 to twelve. Although they did not have a library, they used text books of different subjects offered in the school across the grades, written in English. Learners were encouraged to also bring along other reading materials such as magazines, articles, newspapers and any text book of their choice. After school, during the catch up programmes, there were times where learners were given the privacy to read individually but under teachers' supervision. Other times teachers grouped learners and had them choose any book that interested them to read in turns and share ideas amongst their groups (Snow 2003).

5.2.7. Time management

EFAL lessons like some lessons in the school were scheduled for one hour per day. On Monday to Thursday EFAL was allocated four teaching hours and thirty minutes on Friday. The reading lessons were never finished on time because of some external factors such as overcrowding, limited teaching and learning resources, learners' behaviour and classroom environment. According to the researcher's observation, no reading lesson was finished on time. The teachers mostly used extra-lessons in the afternoon to finish the entire lesson. The class had a huge number of learners and lack of reading materials. To worsen the situation, learners themselves were not time conscious. When they were reading, they seemed not to

skim or scan the text for heading, main ideas and conclusion. They took long to read the part they were supposed to read and they made pauses even when it was not necessary.

Seventy two learners were packed in one class; this is a huge number to be in one class. Teacher two tried all she could to walk around the classroom but she could not as there were no spaces between learners' tables. She explained that at times it was difficult to enter such a class and teach knowing too well that not all learners will be attentive and there was little that could be done about learners' behaviour as the teachers cannot reach them at that time. Teacher one claimed that teaching time was consumed by managing the behaviour of learners; although it was time consuming to call them to order, the lesson could not continue without ensuring that all learners were attentive. Although they used extra-lessons to teach EFAL, this was not done daily as there was a time table for other subjects. Therefore teacher one and two claimed that reading was allocated little time and more time allocated to writing. Teacher one further explained that more time was allocated for writing skills because learners were assessed through writing of formal assessments. Teacher two added that the way she viewed the issue of time allocation, reading and writing were allocated equal time because these two skills could not be separated (Moletji 2018).

5.2.8. Overcrowding

It was indicated in the preceding chapter that observation was one of the instruments used to gather information. The researcher realised through observations that the number of learners in grade 8 class was huge, there were 72 learners in one class and indeed the class was overcrowded. Teachers were struggling to control this large number of learners. Learners as well were struggling to participate in the reading activities because the noise was overcoming them. There were no spaces between learners' tables. When they were called out to read, they had to jump over other tables to get to and from the front. Teachers struggled to reach learners individually, they only moved up and down in a small space in the front of the class. The environment was not suitable for learning (Pretorius 2017).

5.2.9. Language barrier

Learners were selected to read aloud in front of the class; they were called out randomly to read, as they were reading it could notice that English was not their mother tongue. The fact that English was not the learners' mother tongue was observed in times when most of them were using Sepedi accent to pronounce English words like "hungry" as *hankiri* and "body" as *boti*. Most learners had a challenge of stammering, it took them a long time to read and finish a paragraph because they were repeating first letters of each word. It was also evident that they could not get the meaning of the story they were reading because they could not answer the follow up questions about the short story. Some learners insisted on answering questions in the target language. They were not willing to learn in the second language (Kaufman 2018).

5.2.10. Teaching and learning resources

In the grade 8 classroom learners were sharing one text book in a group of four. Some were given photocopies of the short story they were reading. The school relied heavily on photocopies for this subject. There was a lack of EFAL text books. This was one of the major barriers to reading; learners could not learn how to read without having textbooks. Teachers as well could not adequately teach learners how to read because each time a learner had to read aloud, he or she took the book and the others were left without a book as they were sharing. There was no library at the school, learners who could not read in the classroom had no other backup plan, and a library could be used after the reading lessons. Unfortunately, the school had no library. This hindered learners' reading progress because they depended on the school resources to learn how to read. Teachers claimed that they sourced reading materials from neighbouring schools, but it was still not enough. A library was needed so that learners could access different reading materials and read at their own pace (Fredriksen et al. 2015).

5.2.11. Teaching method

English teachers seemed to use different methods and approaches during their teaching. Teacher one explained that the type of learners he had determined the teaching method to be used in the classroom. He further argued that the group of

learners he had that year was different from other years, so this made him not to be precise on which method to use. He claimed that the learners lacked background knowledge and content knowledge, as a result he failed to implement the learner centred and communicative approaches, and instead he used the traditional method which is narrative teaching method. The teacher did not use the three reading strategies advocated by CAPS, this may have been because of lack of good foundation of the implementation of the curriculum. Teacher two on the other hand used learner- centred teaching method and the communicative approach; even so she still had learners who could not read. It showed that learners had a serious challenge of language barrier, they were actively participating during the lesson, and the teacher explained one concept in different ways for them to grasp the overall understanding of the short story. Her use of the learner-centred method did not work accordingly as learners took a long time to complete a reading task (Mangaleswaran 2019).

5.2.12. Language barrier

During the interview sessions, learners indicated that English was not their mother tongue. When the researcher asked them interview questions, they requested that she code switch to Sepedi so that they could clearly understand the questions. Even during the lessons, the teachers were code switching to meet the learners' language needs. I observed that the grade 8 learners had little understanding of concepts in the short story, such as *The old woman, hunger, and neighbour*. They needed these concepts to be explained in the language they understood, that is their mother tongue (Mboacha 2015).

5.2.13. Child headed families

Responses from teachers and learners interviews indicated that most learners came from child-headed families. The learners in question are badly affected by their home environments; hence their academic progress was stagnant. Some learners claimed that the main reason they were still at school was because they did not want their social grant to be cut off. Learners were aware that should they drop out of school; their social grants would be cut off, especially those who were over age. These types

of learners were said to be troublesome, teacher two claimed that most of them did not attend her lessons as they were mostly absent (Tabensky 2015)

5.2.14. Lack of parental involvement

According to some learners from the interviews, parents were not involved in their children's' education. Learners claimed that their parents could not read and write so it became difficult for their parents to teach them how to read. Other learners explained that when they were at home they performed various household duties but reading was not one of them because there was no culture of reading at their homes. Some learner's parents claimed that there was no strong communication network between them and their children's school; others said the school did give them timeous feedback about their children's performance; they were merely failing to support them because they themselves were illiterate (Degger and Frank 2021).

5.2.15. Teaching method

Learners had a great challenge of learning how to read because of how they were taught to read. Seemingly, teacher one was applying a teaching method that was not suitable for the phase and grade in question. He was using a classical narration method which inhibited learners from engaging themselves in reading lessons. Most of his reading lessons seemed to be more authoritative and that made learners to not learn at ease. They resorted to being passive and follow the rules given by the teacher. As for teacher two, she used a communicative approach at times, unfortunately, learners had already gotten used to the traditional method implemented by teacher one. She made a great effort to get learners to think critically and participate actively. Some few learners managed to adapt to a new way of learning, that is, the communicative way (Lefty and Fraser 2020).

5.2.16. Overcrowding

Drawing from learners and teachers views, it is safe to say overcrowding is a learning barrier, particularly to reading. As much as it was tough for learners to read individually, it was also tough to read in groups, hence the creation of after school programmes. Most learners complained about the noise in the classroom and claimed it was the reason they could not be audible, contrarily, the noise was a bit

controlled during the reading sessions. Overcrowding impedes learners from learning effectively (Lent 2012).

5.3. RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

5.3. 1.Results from observations

Classroom observations have revealed that there are many factors contributing to the problem of reading. The major contributing factors are language barrier, overcrowding, lack of teaching and learning resources, time management, reading skills, and teaching methods. Some of the contributing factors were revealed from the learners and teacher interviews. Observation of teacher one lesson was mostly slightly different from his interview responses, particularly the teaching method he used when teaching learners how to read (Spaull and Jansen 2019).

5.3.2. Results from interviews

Responses from interviews with teacher two correlates with classroom observations. The challenge was with teacher one, some of his responses were not evident in the classroom, such as the supposed use of other teaching methods and approaches to teach reading. There was only one method of teaching evident, which was the narration method, and one teaching approach which was Teacher Centred Approach (Killoran and Denning 2020). Learners' interviews revealed that they were not able to read with understanding and there was a rather urgent need for intervention strategies to assist them in reading. Both learners and teacher explained their major challenges to reading such as language barrier, overcrowding, lack of parental involvement, child-headed families, teaching and learning resources and teaching methods. Through the analysis of both observations and interviews, as well the responses from interviews, except for few issues mentioned earlier from teacher one's lesson, the results correlates. Therefore, in summary, the results from classroom observations of teacher one and two correlate with the results from interviews with learners, teachers and the Head of Department

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The main aim based on the recommendations gathered from the main findings of the study is to improve the language proficiency and the level of teaching and learning in the sampled population. Should all the relevant stakeholders partake in the teaching and learning in the school, the main aim of the study will be accomplished. Recommendations for the Department of Education, teachers, learners and the SGB are discussed in this section.

5.4.1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The department of education at provincial and national level should be in close interaction with school of education from various universities, particularly the language discipline (Barrett et al., 2019). This should be done to support and train the language teachers in making sure they are better equipped to teach learners in senior phase and FET. There should be a guarantee that the CAPS is suitably inculcated to teachers and implemented by teachers throughout their teaching. Language discipline in the School of Education at universities should teach students how to teach learners applying the communicative approach and learner-centred teaching method. The implementation of these approaches will develop in learners the reading skills and enable them to read fluently.

5.4.1.1. Teacher training workshop

The workshop trainings should be organised across all circuits in the province. Language curriculum advisors and EFAL teachers in each circuit should collaborate in training teachers on how to teach reading. CAPS is rather new to most teachers who were long in the education system in the times of OBE, these are senior teachers who still apply traditional teaching methods in the modern day teaching. Senior teachers need to join forces with new teachers, fresh from universities, and learn from them how to implement the current teaching methods and approaches that are aligned the curriculum. The language curriculum advisors should plan and organise adequate workshops to cover each individual teacher and ensure proper training.

Teachers need to be empowered to continue fulfilling their roles of being researchers, lifelong learners, subject specialist and designers of learning material (Leōnidas, and Antoniou, 2013). They could be given bursaries to further their

studies to improve their education level and attain professional development to meet the current standard of the education system. This could assist learners to learn how to read and improve their reading skills. The teacher training workshop will train teachers how to teach learners to read short stories. Both young and old teachers will be trained on how to implement the reading strategies. This will assist learners to also implement the reading strategies throughout their reading processes. This will ultimately improve their reading levels.

5.4.1.2. Teaching and learning materials

Learners should be provided with textbooks at the beginning of each year, this will enable effective teaching and learning in all subjects. Curriculum advisors should timeously visit the schools to make certain that each individual learner has their own text book. They should also equip teachers with teaching support materials that match the curriculum, rather than going to schools simply for learners' assessment and supervision of teachers. Learners should be assessed, based on what they were taught and curriculum advisors should make available the necessary learning materials that will enhance learning processes. Having access to enough teaching and learning resources will reduce the pressure and hindrances that teachers go through during photocopying. It is necessary for each school to have a library where learners can access reading materials at large (Milai, 2017). The exposure of relevant reading materials to grade 8 learners will create an interest in reading. Learners will be interested to read in the classroom. They will love reading and engage in various reading materials. Their love for reading will grow and they will become proficient readers.

5.4.1.3. Overcrowding

The school under study had recorded 72 learners in one grade 8 class; this is outrageously huge. There is a pressing need for additional classrooms in the sampled school as there were a disturbing number of learners in one classroom. The grade 8 learners of this school were suffering because of overcrowding. The department needs to intervene and rescue the condition learners are faced with to the quotidian. The Department should therefore work on building additional classrooms to accommodate all learners (Nobile, Lyon & Arthur, 2020).

The Department of Basic Education minister has stated that the teacher- learner ratio for Limpopo should be 1:30 (OECD Education Statistics, 2012). This means that each classroom should have one teacher and thirty learners; unfortunately it was not the case in this school. One class was packed with several learners that were equivalent to two and a half classes. Teachers were not coping at all. Learners as well were not able to learn effectively. During the pandemic, the situation changed slightly as learners were rotating per grade. The two English teachers were responsible for teaching EFAL in all grades. Although there was a decrease in overcrowding in the classroom, teachers were left with a huge workload of teaching all the classes. Each class accommodated thirty learners, this resulted in three classrooms. This meant that two extra classrooms were created for which no extra teacher was allocated for them. To ease the situation, the Department of Education should pay homage to the school. Should the class size be reduced to the stipulated teacher-learner ratio of 1:30, the learners will read at ease without having to worry about noise in the classroom. Learners will have ample time to read in turns and listen to one another during reading.

5.4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

5.4.2.1. Time management

To ensure effective time management, teachers should plan their lessons adhering to the EFAL teaching time. For instance, according to CAPS (2012), the supposed teaching time in grade 8 EFAL is four hours and thirty minutes per week. Each lesson could be allocated one hour per day from Monday to Thursday, then thirty minutes on Friday. Should the teaching activities take longer than planned, afternoon or morning time, before and after lessons could be used to finish the work. Teachers should monitor the work of learners during lessons to ensure that they finish on the stipulated time. The lesson plan structure should have slot for time allocation per activity for instance, pre-reading activities could be allocated less than five minutes, teachers and learners' activities could be allocated ten to fifteen minutes and assessment activities could be completed in fifteen to twenty minutes (Dowd & Green, 2019). If teacher one and two could manage their time well and allocate equal reading time to each individual learner, they will easily identify learners with

reading barriers. Time management in the EFAL classroom will also assist learners to be ready to read when it is their turn to read. Each learner will have a responsibility of managing time during reading. This will improve their reading pace.

5.4.2.2. Teaching method

Teachers should be acquainted with theories for language teaching such as Schema Reading Theory so that they could mediate learning effectively and implement CAPS creatively and critically with a grounded understanding. The use of Schema Reading Theory will encourage teachers to start by teaching the background knowledge of the short story before teaching learners how to read it. The background knowledge is greatly important and should be taught before embarking on the journey of reading. When learners have concrete background knowledge, it will be easier to understand the short story at large together with all its concepts and the vocabulary used. The teaching of background knowledge using Schema Reading Theory will develop learners' ability to link prior knowledge with the current text they will be dealing with. Learners will have ample time to search for unacquainted words in the short story to be equipped with the relevant vocabulary. It will also encourage learners to construct their own sentences in a formal format applying the information from the short story.

For effective language teaching, teachers should be informed of how and when to apply language theories of teaching. The language department should have a subject policy that outlines the specific topics and content to be taught in grade 8. The policy should entail information on how to teach English across the curriculum. Furthermore, the departmental head should encourage newly appointed teachers to attend EFAL training workshops so that they can be fully trained and learn different techniques of teaching reading. The implementation of communicative approach should be reinforced and encouraged (ERIC Clearinghouse, 2007).

5.4.2.3. Teaching and learning materials.

Teachers should ensure that learners are exposed to genres such as; short stories, novels and poems so that they can be able to read proficiently. Teachers should encourage learners to listen to radios and other audios which are contextual and academic, to learn from other learners and listen to how they read various texts. They can as well engage themselves into reading a variety of EFAL books so that

they can learn a wide range of vocabulary. It is evident that most learners learn through viewing and listening, so it is of paramount importance for educators to expose learners to learning materials such as projectors (visuals) and diagrams where learners can get information from them and be given an opportunity to interpret what they see and hear on the projectors through a communicative approach. Teaching and learning materials should be contextualised to enable learners to grasp the meaning and be able to apply what they learned in the classroom to their daily lives. The relevant teaching material will encourage learners to read, for instance, if teachers were to project their reading materials for all learners to view what they are reading about, this would make them to pay attention and be eager to take part in the reading.

5.4.2.4. Reading approaches

Teachers should teach content relevant to grade, phase and term. The CAPS teaching approach such as communication approach should be made known to all teachers and it should be implemented accordingly. Learners learn best by taking ownership of their learning; therefore, it should be a norm to teach learners using the Learner Centred Approach. Teachers should develop into learners the reading skills; listening, reading, writing, and language convention and structures as well as their usage and application. There should also be a coherent application of reading skills and of the three reading steps advocated by CAPS (2012) that is, pre-reading, during reading and post reading. The use of Communicative Approach will enhance learners' reading skills. When the reading lessons are learner-centred, they enhance their reading ability. Additionally, learners will read independently and be confident when they read for the entire class.

5.4.2.5. Lesson plan

Teachers should plan their lesson in advance, this will amount them ample time to gather the necessary teaching and learning materials. The four EFAL reading skills should be holistically integrated and applied through teaching and learning activities. The text to be used in a classroom setting should be one that will interest and challenge learners to want to learn more about it. For instance, '*how to improve grade 8 results?*' This will motivate learners to be engaged and participate

accordingly as the question is a current phenomenon. The topic could be set in a form of a speech, poem, argumentative essay, and debate. This activity will reinforce their listening, reading and writing skills. The success of proficient reading will be determined by the effect put on the use of EFAL for vicarious reading purposes. Reflective and critical feedback should be provided so that learners can be aware of whether they are progressing or not. If teachers can plan and prepare their lessons in advance, they will be able to give learners enough short stories in advance. Learners will read the given short stories and practise how to read unfamiliar words before they get into class. Learners will also be advanced in seeking help from their peers or parents at home, for those whose parents are literate. They will always eagerly wait for the next reading lesson.

5.4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEARNERS

Learners should learn to read effectively as individuals in front of their peers and collectively in a group. Souto-Manning and Martell (2016) agree with the idea of independent and shared reading mentioned above. Learners should be responsible for the provided reading material such as text books and other supporting learning materials such as photocopies and manage them with care. Learners should be able to get meaning from symbols or visuals and interpret it through verbal communication in order to communicate accurately. Also, for learners to read fluently, they should acquire the necessary language skills. The acquaintance of the language skills will assist them to read texts with meaning and be able to present them by writing their own sentences. The CAPS advocates that for learners' profound reading, the four skills should all be integrated across their academic learning. To ensure life-long learning through reading, learners should confidently listen to, write and present EFAL with understanding. Through the use of the reading skills, learners will develop and nurture reading by means of continuous reading of wide range of texts.

5.4.4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SGB

Parents, as part of the SGB, should ensure that they belong to the WhatsApp group of grade 8 English. The EFAL reading assessment activities will be shared in the group for parents to assist learners to read at home. All of the learning activities will

be sent in the group so that learners can read further for their own understanding. Other learners may use the learning materials as revision. Parents should also participate in the use of English by enquiring about concepts they do not understand. This will reinforce parental involvement and encourage learners to read texts written in English at home. The abovementioned communication tool is seemingly affordable to most parents staying at home with their children and those who are away for work. Since learners and teachers have stated their backgrounds, another communication tool could be letters written in English, to reinforce the use of the language through writing. The last means of communication could be phone calls.

The English teachers could call the grade 8s' learners' parents to discuss the reading progress of their children. Parents should be encouraged to use English and code switch where necessary. Members of SGB should encourage other parents to participate in the school activities, particularly to teach them how to read. Parents should attend school meetings when they have been called to. They should also visit the school to check their children's progress. They should extend their support to teachers as well. Reading is an on-going process which requires a reader to be a life-long learner. Eventually both learners and parents will learn how to read as they timeously participate in the reading activities sent through the school's grade 8 WhatsApp group.

5.5. AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has explored the “challenges encountered by grade 8 learners when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom”. It has only focused on grade 8 learners and the challenges they come across when they read short stories written in English, in their classroom context. Through this study, the researcher discovered new areas for research around this topic which could be pursued for future research. The researcher identified these topics but did not cover them as they were not part of the main topic. Therefore future researchers could research on topics such as:

- Does exposure to English reading material improve the learners reading skills?

- The exploration of relevant teaching methods towards developing learners reading skills.
- Exploration of classroom contextual factors such as overcrowding that impedes on learners' ability to read English proficiently.

5.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was based on a small school in the Mogodumo circuit, Capricorn south district. The circuit is relatively small compared to other circuits in the district. It would not be fair to base the conclusions around the general reading challenges of learners in other schools outside the population on such a small area. Thus the sample is too small to be generalised to other districts and provinces. Due to insufficient resources and time, one school from the circuit was purposively sampled for study. The last limitation of the study was that a majority of learners were not aware of the causes of their reading challenges.

5.7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study was about “Exploring the challenges faced by learners when reading short stories for comprehension in an EFAL classroom”. There was one main research question whose main purpose was to explore the challenges to reading. It was follows; “What challenges do grade 8 learners come across when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom?”

The study analysed and discussed two sub questions, which were guided by the purpose of the study. They were as follows;

- “How can learners' reading skills be developed as outlined in the curriculum?”
- “What makes learners' home environment impede on the reading ability?”

The problem statement as discussed in chapter one, which was central to learners who are in grade 8 taking EFAL as a medium of instruction. The problem was that learners were not able to read short stories with clear understanding. Teachers showed little understanding of how to teach reading in EFAL classroom.

Furthermore, learners were mostly exposed to reading at school. The information gathered from this study indicates that reading was an on-going challenge.

To curb the problem, the challenges to reading were addressed by creating extra reading time. English teachers at the school created a programme for after school reading activities where learners could choose any educational reading material to read from. They also improvised various reading materials such as text books, short story guides, drama books and novels from neighbouring schools. In addition, teacher opted to make use of projectors in some of his reading lessons. Ultimately, the success and failure of these intervention strategies towards reading will be determined by the extent to which both teachers and learners are willing to go.

APPENDICES

CONSENT FORM.

1. Parents or guardians

Request for permission to conduct research

I am asking for permission to conduct a research in which your child is one of the participants. It would be a great pleasure if you permit him/her to partake in the study.

Name and surname of the child _____

School' name _____

I am a student at University of Limpopo in Faculty of Language Education, doing a Master's Degree. My study topic is exploration of challenges faced by grade 8 learners when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom in Mogodumo circuit, Limpopo province. This study seeks to explore the problems that learners are faced with in the classroom, when they read. I will also observe methods used by teachers when they teach learners how to read short stories. Hopefully, I will identify adequate

methods which will create conducive learning environment, where learners develop the reading skill and think critically.

In obtaining the relevant information based on the research topic, learners will be interviewed, observed during lessons, and their reading tasks will be collected recorded and captured. Learner's identity will not be disclosed and their participation is voluntary.

For more information you can contact (cell; 0791294189); email:

seboneml@gmail.com

Alternatively, you can contact my supervisor Mr S.I. Ramaoka on: cell; 0824509491;

email: Isaiah.ramaoka@ul.ac.za. You can also contact my co-supervisor Dr H.A.

Motlhaka on: cell; 0797210620; email; hlaviso.motlhaka@ul.ac.za.

Be sure to enquire for further information

Yours faithfully

2. PRINCIPAL

STUDY TITLE: EXPLORATION OF CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY LEARNERS WHEN READING SHORT STORIES IN AN EFAL CLASSROOM IN MOGODUMO CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

Researcher: Lovedalia Mamoshaba Sebone Contact email: seboneml@gmail.com

I, the Principal of _____ School acknowledge that the information regarding the research topic mentioned above has been explained to me and I don't dispute any content thereof.

I give my permission and declare the following:

- I understand the purpose and aims of the study.
- It was explained to me that the information will not be disclosed.
- I agree to take part in the interviews.

Surname and Names: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

3. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HOD)

STUDY TITLE: EXPLORATION OF CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY LEARNERS WHEN READING SHORT STORIES IN AN EFAL CLASSROOM IN MOGODUMO CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

Researcher: Lovedalia Mamoshaba Sebone Contact email: seboneml@gmail.com

I, the Head of Department in the stream of languages and social sciences of _____ School acknowledge that the information regarding the research topic mentioned above has been explained to me and I do not dispute any content thereof.

I give my permission and declare the following:

- I understand the purpose and aims of the study.
- It was explained to me the information will not be disclosed.
- I agree to take part in the interviews.

Surname and Names: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

4. TEACHER

STUDY TITLE: EXPLORATION OF CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY LEARNERS WHEN READING SHORT STORIES IN AN EFAL CLASSROOM IN MOGODUMO CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

Researcher: Lovedalia Mamoshaba Sebone contact email: seboneml@gmail.com

I, an English educator at _____ School acknowledge that the information regarding the research topic mentioned above has been explained to me and I do not dispute any content thereof.

I give my permission and declare the following:

- I understand the purpose and aims of the study.
- It was explained to me that the information obtained will not be disclosed.
- I agree to take part in the interviews.

Surname and Names: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

5. PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

I acknowledge that the information regarding Ms M.L Sebone's proposed study topic was explained to me in detail.

I was assured of:

- Non-disclosure of the child's identity
- Confidentiality of information
- Voluntary participation

I therefore permit my child to take part in the research, including being interviewed, and recorded on either audio/video.

Surname and Names _____

Date _____

Signature _____

6. OBSERVATION SCHEDULES

6.1. LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

LESSON: Reading aloud

Short story: The old woman by Bessie Head.

GRADE: 8

READING STRATEGIES	
BEFORE READING	
Activities	Comments
a) Learners were asked to define a short story	Only one learner raised a hand and answered. Others were mumbling and they were not audible.
b) Learners are asked to predict what the story is about	Learners showed little understanding of what the story is about, but the teacher tasked them to carefully look at the pictures; some were able to understand from then.
DURING READING	
c) Learners are asked to connect and construct meaning of the short story	Some responded by saying the story meant the woman is old, others said it is about the woman who is old and stays with a boy
d) Learners were asked to construct mental images	They asked what mental images are
AFTER READING	
e) Learners were asked to recall, paraphrase,	Here learners showed a bit of an overall understanding of the short story. One of the

summarise and synthesise	sampled learners gave a good summary.
f) Learners were asked to reflect and interpret the themes	This question showed that learners are familiar with themes. The level of participation increased rapidly.
g) Learners were asked to evaluate and respond critically	Now few learners could respond critically as this requires adequate understanding.
h) Learners were asked to respond personally with support from text	Personal opinions were given at large, some learners were out of text, and they were just giving opinions about their personal experiences with their grandmothers.

6.2. Reading aloud observation checklist

Contents	Pronunciation	Audibility	Understanding of text	reading skills	Use of non-verbal	Fluency	Accent	Self-confidence	Time management	Observation of
Learners	Comments									
	Good (G)									
	Fair (F)									
	Poor (P)									
1	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
2	P	G	G	G	G	F	F	P	G	G
3	F	F	F	P	P	P	P	F	G	G
4	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
5	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
6	F	F	F	F	P	F	F	G	G	G

Contents	Comment			
	Learner	good	fair	poor
1. Pronunciation.	Learner one:	poor		
	Learner two:	Poor		
	Learner three	fair		
	Learner four	poor		

	poor	
	Learner five	good
	Learner six	fair
2. Audibility	Learner one	poor
	Learner two	good
	Learner three	fair
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Fair
3. Understanding of the text	Learner one and six had lack of understanding of the text.	Poor
	Learner two	Good
	Learner three	Fair
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Fair
4. Use of voice and mastery of reading skills.	Learner one	Poor
	Learner two	Good
	Learner three	Poor
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good

	Learner six	Fair
5. Use of gestures, body language and facial expression.	Learner one	Poor
	Learner two	Good
	Learner three	Poor
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Fair
6. Fluency when reading.	Learner one	Poor
	Learner two	Fair
	Learner three	Poor
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Fair
7. Accent.	Learner one	Poor
	Learner two	Fair
	Learner three	Poor
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Fair
8. The influence of dialect when reading.	Learner one	good
	Learner two	Fair
	Learner three	Poor

	Learner four	good
	Learner five	Poor
	Learner six	Fair
9. Self-confidence	Learner one	Fair
	Learner two	Poor
	Learner three	Fair
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Good
10. The ability to complete reading the given text on time.	Learner one	Poor
	Learner two	Good
	Learner three	Good
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Good
11. Observation of punctuation marks	Learner one: poor	Poor
	Learner two	Good
	Learner three	Good
	Learner four	Poor
	Learner five	Good
	Learner six	Good

7. SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (HOD)

1. What do you do in case of lack of teaching resources? How does this affect your teaching and learners reading?

2. Who is responsible for creating time tables, assessment activities and lesson plans?

3. Do you encounter any problems when using those teaching methods you explained earlier on ? Explain

4. Is learners' progress on par ? Explain

5. What are the impacts of workshops and teacher training programmes on teaching reading?

6. What are your recommendations for improving teaching, particularly reading lessons?

8. SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS (TEACHERS)

1. What do you think impedes your grade 8 learners to read proficiently? _____

2. Do you attend EFAL reading workshop, and how does it affect teaching reading? _____

3. Which teaching methods do you use when you teach learners how to read short stories? _____

4. Which resources are available for use during reading lessons? _____

5. Do your teaching methods allow you to implement CAPS? Elaborate.

6. What do you think makes learners' home environment impede on the reading ability?

7. Does the lesson plan link with the allocated reading time? _____

8. What strategies can assist learners to read proficiently? _____

9. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW (LEARNERS)

Short story: The old woman by Bessie Head.

1. How would you explain reading?

2. What impedes you from reading short stories with a clear understanding?

3. Does the language teaching method used by the teachers encourage you to read fluently?

4. Does the text provided activate your prior knowledge? Why?

5. Are you able to predict what the short story “the old woman is about?

6. What is the message conveyed in the story?

7. What challenges do you encounter when reading this story?

8. Is your home language a barrier towards your reading performance?

Responses to interview questions

Semi structured (teachers) interviews and responses

1. "What do you think impede your grade 8 learners to read short stories"?

Responses:

Teacher one: *Our learners are from this village, it's very rural. There is no library. People in this village do not believe in education. They read only at school.*

Our learners enter grade 8 without the basic reading skills. They lack EFAL foundation. They are used to be taught in Sepedi.

Teacher two: *parents do not track their children's' schoolwork. Some of them write homework during lessons. There is no one monitoring their work at home. Parents do not come to school when they are called.*

1. "Do you attend EFAL reading workshop, and how does it affect teaching reading?"

Responses:

Teacher one: *Well, we do go for workshops from time to time, more especially at the beginning of a new term. But the challenge is that they are held during the week, I, with the experience I have, I mostly weigh my options on whether I should go to class or the workshop, because the workload here is too much. In the workshops we do same thing every year, that's why I feel no pressure of attending because I know how to teach my learners. But hey, with the group of learners we have these years, you never know how to teach them.*

Teacher two: *workshops are very important in the teaching profession; they give us guidance on the relevant teaching. I am a novice teacher with less than five years teaching experience, these workshops helps me a lot*

because I get to learn how other teachers in different schools teach. This profession has given the “experienced teachers” everything. We can learn a lot from them when it comes to classroom management.

2. Which teaching methods do you use when you teach learners how to read short stories?

Responses;

Teacher one: *There is yes, a method, that one has to use but it is not set up, it depends on your experience as a teacher on your approach you understanding? You look at the type of learner and you decide on the approach it depends on the type of learners that you are teaching, if you understand them to be slow, you would go with their pace and what is important is not to leave them behind make sure that they understand.*

Teacher two: *with these learners, it’s imperative to use an approach that will accommodate all of them. In EFAL reading lessons I usually implement the communicative approach and question and answer method, they help a great deal because they encourage learners to be actively involved.*

3. Which resources are available for use during reading lesson?

Responses:

Teacher one: *We do not have the prescribed text books, so we mostly borrow from our neighbouring schools, sometimes we buy from our own pockets because the school does not have enough money. We heavily rely on making copies from time to time; in turn the papers are mostly finished.*

Teacher two: *It takes time to make copies because even the machine run out of ink or they jam, this affects our periods very badly because we end up writing on the board.*

4. Teachers were asked if they implement CAPS, and to elaborate their answers.

They responded as follows:

Teacher one: *We do implement some aspect of it, not all of it, you see, we don't have the technology that matches with the curriculum.*

Teacher two: *Not always, it's difficult to implement it, our school resources are inadequate, and it limits us from implementing the CAPS.*

5. Teachers were asked, What do you think makes learners' home environment impede on the reading ability?

Responses;

Teacher one: *Most learners are from families wherein they themselves are parents. No one encourages them to go to school or to read.*

Teacher two: *The learners are from poor and unstable economic background. They bunk school to go work for the younger ones in the family. Their main source of income is grant.*

6. Does the lesson plan link with the allocated teaching time?

Teacher one : *Yes, it does, but we do have a challenge when it comes to time management, because as I've said earlier on, our learners need to be taught one topic several times.*

Teacher two: *Our lesson plans from the departmental head for grade ten to twelve does not have time allocation per activities, so even mine does not have since I borrowed from them. I am aware that the EFAL teaching time per week is 4.5 hours. So I take it from there. It hard to follow the lesson plans because we lack necessary teaching materials and our lesson are of middle and low cognitive levels.*

7. What strategies can assist learners to read proficiently?

Teacher one: *I think providing learners with different text books that interest them. Teach them to read during extra lessons. Create reading programs where learners read both intensively and extensively. A library will be helpful for such a program.*

Teacher two: *The three reading strategies; that is pre-reading, during reading and post reading.*

Semi-structured interviews for HoD

1. "What do you do in case of lack of teaching reading resources? How does this affect your teaching and learners' reading"?

Response:

We borrow from other schools in the circuit and other circuits. It affects our learners badly because they have no reading materials they can rely on for assessments.

2. "Who is responsible for creating time tables, assessment activities and lesson plans"?

Response:

It is the responsibility of each teacher to create their lesson plans that suit their teaching approaches. Even so, the language department does provide teachers with EFAL lesson plans and activities that match those lesson plans. As for time tables, the school has a general timetable, but teachers are encouraged to draw their own from the main one.

3. "Do you encounter any problems when using those methods explained earlier on? Explain"

Response;

It depends on the type of learners I have, but in these recent years, I've experienced numerous challenges. The thing is these learners are more exposed to computers than books. They are not interested in reading books. They want to listen to audios and watch videos.

4. "Is learners' progress on par? Explain"

Response;

We've attempted to teach learners according to the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) but our learners do not study at their own time. We do pace our

teaching with ATP, but they remain behind because they need to be taught one topic several times. This tempers with allocated teaching time and other learning activities.

5. “What are the impacts of workshops and teacher training programmes on teaching reading?”

Workshops have a great impact on teaching, although I do not attend all of them, but they are important. With a good plan and strategizing, workshops can be beneficial to teachers. They are set during the week so the timing is not perfect. Nothing much is taught at the workshops, we are just given details on the type of teaching material and how to get them.

6. “What are your recommendations for improving teaching, particularly reading lessons?”

Response:

We should be given materials and the CAPS document. In the workshops we should be taught how to teach reading and share the teaching methods or strategies. We should be given lesson plans so that we do not deviate from the content.

Questions and responses from focus group interviews (learners)

1. “How would you explain reading?”

Responses;

Learner one: *Reading is saying out words written on paper.*

Learner two: *Reading is extracting meaning from text.*

Learner three: *It is how you understand symbols pictures and words.*

Learner four: *Reading is uttering the letters and sentences in a meaningful way.*

Learner five: *Reading is presenting written words by means of verbal communication.*

2. Learner six: *Reading can be explained as finding meaning out of a text.*

“What impede you from reading short stories with a clear understanding?”

Responses;

Learner one: *English is not my mother tongue, so it is difficult for me to read English short stories.*

Learner two: *There are many of us in the class, it's difficult to focus, and the noise is too much.*

Learner three: *Nobody speaks English at home; they simply don't know the language. At home there is no one to help me to read. I can't read English. my challenge is lack of understanding, I don't understand when my English teacher is teaching, so I'm failing to read English short stories because I don't understand what I'm being taught. I sleep without reading, and my parents don't check or help me with my homework.*

Learner four: *I am failing to understand when sir is teaching us, I only read them here at school, at home there's always something to do. My grandmother cannot read.*

Learner five: *When Sepedi teacher reads short stories and explain for us I understand, but in English class sir teaches differently. When I read English short stories, I first write the unfamiliar words down in Sepedi and then translate it to English because I am not competent in English.*

Learner six: *I can't say I don't understand what I read, I'm just struggling to explain what I read in English.*

3. “Does the language teaching method used by the teachers encourage you to read fluently?”

Responses;

- Learner one: *Not really, I try to pay attention when they are teaching but I just do not understand.*
- Learner two: *The way sir is teaching us is a bit confusing, but with ma'am I try my best to learn about the things she taught.*
- Learner three: *Sir teaches us by using old methods that we are unable to learn with.*
- Learner four: *I enjoy attending English lessons because ma'am encourages us to communicate amongst ourselves and with other teachers, so her methods do encourage us to read more often.*
- Learner five: *The teaching methods used by ma'am are the one that encourages me to read. I enjoy sir's lessons because I feel free to participate.*
- Learner six: *I get lost when sir is teaching us, ma'am speaks a lot of English, and I also don't understand her.*

4. "Does the text provided activate your prior knowledge? WHY?"

Responses:

- Learner one: *Yes, it makes me remember what a short story is.*
- Learner two: *Yes, when I look at the picture of the old woman. I remember the stories we were taught in grade seven.*
- Learner three: *Yes, the story provided makes me recall yesterday's lesson about elements of short stories.*
- Learner four: *Yes, the text does activate my prior knowledge because I remember clearly what we were taught about reading a short story.*
- Learner five: *Yes, last week we read a short story but it was different from this one.*
- Learner six: *Yes, but I have forgotten the tittle of last week's short story, I just remember that we were reading in groups.*

5. "Are you able to predict what the short story "the old woman is about"?"

Responses:

Learner one: *Yes, it is about a woman who is old and is having trouble walking.*

Learner two: *Yes, by skimming the title and paragraphs I think the short story is about an old woman who cannot walk without a stick*

Learner three: *The title and pictures used here helps me to predict what the story will be about.*

Learner four: *I skimmed and scanned the whole text, I also used the tittle and pictures to guess what is happening in this short story.*

Learner five: *Yes, "The old woman" is about a woman in her old age stage. She cannot walk properly without the use of a walking stick, she is old, hungry and thirsty, and she needs water.*

Learner six: *I see an old woman with a stick; I think the short story is about old people who cannot walk.*

6. "What is the message conveyed in the story?"

Responses:

Learner one: *The message is to respect old people*

Learner two: *Is to love and respect our grandmothers*

Learner three: *It is to help one another as neighbours*

Learner four: *The message is to look after and care for each other and our old loved ones.*

Learner five: *The message is to help each other alleviate poverty as a community.*

Learner six: *Is to give old people water and food when they are thirsty and hungry.*

7. "What challenges do you encounter when reading this story?"

Responses:

Learner one: *I never read this short story before until yesterday; I only listen when my teachers and other learners are reading. I enjoy listening to ma'am because she explains everything.*

Learner two: *I love reading short stories, I have read this one several times, and I love it because I can relate to it. Even so, I did not understand some words like frail, swayed, clutched, knobbed and hedge. My English teacher helped me to understand them. She handed me her dictionary so that I can search their meaning.*

Learner three: *I have a challenge of reading in front of the whole class, but I do understand the short story because when I read, I use a dictionary. I often ask ma'am and sir to explain to me when I get stuck.*

Learner four: *My challenge is that I am used to translating Sepedi words to English, now I had to do the opposite. I spent much time translating words from English to Sepedi. Another challenge is that it took me a lot of time to understand what this story is about. And with other genres I also take time to understand what they mean.*

Learner five: *There are many unfamiliar words in this short story, it's hard for me to read and finish reading without encountering a difficult word. Sir sometimes read and explains in Sepedi, that's when I am able to follow.*

Learner six: *My biggest challenge is English language, they teach us to read using it and it is not our home language. The big words like averted, shrugging and sensible in the story confuse me. When I come across them, I forget everything I read and start to wonder what they mean.*

8. "Is your home language a barrier towards your reading performance?"

Responses;

- Learner one: *I read for meaning, the language I know and understand very well and can speak fluently is Sepedi. I cannot read English fluently with better understanding.*
- Learner two: *No, I read both home language and English novels to train my reading performance.*
- Learner three: *My home language is not a barrier to my reading performance; the more I read Sepedi short stories, the better understanding I have for English. I use a multilingual dictionary to learn words I don't understand in both home language and English.*
- Learner four: *No, I can read English without making mistakes, but my reading performance is not perfect. I think my home language is helping me to improve my reading because I make sure I translate every Sepedi word I know to English language.*
- Learner five: *Sometimes, because words in English are difficult to understand and in class we read in English, my home language does not help me because we don't use it.*
- Learner six: *Yes, it is a barrier because I cannot translate English words into my language, so I will not get the meaning of what I am reading.*

10. LESSON PLAN

Day 1: (1 hour)

Topic / Aspect: Reading Comprehension		
Resources used	Teaching and Learning Strategies	Text Produced (evidence)
Grade 8 English Core Reader Pamphlets	Class discussion Pair work Individual work “Reading aloud” “Reading quietly” Answering comprehension test Questions	Learner responses to comprehension test questions
Assessment		
Assessment Tools	Assessment methods	Types of Assessment
Memorandum	Self-Assessment Peer Assessment Teacher Assessment	Informal Assessment Formal Assessment Summative Assessment

Lesson Procedures	
Teaching Strategies	Learner Activity (<i>attach learner task to lesson plan</i>)
Pre-Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on what is a short story • Revise <i>skimming</i> and <i>scanning</i> a text. 	Pre-Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating learners’ background knowledge • Skimming and scanning text features: titles, headings, subheadings, captions, visual

	<p>elements and graphic information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predicting, using the information gained from skimming and scanning
<p>Teacher activities</p> <p>Discuss and explain the following aspects in the <i>Core reader text book</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines to assist you (the learner) in reading for meaning; • Practical advice; • Answering Techniques; • The 4 skills; • Solutions to Activity 1 • Tone. 	<p>Learner activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Activity 1 • Complete example on tone
<p>Post-Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on solutions to Activity 1 and on Tone. 	<p>Post-Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark and correct Activity 1 • Mark and correct the activity on tone.
<p>Remedial exercises:</p>	<p>Vocabulary extension - words to form sentences</p> <p>Visual material to support reading and writing</p>
<p>Educator reflection:</p>	
<p>Challenges faced:</p>	

Day 2 and 3: 60 minutes

Topic / Aspect: Reading Comprehension

Resources used	Teaching and Learning Strategies	Text Produced (evidence)
Core reader text book (grade 8) Photo copies The Old Woman Short story.	Class discussion Pair work Individual work “Reading aloud” “Reading quietly” Answering questions	Learner responses to the Comprehension test
Assessment Tools	Assessment methods	Types of Assessment
Memorandum	Self–Assessment Peer Assessment Teacher Assessment	Informal Assessment Formal Assessment Summative Assessment

Lesson Procedures	
Teaching Strategies	Learner Activity (<i>attach learner task to lesson plan</i>)
Pre-Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start a class discussion on the generation gap. • Ask pre-reading questions. 	Pre-Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating background knowledge • Engage in discussion on the generation gap.
Teacher activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the passage aloud. • Issue the learners with the passage. • Discuss the concept of a generation. • Stop regularly and explain. • Give learners informal assessment 	Learner activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in class discussion • Learners must demonstrate their vocabulary skills by answering the set questions.
Post-Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark and correct informal assessment • Homework assignment: Comprehension 	Post-Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark and correct the activity. • Homework exercise on ‘analysis of a short story

Test 1	
Remedial exercises:	Vocabulary extension - words to form sentences Visual material to support reading and writing
Educator reflection:	
Challenges faced:	

11. Letter of Approval from the university:



University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

MEETING: 08 December 2021

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/332/2021: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Exploration of Challenges Experienced By Learners When Reading Short Stories in an EFAL Classroom
Researcher: ML Sebone
Supervisor: Mr SI Ramaoka
Co-Supervisor/s: Dr HA Motlhaka
School: Education
Degree: Masters of Education in Language Education

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: **REC-0310111-031**

Note:

- i) This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
- ii) Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
- iii) PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

12. LETTER OF PERMISSION TO THE CIRCUIT

SEBONE M.L
P.O. Box X 505
Dwars River
0812
13 September 2021

Mogodumo Circuit
Private Bag x 01
Chuenespoort
0745
Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT THE SCHOOL UNDER YOUR JURISDICTION

I Sebone Mamoshaba Lovedalia, hereby humbly request to conduct a research at the school under Mogodumo circuit, which is Boikhutjong Secondary School. I am a student at University of Limpopo in faculty of Language Education, doing Masters Degree. My study topic is exploration of challenges faced by grade eight learners when reading short stories in an EFAL classroom in Mogodumo circuit, Limpopo province.

This study seeks to explore the problems that learners are faced with in the classroom, when they read. I will also observe methods used by teachers when they teach learners how to read short stories. Hopefully, I will identify adequate methods which will create conducive learning environment, where learners develop the reading skill and think critically.

In obtaining the relevant information based on the research topic, learners will be interviewed, observed during lessons, and their reading tasks will be collected, recorded and captured. Learner's identity will not be disclosed, their participation is voluntary.

I look forward for the ongoing process of this application

Yours respectfully

SEBONE M.L

13. LETTER OF APPROVAL FROM THE CIRCUIT



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT
MOGODUMO CIRCUIT

Enq: Mashala T.E

Tel no: 015 633 5086

Cell: 082 954 1267

**TO: SEBNONE M.L
BOIKHUTJONG SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH FOR A MASTER PROGRAM WITH
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO.**

1. The matter above refers
2. This serves to confirm receipt of your letter regarding the above mentioned program.
3. The Circuit hereby approves your application on the following conditions.
 - 3.1 That the program won't interfere with your normal activities as an educator.
 - 3.2 In pursuance of your Research program, Teaching and Learning should not be compromised.
4. The Circuit wishes you to have a successful program and that the school gives you the necessary support.
5. Wishing you the best.

Yours in Education

.....
T. E. MASHALA
CIRCUIT MANAGER

13.12.2021
.....
DATE

14. LANGUAGE EDITOR'S LETTER



School of Languages and Communication
Department of Languages: English
Discipline

Mrs. M.V. Mashiane

(Lecturer: MA English Studies)

Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727. South Africa

Tel: 015 268 2502, Email: valery.mashiane@ul.ac.za

27 June 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves as proof and confirmation that the dissertation titled “**Exploration of challenges Experienced by Grade 8 learners when reading short stories in Mogodumo circuit in Limpopo Province**” by **M.L Sebone**, was edited by me, and that unless further changes have been made after me, I am content that all grammatical and technical errors of this thesis have been eliminated.

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