

**CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL
LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN ESSAY WRITING AT MOTHIMAKO SECONDARY
SCHOOL: KGAKOTLOU CIRCUIT, UNDER CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT,
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION
(LANGUAGE EDUCATION)**

FANKOMO NC

2022

**CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL
LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN ESSAY WRITING AT MOTHIMAKO SECONDARY
SCHOOL: KGAKOTLOU CIRCUIT, UNDER CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT,
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

BY

FANKOMO NTHABISENG CHARITY

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

LANGUAGE EDUCATION

IN THE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**(SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION MANAGEMENT
STUDIES)**

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SUPERVISOR: Dr. T.W MOLOTJA

2022

DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to the following people:

To my beloved late brother, Fankomo Charles. Thank you for the legacy of love, family unity and perseverance.

To, my son, Fankomo Nkosenhle Charles. Thank you for giving me the motivation to further my studies, you are the reason I work harder.

To, my loving mother, Mogane Grace. Thank you for your prayers and unwavering support throughout my study.

My sister, Fankomo Mbali. Thank you for being there throughout my academic journey.

DECLARATION

I declare that Challenges Experienced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language Learners in Essay Writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou Circuit, under Capricorn South District, Limpopo Province hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree Master of education in language education has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- To God, for the courage and wisdom bestowed on me to complete my study.
- My sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr TW Molotja, for his unconditional support, vital encouragement, and invaluable guidance during the period of the study. I feel fortunate to have received his guidance and mentorship. May God richly bless you.
- My mother and siblings for their unwavering support at all times.
- Mothimako high school grade 12 learners and teachers for assenting to participate in the study.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates challenges grade 12 learners experience in essay writing in English first additional language (EFAL). Nine Grade 12 learners and 3 EFAL educators at Mothimako high school participated in the study. The method used in this study is qualitative method and it is used to get both teachers and learners experiences in depth detail regarding the challenges faced by learners in essay writing. Furthermore, the tools used to collect data are documents analysis, questionnaires, and observation. The study is underpinned by the Social Constructivism Learning theory. The researcher presented profiles of the school and EFAL teachers.

The findings suggest that learners face a number of challenges with essay writing. The major challenges identified include the lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, poor teaching methods and poor foundation skills of EFAL which led to poor grammatical competence. The study recommends that scaffolding be practiced when teaching the skill, conducive learning environments be created so learners learn the writing skill in a free, comfortable environment, support be provided in terms of writing materials, regular workshops be conducted to equip teachers with the writing skill, conducting workshops for parents so they could be aware how they could be involved in their children's education and lastly, encourage learners to work in groups if they are to learn the skill.

Table of Contents

Contents	Page no.
1.1 Chapter 1: Introduction and background	2
1.2 Purpose of the study	4
1.3 Research problem	4
1.4 Role of theory to the study	5
1.5 Research methodology	7
1.6 Significance of the study	12
1.7 Ethical considerations	12
1.8 Chapter outline	12
1.9 Summary	13
2. Chapter 2: literature review	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Writing defined	14
2.3 Significance of writing	15
2.4 Essay writing	18
2.5 The writing process	19
2.6 Writing strategies	21
2.7 Approaches to teaching writing	24
2.8 Difficulties in writing and learning to write	29
2.9 Producing a piece of writing	37
2.10 Expert vs novice writers	37
2.11 Error analysis of learner's writing	38
2.12 Provision of feedback on learners' writing	38
2.13 Use of teaching and learning resources	39
2.14 Social constructivism learning theory	40
2.15 Conclusion	43
3. Chapter 3: Research methodology	44
3.1 Introduction	44
3.2 Research paradigm	44
3.3 Research approaches	44

3.3.1 Research design	45
3.3.2 Population and sampling	45
3.4 Data collection tools and procedures	46
3.5 Data analysis	49
3.6 Quality criteria	50
3.7 Ethical considerations	51
3.8 Significance of the study	52
4. Chapter 4: data analysis	53
4.1 Introduction	53
4.2 Data presentation	53
4.3 Analysis of documents	55
4.4 Analysis of open-ended questionnaires	61
4.5 Observation data analysis	70
4.6 Conclusion	75
5. Chapter 5: Findings and recommendations	76
5.1 Introduction	76
5.2 Summary of key identified findings for the study	77
5.3 Recommendations	83
5.4 Chapter summary	85
6. References	86
7. Appendix A	109
8. Appendix B	110
9. Appendix C	112
10. Appendix D	113
11. Appendix E	117
12. Appendix F	120
13. Appendix G	121
14. Appendix H	123
15. Appendix I	125
16. Appendix J	128
17. Appendix k	129

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BED- Bachelor of Education

CA- Curriculum Advisor

CAPS- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

DoE- Department of Education

EFAL- English First Additional Language

ESL- English Second Language

FET- Further Education and Training

GET- General Education and Training

HOD- Head of Department

L1- First Language

L2- Second Language

LLS- Language Learning Strategy

LTSM- Learner Teacher Support Material

MKO- More Knowledgeable Other

NSNP- National School Nutrition Programme

NSW- New South Wales

PL1- Post Level 1

SASA- South African Schools Act

STD- Secondary Teacher's Diploma

ZPD- Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the background of the study, purpose of the study, research problem, role of theory in the study, research methodology, significance of the study, ethical considerations, and chapter outline.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

At all levels of education system, writing seems to be a major challenge among school learners. Graham, Harris and Mason (2005) state that writing skill is not easy to master because of its complexity. Writing is, therefore, regarded as the most complex aspect in the learning of a second language, since writers are required to be strategic, taking into account structural accuracy, thus using the language appropriately (Dar & Khan, 2015; Hyland, 2003; Mahboob, 2014). Furthermore, Raja and Zahid (2013) view writing skill as the most difficult skill in second language learning. However, Jahin and Idrees (2012) claim that writing is not only a challenge to second language learners, but also seems difficult for both native and non-native learners. In short, writing seems hard to be implemented because of some considerations (Richards & Renandya, 2003).

Moreover, Kellogg (2008) views writing as a key cognitive challenge, because it involves testing of memory, language and thinking abilities. Shangarfan and Mamipour (2011) argue that the writing skill has a large contribution towards learning other languages and, without it, further education may not be possible. Likewise, the skill of writing is significant for English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners in particular, for it gauges their success academically since most of the examinations are assessed through writing. Nevertheless, learning to write and being successful in completing written tasks is usually problematic, for most learners often encounter several issues with regard to their essay writing skills, and they perceive writing as a demanding and

challenging task to carry out as a result of various instructions they need to respect. Generally, learners face difficulties regarding grammar rules, coherence, cohesion, sentence structure, idea development, content, vocabulary, rhetorical devices, paragraph structure and organisation (Dar & Khan, 2015).

Moreover, Carlino (2011) states that one of the most challenges facing learners in essay writing is the fact that they lack discursive skills. For learners to gain a learning experience, they need to be actively involved and engaged personally in written activities as this will develop their communicative competence. Therefore, teachers have the task of developing interest in essay writing among learners so as to equip them with writing proficiencies (Adas & Bakir, 2013).

Furthermore, Hyland (2003) and Haider (2012) assert that different challenges concerning writing are faced by learners at different phases of the writing process. Classically, these challenges may be categorised according to linguistic, cognitive, emotional and educational classifications. Quintero (2008), Nik, Hamzah and Rafidee (2010) state that learners have difficulties with the structural components of English. This may result in an inappropriate structure that obscures the content as well as the understating of the text. Similarly, Rico (2014) states that a text that does not have coherence impedes comprehension, thus reducing the level of self-esteem and confidence in learners besides mastering grammar rules.

Learners need to be competent with writing skills for them to successfully participate in the literate society of the future. Kirby and Crovitz (2013) assert that developing competence in writing is very challenging, but it can also be rewarding in contexts of education since learners' level of performance is assessed through writing. Lea and Strierer (2000) state that if learners are proficient in all the language skills, they can face all academic and professional challenges they encounter. Walsh (2010) supports the idea that the writing skill plays a vital role in the workplace and in educational contexts.

Most learners at Mothimako Secondary School face a number of challenges in essay writing. It is therefore of vital importance to equip learners with essay writing skills and address the challenges they experience since poor writing is a national challenge among grade 12 learners in many schools. Annual (ANA, 2011) reports by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) consistently and systematically show that South African learners lack effective and sustainable strategies to improve essay writing particularly grade 12 which is a critical grade that bridges high school and university. Hence, this study sought to explore challenges experienced by grade 12 EFAL learners in essay writing, in particular Kgakotlou circuit.

1.2PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 Aim of the study

The study is aimed at investigating challenges experienced by grade 12 EFAL learners in essay writing.

1.2.1 Main Research Question

- What challenges do grade 12 EFAL learners experience in learning essay writing?

1.2.2 Research sub-questions

The following research sub-questions were addressed in the study:

- Which writing approaches or strategies do learners use in learning essay writing skills? `
- Which writing methods do teachers employ when teaching writing skills and how are they enhancing the writing skill?

1.3RESEARCH PROBLEM

Writing is a more valuable skill needed in most contexts of life (Browker, 2007). Almost all levels of education view the writing skill as a necessity to gauge learners' level of

performance (Afrin, 2016). Abdulkareem (2013) confirms that academic writing has an essential effect on learners' progress in a Second Language learning. Furthermore, the main goal of teaching English across the world is developing communicative skills and abilities of learners so that they may have a better future as they progress in furthering their studies (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012). McKay (2011) states that other writers use English for provision of content-area and language knowledge concurrently using different modalities (written or spoken) to send messages. However, some learners are unable to attain the goals as they do not value the importance of writing, thus becoming ignorant of its significance towards school, university and in their careers (Chou, 2011).

Al Fadda (2012) discovered that the key problems Second Language Learners experience are sentence and paragraph structure, committing grammatical errors, struggling with vocabulary and ensuring cohesion in a paragraph. Furthermore, another barrier impeding learners to move on with their writing activities is the inability to generate ideas (Al Murshidi, 2014). Moreover, one more concern is the inability to read and paraphrase (Amin & Alamin, 2012). Additionally, learners' different cultural backgrounds; lack of critical thinking skills; lack of interest towards writing; weak vocabulary; punctuation; and difficulty in structural components are also contributing challenges encountered by learners in their compositions (Chou, 2011).

1.4 ROLE OF THEORY IN THE STUDY

The role of theory in the study is to provide structure and guide (Breakwell, Hammon, Five-Schaw & Smith, 2007:210). Theoretical framework gives a description of why the problem under study exists. It provides specifications on the key variables influencing a phenomenon of interest. Thus, the theory underpinning the study is the Social Constructivism Theory.

1.4.1 Social Constructivism Theory by Vygotsky (1978)

Social Constructivism Theory is based on the idea that people construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world through experiences and reflecting on those experiences (Giesen, 2008). Furthermore, the theory views learning as a process

whereby learners learn through social engagement and active participation (Christie, 2005). This theory, if employed, would help address learners' writing challenges by engaging learners in writing activities so that they can fully participate to develop confidence and mastery over the writing skill. The teacher plays a facilitative role in a constructivism classroom wherein learners construct their own knowledge. According to Ndon (2011), the teacher in a constructivism classroom provides a conducive environment in which learners learn freely, collaboratively using authentic materials.

In addition, the following principles underpinning Vygotsky's theory can be employed in trying to address the challenges learners face in essay writing, namely: Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Scaffolding, More Knowledgeable Others (MKO) and social interaction.

ZPD refers to the gap between the knowledge learners possess and the knowledge they receive from others as they socially interact (Raymond, 2000; Warschauer, 2005). In ZPD, the facilitator provides support to learners if the tasks are more challenging. As learners develop competence, the teacher starts fading or provides less support (Benson, 2004). This, as a result, would enable learners to develop the essay writing skills step by step, and it will also help them reflect on their writing, thus developing mastery over the skill. Learners would gain more knowledge of the skill through social interactions.

Scaffolding refers to the method whereby the learner works with more capable peers to perform tasks (Culatta, 2011). The teacher or more capable peers may provide assistance to the learners with necessary steps of essay writing in trying to scaffold their learning. The teacher may provide more support only if a learner faces challenges with writing steps or any other aspect of writing such as vocabulary, grammar, spelling, use of idioms, rhetorical devices and idea development of writing (McPherson, 2013).

Furthermore, the teacher may employ Guided Writing by allowing learners to work in pairs and work independently when they develop mastery. This would make learners

to develop confidence and feel interested in completing written activities. Moreover, the facilitator needs to scaffold the activities into smaller tasks. For example, when teaching essay writing, the teacher may allow the learners to master how to gather information first, write the introduction, followed by body and then conclusion while at the same time focusing on other aspects of writing. Furthermore, MKO is someone who has better knowledge or someone who is more capable than the learner (McPherson, 2013). MKOs can be other learners, books and teachers through which learners can gain knowledge of their essay writing skills.

Lastly, the fourth principle is social interaction. It is suggested by De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) that, in order for intellectual growth to occur, a certain degree of social interaction and collaboration must occur between the novice writer and expert and must take place within the novice learner's ZPD. Thus, for learners to develop their thinking abilities in academic writing and overcome challenges, they should interact with the MKO (Kim, 2001; Raymond, 2000).

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research paradigm

The study is premised under the interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivists researchers attempt to derive their concepts from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest. According to Myers (2009), interpretivists' researchers access reality through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. Interpretive paradigm allows researchers to have a view of the world through the perceptions and experiences of participants. Therefore, the researcher adopted this paradigm to explore the challenges learners experience in essay writing and use those experiences to construct and interpret her understanding from gathered data.

1.5.2 Research approach (methodology)

A qualitative research method was employed to gain full insights about the problems learners experience when writing essays. According to Creswell (2003), qualitative

research can help the researcher to gain an understanding of how the participants feel and their perceptions with regard to a particular subject. Furthermore, qualitative research is an effective model that occurs in a natural setting, which enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery (Holloway, 2005). The researcher employed this method to develop a level of detail regarding learners' experiences about the challenges they face when writing essays.

1.5.3.1 Research design

A Case Study design was employed whereby EFAL teachers and learners served as cases for the study. This allowed the researcher to get first-hand information directly from the participants' views about the challenges learners experience with essay writing.

1.5.3.2 Population and sampling

Sampling is used to find objects or people that are best suited for the research (White, 2005). The method of purposive sampling was used to develop the sample of the research under discussion. According to this non-probability method, sample members are chosen on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedman, Pisani & Purves, 2007). The researcher used purposive sampling as the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on characteristics of a population that are of interest, which enable the researcher to achieve the objectives.

Furthermore, the population of the study comprised of schools under Kgakotlou Circuit, consisting of 12 secondary schools. Mothimako Secondary School was the selected school for the research with 3 grade 12 EFAL educators. Nine Grade 12 EFAL learners were sampled. The researcher administered an essay to all Grade 12 EFAL learners and then sampled 3 Highest Achievers, 3 Moderate Achievers and 3 Lowest Achievers. The researcher sampled Grade 12 learners because they are on their exit level or final grade of high school, thus having the need to improve their writing skills to prepare

themselves for tertiary education and/or professional field. The researcher also administered a semi-structured interview to the EFAL teachers to dig out their perceptions in relation to challenging matters on teaching essay writing.

1.5.4 Data Collection tools and data collection procedures

Three data collection instruments were used to collect data namely, document analysis, open-ended questionnaires and observation. Document analysis was used as data collection instrument whereby essays were administered to learners and a rubric was used to assess the essays. From the essays' results, the researcher identified challenges encountered by learners. Furthermore, open-ended questionnaires were used to get teachers' views about the challenges learners experience when writing essays. Moreover, observation was also used to collect data on the effectivity of the lesson looking at classroom interaction and methods employed by teachers when teaching essay writing. This helped the researcher to gain insights into the kinds of methods teachers implement when teaching essay writing, and the effects such methods have on learners' writing. Writing strategies help learners to develop and formulate abstract ideas as well as use proper tools to successfully complete a written discourse (Lan, Hung & Hsu, 2011).

1.5.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves categorising data with the intention of interpreting it so that it makes sense (Schwandt, 2007). The researcher employed Thematic Content Analysis in analysing the data. The necessity of Thematic Analysis is to classify data into themes or patterns as it minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail. According to Moore and McCabe (2005), this is the type of research whereby data gathered are categorized in themes and sub-themes to be comparable. The main advantage of Content Analysis is that it helps in data collected being reduced and simplified, while at the same time producing results that may then be measured using quantitative techniques. Furthermore, Content Analysis gives the ability to researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives (Krippendorff & Bock, 2008).

The essays were analysed first. They were marked out of 50, looking at the theme of content and planning, wherein the researcher assessed the relevance of the responses as well as the organization of ideas (with regard to introduction, body and conclusion) and the awareness of audience, purpose and context for 30 marks. Furthermore, the language, style and editing skill was also assessed by looking at the tone; register; style; appropriateness of vocabulary to purpose and context; word choice; language use and conventions; punctuation; grammar; and spelling. This was assessed out of 15 marks. Lastly, the researcher checked the structure of the essay whereby features of the text were looked into, namely: paragraph development as well as sentence construction. This was marked out of 5.

Moreover, the open-ended questionnaire data was also analysed using Thematic Content Analysis method. The researcher used theme coding, in which key themes were assigned through reviewing each response using a coding system. Furthermore, observation data were analysed under the Thematic Content whereby the researcher took notes which were then classified into themes. The researcher looked at the theme of classroom interaction: the interaction between the teacher and learners and the interaction between peers; the approaches and strategies teachers implement when teaching essay writing skills and their effectiveness.

1.5.6 Quality Criteria

The researcher ensured rigour in the study. This was done by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These aspects help in insuring accuracy and consistency in a study (Bitsch, 2005).

1.5.6.1 Credibility

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002); Macnee and McCabe (2008), credibility refers to the truthfulness and sureness of the study's results. Furthermore, credibility ensures that the gathered data are interpreted appropriately and not made-up in any

way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). To consider credibility, participants were identified and described accurately by the researcher (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

1.5.6.2. Confirmability

Confirmability is described as the degree to which the results of an inquiry could be confirmed or verified by other researchers (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Confirmability deals with establishing that data and interpretations of the research findings are not fabrications of the inquirer's imagination but are clearly derived from the data.

1.5.6.3. Dependability

Dependability is described as the constancy of the research results over a period of time. Participants assess the research results, analysis of the results and commendations of the study in confirming that they correspond with the data obtained (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Dependability guarantees that the findings can be repeated in a similar situation thus obtaining consistent results. The study ensured dependability by validating that the study's discoveries are congruous with the raw data gathered.

1.5.6.4 Transferability

Transferability is described as a way in which the study's findings can be applied to other situations or settings with other participants (Bitsch, 2005). The study ensured transferability by means of producing evidence that the results of the study could be applied to other contexts. The researcher established in-depth descriptions of the context where data were collected by providing a description of where the observation took place, the background of the school and setting as well as teacher profiles so the reader is able to get a clear picture of the context and clearly link the research findings with the setting thus being able to make transferability judgements.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Writing is one of the most important skills in studying English because not only is writing an academic skill, but it is also an important skill that translates into many career fields. The significance of the study will reflect greatly on EFAL teachers considering the writing skill as an important tool in academic performance. Teachers will find this study useful in exploring learners' major difficulties in writing. This study may help teachers significantly in the implementation of instruction and general classroom pedagogy of writing. The study identified possible causes of writing difficulties among EFAL learners, in particular, and suggested possible strategies to minimize and/or curb the writing difficulties experienced by EFAL learners.

1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants were not coerced to participate in the study and all the tests and open-ended questionnaires were conducted at their convenience. They were not obliged to answer any question they did not want, and they were made aware that they are free to withdraw from the research process at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Furthermore, for confidentiality reasons, the real names or any information that might reveal the identity of the teachers and learners, is omitted in the study. Participants were fully informed regarding the objectives of the study, while they were reassured that their answers were treated as confidential and used only for academic purposes and only for the purposes of the research. The researcher ensured quality and integrity of the research and requested informed consent (Schenk and Williamson, 2005) from learners who wished to participate. The researcher attempted to create and maintain a climate of comfort thus creating a conducive environment.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one provides the background for the study, purpose of the study, research problem, theoretical framework, research methodology which includes research design, population and sampling, instruments for data collection and data analysis. It also consists of significance of the study, quality criteria, ethical considerations and chapters outline and summary. Chapter two discusses the literature review in terms of core topics and key issues that have a bearing on the title of this study. Chapter three outlines research methodology including research designs, theoretical framework, research questions, population and sampling, data collection methods, data analysis, ethical consideration, quality assurance, and summary. Chapter four deals with data presentation with regard to a brief background of the schools, profiles of the teachers who participated in the research. Discussion of themes emerging from generated data and chapter summary. Chapter five offers a summary of the key findings of the study, recommendations, and chapter summary.

1.9 SUMMARY

In summation, chapter one examined the background of the study, purpose of the study, problem statement, theoretical framework, research methodology, significance of the study, quality criteria, ethical considerations and an outline of the chapters. The next chapter reviews literature regarding the challenges learners experience in essay writing in EFAL.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter covers a review of literature related to the study. It is based on the following subheadings: Writing defined, significance of writing, essay writing, the writing process, writing strategies, approaches to the teaching of writing, difficulties in writing and learning to write, producing a piece of writing, expert writer vs. novice writers, error analysis of learners' writing, provision of feedback on learners' written essays, use of teaching and learning resources and social constructivism.

2.2 Writing defined

Writing is defined as a process that involves extensive self-regulation and attentional control where writers change their thoughts and ideas into a text, repair organisation and mechanics, and monitor their progress to communicate a coherent message (Ransdell & Levy as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003). In fact, dealing with writing means being able to take into account all the various stages writers go through when composing their essays to arrive at producing a successful piece of writing.

Moreover, Widdowsons (1978) defines writing as an act of producing correct sentences and transmitting them into words on paper. This involves mainly the use of graphic language. Writing therefore involves the skill to record one's experiences, ideas and feelings using correct grammar in a concrete manner. Following Widdowsons's definition, Troyka and Nudelman (1994) assert that writing is more than just taking a pen in hand and expecting words to flow perfectly on paper. This indicates how sophisticated and complicated writing is since it comprises of lengthy steps that need to be obeyed in the process. In doing so, writers have to: generate their ideas, which need to be monitored, selected, and prioritized; to translate the ideas into text, using correct lexicon, grammar and genre rules; and to review the text in order to clarify meaning and eliminate errors (Biggs as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003).

Nunan (2003) states that writing is an intellectual activity where writers discover ideas and find appropriate ways to express and arrange them into comprehensible statements and paragraphs clear for readers to understand. Writers are therefore demanded to show the thoughts and organise them into a good composition. According to White and Arndt (1991), writing is a thinking process which demands intellectual effort, and it involves generating ideas, planning, goal setting, monitoring, evaluating what is going to be written as well as what has been written, and using language to express exact meanings.

2.3 Significance of writing

Unlike speaking that is acquired at an early stage throughout the process of exposition, writing is, however, most considered as a minor skill which is only achieved as a result of a more conscious process of learning (Harmer, 2004). According to Reid as cited in Damayanti (2009), we learn to write to fulfil our social needs and educational needs. Being educated gives people the impression of self-esteem over those who are not so fortunate. Furthermore, a learner's writing will help to evaluate how much a learner understands a particular course. Jones (1999) and Maclellan (2004) share a similar view where they acknowledge that written products are utilised to gauge the level of academic achievements in many learning institutions.

Writing is considered the most important language skill that learners require for their personal development and academic success (Mukulu, Indangasi, Mwangi, Gecaga & Okanga, 2006). Similarly, Rao (2007) points out that writing strengthens learners' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language in their academics. In addition, Ahmed (2010) notes that competence in writing helps learners perform well in their academic programmes. A study conducted by American Institute of Research (Baer, Cook, and Baldi, 2006) on the literacy skills of college graduates of two- and four-year programs show that the student who were surveyed lacked basic skills such as carrying out instructions. This indicates the need to develop the writing skill. Furthermore, review of literature suggests that the ability for learners to represent themselves well on paper

will help them with a greater chance of securing a job or higher educational chances, as they will be more attentive to the significance of the quality of the presentation of the written work. Moreover, being proficient in writing in English will enable learners to be professionals and action researchers in the future.

Writing skill is of paramount importance to the cognitive development of learners. According to Alexander (2008), strong writing skills may enhance learners' chances for success. Effective writing is a skill that is grounded in the cognitive domain. It involves learning, comprehension, application and synthesis of new knowledge (Graham and Perin, 2007). A good writing skill entails more than adhering to writing conventions. Writing also encompasses creative inspiration, problem-solving, reflection and revision that results in a completed manuscript (Graham & Perin, 2007). From a learner's perspective, writing may instead be a laborious and even dreaded exercise of attempting to place thoughts on paper while developing mastery over the rules of writing, such as spelling, punctuation format and grammar hence it is a framework for our communication (Ahmed, 2010).

Furthermore, writing skills are the primary tools for communicating knowledge, especially in educational settings. The capacity to communicate effectively may prove to be an achievement in life's chances. Tan (2010) states that presentation, clearness, and professionalism can help differentiate a person from the others. Also, in the workplace or academic contexts, good writers are exceedingly valued. Thus, a good writing skill opens the door to progress in almost any field/career a person might opt for in the future.

Another important element in achieving excellence in writing is the reflective process, that is, the ability to critique one's own work as well as the work of peers. As outlined by McGuire, Lay and Peters (2009), this reflective aspect of writing is particularly important in the curriculum of professional programs as a method of teaching problem-solving. Writing is a significant skill in language production. Its significance increases when it comes to writing in English language which is extensively used for global mediation of

knowledge (Rahman, 2002; Mansoor, 2005; Mahboob, 2014; Marlina and Giri, 2014). Hyland (2003) believes that performance in language development is subject to improvement in writing skills.

Nunan (1989) argues that writing is an extremely difficult cognitive activity which requires the learner to have control over various factors. These factors vary from academic background and personal interest of the writer to various psychological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena (Haider, 2012; Dar & Khan, 2015). A study conducted in Pakistan revealed that the writing skills of the learners were alarmingly weak and substandard. Although, English language users in Pakistan have exponentially increased to 49% in 2003 from 2% in 1961 (Dar & Khan, 2015), they still face issues in English language, particularly in writing. These issues generally arise from incompetence in syntax, coherence, idea expansion, content selection, topic sentence, rhetorical conventions, mechanics, organization, lack of vocabulary, inappropriate use of vocabulary. However, further research is required to explore and examine the factors that adversely affect writing skills of the learners, because issues in writing can be more efficiently addressed if the factors that generate them are identified (Hyland, 2003).

Learning to write would enable learners to get knowledge on how to write effectively, how to express their ideas and how to share their ideas and thoughts with anyone (Harmer, 2004). Furthermore, learning to write can help learners be able to use a variety of strategies and this may help with problem solving skills. Developing communicative competence in writing should not be taken for granted by both teachers and learners as it is not only important in academic discourse but also in social and professional settings.

Moreover, academic success and performance is strongly influenced by one's academic writing ability. According to Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (2006), the South African Department of Education (DoE) investigated literacy levels among grade 3 learners in 2003 and found that 61% of children did not have age-appropriate reading and writing skills. This indicates that poor writing abilities affects or challenge the

learners from the lower grades up until to the higher levels of education. The long-term result of poor writing skills among young learners is that they leave primary school with low literacy levels, and face ongoing problems in secondary school, as proved by the poor matric results (UNESCO, 2010).

Furthermore, the Department of Education (2007) in South Africa has conducted a case study based on the teachers' conceptions of standards in South African Basic Education and Training. According to the study, the Foundations of Learning Campaign is meant to create a national focus on improving basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy among all South African children (Taylor, Fleisch & Shindler, 2007). The study confirmed that the inability to read and write is definitely a national crisis. These results argue for the need to investigate the challenges learners encounter and so come up with solutions to the problems to prepare learners to compete globally.

2.4 Essay writing

An essay is a short piece of writing about a particular subject, especially one written by a learner where the use of a skill to produce words on a surface is required (Cambridge learner's dictionary, 2007). Furthermore, Zemach and Rumisek (2005) describe an essay as a group of paragraphs written about a single topic and central main idea discussed in a clear order.

2.4.1 Types of essay writing

Langan (2001) presents and describes the following types of essay writing:

a) Description

In a descriptive essay, learners are required to provide readers with a vivid and authentic picture as possible in words. Descriptive essay is also referred to as fiction where the writer transmits a mental image or the particulars of the story (Department of Education, 2012).

b) Exposition

In exposition, the writer provides information about a particular subject. Patterns of development within exposition include detailing a process of doing or making something, analysing causes and effects and comparing and contrasting. The purpose of exposition is to provide some background and inform the readers about the plot, character, setting and theme of the essay, story or picture. It is a discourse used to explain, describe or inform (Department of Education, 2012).

c) Argumentation

This type of essay writing is also called persuasion. It includes the arts and sciences of civil debate, dialogue and conversation. It is based on rules of reference, logic and procedural rules in both real-world and artificial settings. Moreover, argumentation includes debate and negotiations, which are concerned with reaching a mutually acceptable conclusion (Department of Education, 2012).

d) Narration

Narration is retelling of something that has happened. Narration recounts events and therefore shapes history. As outlined by McGuire, Lay and Peters (2009), this reflective part of writing is particularly important in the curriculum of professional programs as a method of teaching problem solving. Narration can also be categorized as fiction since it is based on imaginative events. The other category of narration is non-fiction, which is described as writing that is based on real facts.

2.5 The writing process

Writing as a skill is a sophisticated process consisting of different steps to arrive at the final form. This includes pre-writing/planning, drafting, editing and publishing.

2.5.1. Planning/Pre-writing

This phase requires learners to analyse the structure, language features and register of the text type that has been selected; decide on its purpose, audience and context; brainstorm ideas for the topic using, for example, mind maps; discuss the criteria that will be used to evaluate the piece of writing; research the topic, for example in a library, and select relevant information and identify main ideas and supporting detail. In this phase, learners generate ideas before starting to write (Department of Education, 2012).

Moreover, Williams (2003) asserts that planning is one of the most effective features of the writing process, although it also can be one of the most challenging. According to Harmer (2004), at this stage, writers before beginning to write, consider three main issues. Firstly, they need to think about the purpose of their writing; by doing so, they will identify the text type they will produce along with the language used, and the information included. Secondly, writers must account for the audience they are addressing allowing them to adjust their writing to leave a certain impact on the readers. Lastly, Harmer (2004) emphasises on the content structure of the piece of writing in which it is organized in terms of facts, ideas or arguments. In short, planning is the step stone for the writing development by which the writers collect all sorts of information about the purpose of writing, the addressed audience, and the information that will be used (Department of Education, 2012).

2.5.2. Drafting

This stage requires learners to write a rough draft first that considers purpose, audience, topic and text type; choose appropriate words; organize ideas in a logical sequence so that the argument flows smoothly; organise ideas and/or images so that a story makes sense; establish an individual voice and style and lastly read drafts critically and get feedback from teacher and classmates. This is followed by making an outline of the essay. Drafting involves producing the first version of the piece of writing that is a subject of amendment (Department of Education, 2012).

Donohue (2009) defines drafting as the stage where learners are able to craft their own writing. Therefore, in the drafting stage, writers need to put all what they see relevant to the piece of writing they are composing regardless of spelling mistakes, grammar mistakes and others. Hence, the purpose behind drafting is to gather as much information, ideas and arguments that will be used later on in writing. Along the writing process there may exist a number of drafts until the final version is reached (Harmer, 2004).

2.5.3. Editing

This is the stage in which learners are expected to evaluate their own and others' writing for improvement using set criteria, refine word choice, sentence and paragraph structure, work on the sequencing and linking of paragraphs, eliminate ambiguity, verbosity and any offensive language, use grammar, spelling and punctuation correctly, prepare the final draft including layout, for example, headings and fonts. At this phase, learners also revise their first drafts and give them to their peers for pre-reviewing and commenting on. The final stage is editing the essay by the writer himself or herself to eliminate any language errors (Department of Education, 2012). Williams (2003) states that during this step, the writer checks their drafts for cohesion and coherence and rewrite what they think is unclear or ambiguous to form an understandable passage. This phase is about revising what a writer has done so far with careful emphasis on the elements of style and grammar lexis and so on.

2.5.4. Publishing (the final version)

After editing the drafts and making the changes that needed to be done, writers are now ready to make the final version of their piece of writing to be sent to the intended audience.

Donohue (2009) concludes that the final stage of writing process includes sharing, reflection, and assessment of the learners' writing. The final version is therefore supposed to be the refined, errors-free copy delivered to the teacher or any other entity in order to be evaluated.

2.6. Writing strategies

Westwood (2008) states that writing strategies has a number of benefits to learners. Firstly, writing strategies help learners think productively before writing thus improving their thinking skills. Secondly, writing strategies make it easier for learners to sequence their ideas logically, add relevant detail and impose structure on their text. Lastly, through writing strategies, learners are encouraged to review and improve on their writing thus enabling them to master the skills involved in writing. Moreover, Lan, Hung and Hsu (2011) confirm that writing strategies help learners to develop and formulate abstract ideas as well as use proper tools to successfully complete a written discourse.

Kirby and Crovitz (2013) state that teaching writing is challenging, however, it can also be rewarding. The teaching of writing occurs with the help of certain strategies that aim at enhancing learners' writing productions. Teaching these strategies to learners will surely have a positive effect on their writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). The NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) have proposed a series of strategies which promote learners to write and demonstrated their implementation in writing classes.

2.6.1. Modelled writing

Teachers use this strategy to allow learners to gain knowledge about language, vocabulary and text structures required to write for a range of purposes. Models used in this strategy are real world texts learners read, they might vary from newspaper articles to literary works such as novels and short stories depending on the teacher's selection. The implementation of this strategy starts by introducing the text type to learners while clarifying the audience and the purpose behind writing the text (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

2.6.2. Think aloud writing

Think aloud strategy is one way to engage learners in writing that function as a stimulator

for writing. Think aloud is defined by The NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) as a method in which learners are saying aloud what they are thinking about during their composition which helps them organize and edit their writing. It is a strategy that can be used to demonstrate a comprehensive range of skills, knowledge and understandings about writing.

2.6.3. Guided writing

In guided writing strategy, the teacher's role is to provide guidance for learners, and they work cooperatively in order to compose a written text. This strategy can involve the whole class, small groups or individuals. In short, guided writing emphasises the role of the teacher in fostering and facilitating learner's writing, by focusing on their needs, measuring and assessing the learners' achievement of the outcomes. Then the teacher helps in stimulating learners' prior knowledge and skills (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

2.6.4. Independent writing

The aim of this strategy is to provide learners with opportunities to explore their own skills

in writing different text types apart from the teacher's guidance and collaborative writing with peers. In independent writing, learners learn to identify the purpose of their writing, the audience, and the use of different skills to help them accomplish the writing tasks. This strategy also helps learners become aware of their writings and increases self-assessment (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

A study by Omulando (2009) investigated the teaching and learning strategies used by teachers and learners respectively; and how they influence the manner in which language teachers conduct instruction in English language in secondary schools in Kenya. The results indicated that learners did not appropriately use the Language

Learning Strategy (LLS). English language teachers were aware of LLS and their usefulness, but they did not appropriately apply this knowledge in training learners on the use of appropriate LLS during instruction. It was recommended that teachers should train learners on the use of LLS as a means of motivating learners into language learning process.

From the foregoing it is evident that teacher's role in strategy training is very crucial for successful language learning. This implies that lack of adequate training of learners on the use of learning strategies is likely to bring about challenges in learning second language essay writing skills. It is on this perspective that the study sought to examine strategies learners employ in the process of learning essay writing skills.

2.7. Approaches to the teaching of writing

The teaching of writing has been significantly marked by the adaptation of three main approaches. The product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach. According to Gathumbi and Masembe (2005), the methods that teachers use in writing instruction have measurable effects on the quality of the learners' written products. Archibald (2001) states that teaching influences the learners' ability to reflect on their writing and to produce more effective, fluent and appropriate texts in second language. In addition, Tangpermpoon (2008) asserts that teaching writing skills to second language learners is a challenging task for teachers because developing this skill takes a long time to realise the improvement.

2.7.1. The product approach

This approach can be described as a traditional approach, in which learners are passive and they are encouraged to mimic a model text, which is usually presented and analysed at an early stage of writing. According to Hossein and Nasrin (2012), the product approach to teaching writing skills focuses on form and syntactical structure and it also put emphasis on rhetorical drills. Therefore, this approach mainly put focus on the

written product rather than the process the learner should undergo to produce an effective written text. When using this approach, writing only is concerned with the knowledge about the structure of a language, and writing development is a result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher (Hosseini, 2013). This therefore means that the teacher dictates knowledge to the learners and only the final outcome of writing is considered.

Myles (2002) shares the idea that if learners are not being exposed to written model texts, their errors in writing are more likely to persist. Learners are required to focus on a model, form, and duplication. In other words, the learners study model texts and attempt various exercises that enable them to draw attention to relevant features of a text, and then rewrite them in their own writing. Moreover, the product approach focuses mainly on the individual ability rather than that of a group where the learner imitates the model product.

Furthermore, the product approach is the oldest and by far one of the most practiced approaches around the world in the teaching of writing (Palpanadan, Bin Salam & Bte Ismail, 2014). This approach is predominantly focusing on the final result of writing, and considers linguistic knowledge, syntax, vocabulary and cohesive devices as basic features of the writing product (Badger & White, 2000). The main objective IN THIS approach is to acquire linguistic knowledge. Hence, learners are generally relying on already made samples in order to compose grammatically and syntactically correct pieces of writing.

2.7.2. The process approach

According to Hyland (2002), the process approach focuses on how a text is written instead of the final outcome. The process approach can give teachers and learners an understanding of the nature of writing and the way writing is taught. Therefore, the process approach put emphasis on the importance of particular steps or procedures such as planning or pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and proof-reading or revising. The

process approach involves introducing methods and techniques that help the learners identify and engage in a topic.

When using this approach, learners are required to produce numerous drafts of a work. After discussion and feedback from their peers and teachers, the learners would therefore revise the drafts. Rewriting, reviewing and editing are crucial parts to writing in this approach. Graham and Sandmel (2011) point out that the process approach to writing has a great impact on the learners as it enables them to make clear decisions about the direction of their writing by certain procedures such as discussion, drafting, feedback and revision choices.

The process approach to teaching writing is well-defined as a cyclical approach. In this approach, learners are needed to move back and forth while going from one stage to another stage and taking part in the writing activities (Palpanadan, Bin Salam & Bte Ismail, 2014). Similarly, Harmer (2004) states that the process approach tends to focus on the explicit instruction of the writing stages to learners. Unlike the product approach which emphasises fostering the linguistic knowledge, the process approach on the other hand is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting (Badger & White, 2000). In the process approach, writers have to go through a number of stages to arrive to the final version.

Moreover, the process approach can be regarded as one of the best methods for teachers to use in teaching second language writing skills. Learners can improve their writing abilities step by step since teachers will guide them through the whole process of their writing tasks by giving them feedback and enough time and opportunity through peer and teacher review (Sun & Feng, 2009). Myles (2002) also states that process approach enables the learners to understand the steps involved in writing and recognises learners' efforts toward the development of their writing abilities and input. It also helps learners develop their critical thinking.

Although, there are many benefits of using this method in teaching writing skills, the process-based approach has been criticised on various grounds. Badger and White

(2000) argue that this approach is time consuming as learners have to spend quite a long time trying to complete one particular piece of writing in the classroom. They also point out that these cause learners to be demotivated and hinder them from learning other types of writing. In critiquing the process approach to teaching writing, Freeman and Freeman (2004) also argue that it is time consuming when dealing with large classes. This is because teachers may not have enough time to schedule individual writing conferences in large classes.

To alleviate the weaknesses associated with this approach, Badger and White (2000) suggest that teachers should provide learners with some examples of the text type that they have to write to allow them to have a clear understanding about the aim and framework of a particular writing type. In addition, teachers should not spend too much time on one piece of writing in the class as it will decrease learners' motivation to write and should train learners to develop a concept of audience by taking turns giving comments on their classmates' writing. It is therefore of paramount importance that teachers adopt this process approach so as to improve the learners' writing abilities.

2.7.3. The genre approach

Thoreau (2006) states that genre writing is a type of writing which has a typical style, with a particular target of readers, and serves a specific purpose. Denoting to Thoreau's statement, it could be said that genre covers three main aspects namely writing style, readers, and goal (goal oriented). In line with style, Thoreau (2006) claims that writing style means how something is written; the words that are used and the way the information is organized. Furthermore, Scott and Avery (2001) support Thoreau's idea by stating that style in writing is words or expressions used to write the particular writing and how language patterns are expressed. It is a different angle how writing is viewed and how it is written and how it is analysed (Dirgeyasa, 2015).

Learners in the genre approach are exposed with different types of writing and write for various purposes. Genre in writing, mainly refers to the distinct structure of texts, the

different use of language in terms of grammar, vocabulary that writers use to convey their ideas (Luu, 2011). Moreover, this approach argues that successful writing occurs when learners take into account both the context and the expectations of the readers in terms of grammar, organization and the content. As for the role of the teacher, Luu (2011) claims that the teacher is generally a guide who provides learners with careful support during writing activities, so they will achieve a mastery over the genres. As a result, learners in the genre approach are first acquainted with the different features of texts, purposes for writing while considering the context and the needs of the readers before they can engage in writing.

Moreover, the central insights of genre analysis are that writing is embedded in social context, so that a piece of writing is meant to achieve a particular purpose which comes out of a particular situation. In terms of genre writing, Hyland (2003) suggests that it can be stated that genre approach to writing covers two distinctive dimensions in teaching and learning writing. First, genre is a kind of text or writing work itself. It views that the language (writing form) must be related to social function of the text. Social function of the text, then implies to certain social environment and place where and when the text is used. Second, genre as a process means how the writing work is developed, taught, and learned. In this case, there is a certain process of production and reproduction of the writing work. Therefore, genre as an approach, provides some stages or steps to follow. These will guide the writer systematically in order to be able to produce the writing work itself. In short, it can then be claimed that genre is a kind of a coin with two facets in which each face has its own characteristics and functions.

According to Badger and White (2000), the genre or eclectic approach is considered as the most effective and successful in the teaching of writing skills. The genre approach combines process theories with genre knowledge and emphasises on the social context in which writing is produced. In other words, this approach provides the learners with opportunities for developing their individual creativity as well as helping them fully understand the features of the target genres. Giving the knowledge of form and language at the same time, helps the learner to understand how a particular form

functions in a specific context; in this way, learners' writing proficiency can be enhanced (Kim & Kim, 2005). In addition, Tangpermpoon (2008) explains that the focus of writing in this approach aims to integrate the knowledge of a particular genre and its communicative purpose. Thus, helping learners to produce their written products to communicate to others in the same discourse community successfully.

However, the genre approach has also been criticized for some reasons. Badger and White (2000) point out that, the genre approach undervalues the writing skills which learners need, to produce a written product and ignores the writing abilities learners have in other areas. Another reason is that learners may not have enough knowledge of appropriate language or vocabulary to express what they intend to communicate to a specific audience. From the foregoing, it is realised that teaching writing skills to L2 learners is a challenging task. In addition, using a single teaching approach may not achieve the desired learning outcome since the weaknesses of each approach tend to impede learners' writing development. Thus, teachers need to incorporate the insights of the three approaches; product, process, and genre approaches into the teaching of writing skills in order to develop learners' writing competence. Therefore, this study sought to explore the teaching methods teachers use in L2 writing lessons and their implications for effective learning of essay writing skills among learners.

Furthermore, research was carried out by Owuondo (2011) to survey the instructional methods used by teachers in secondary schools in Kenya to teach composition writing in French. The findings revealed that teachers lacked appropriate instructional methods for composition writing. The study also revealed that there was a vicious cycle of learners' dismal performance and lack of interest in composition writing in relation to teachers' lack of interest and confidence in the same. The study recommended in-service training for teachers, publication and design of appropriate materials as well as necessary changes in curriculum development all geared towards motivating and adoption of appropriate strategies of instruction in composition writing in French.

From the foregoing review of the study by Owuondo (2011), it is evident that the teaching methods adopted by teachers influence learners' learning and achievement in L2 writing. This study sought to find out methods teachers use in teaching essay writing skills and their implications on the learning of essay writing skills among learners.

2.8 Difficulties in writing and learning to write

Chou (2011) has listed a number of reasons why international learners studying in an English-speaking country encounter a lot of stress and obstacles when writing their assignments. Firstly, learners might come from different cultural backgrounds where they are fully dependent on teachers. They also have not been trained to be critical thinkers and they might have lower expectations than those of their teachers as they consider themselves second language learners. Writing teachers with high expectations might suppose that learners are qualified enough to produce accurate pieces of writing and they might also assign demanding topics that learners might struggle when writing about (Al Spain Murshidi, 2014).

Low language proficiency might also obstruct academic writing. Ghabool, Edwina, and Kashef (2012) state that this problem could be the basic source of the challenge learners may have in their writing. For instance, the novice writers find it very challenging to establish an effective discussion in the target language (Shafie, 2010). As concluded by Al-Khairiy (2013), the participants of his study declared that their major problems comprise grammatical errors, the inappropriate choice of vocabulary, irregular verbs, and incorrect punctuation and spelling. Other causes that could lead to the difficulty in academic writing are first language (L1) interference, inadequacy of ideas, and unclear instructions of the task (Chou, 2011).

Moreover, regarding ambiguous description of the task, Chou (2011) concludes the participants in his study admitted that they feel shy and unconfident to ask teachers for clarification. Finally, Can (2009) claims that conflicting feedback provided by instructors from different departments in an institution might lead to the lack of learners' confidence

in their writing skills. The current study will contribute to the research in terms of offering valuable insights into the most difficult aspects of writing faced by grade 12 learners and how those challenges might relate to their writing strategies. It will also shed some light on the key factors that could cause the problematic challenges.

Furthermore, as learners learn to write inside or outside the classroom settings, they encounter difficulties which hinder their writing proficiency. The writing difficulties are commonly shared among English native speakers and English second language learners (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013). Al-Khasawneh as cited in Huwari and Al-Khasawneh (2013) states that English first additional language learners showed that they have many problems when writing essays. That is because they rarely write in English. Writing is also highlighted as one of the most difficult skills to master (McIntyre & Gardner as cited in Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013). In addition, Learners do not write very often and most of what they write is classroom-bound (Adas & Bakir, 2013). This therefore implies that teachers should engage learners in more writing activities so as to help them develop writing competence.

The challenges that learners face in essay writing may be related to features like grammar, syntax, cohesion, spelling, language transfer and vocabulary. Learners usually vary in facing these difficulties. Furthermore, Aragón, Baires and Rodriguez (2013) argue that learners' writing difficulties may be a result of different factors. Additionally, social factors contribute greatly to the challenges faced by learners in their writing. Learners who have low interest in writing and learning to write mostly have low writing proficiency.

Previous studies have attempted to categorise these factors into some broad domains, for example, teachers' incompetence (Haider, 2012; Mansoor, 2005; Harmer, 2008), learners' lack of interest (Byrne, 1991; Harmer, 2008) methodological inappropriacy (Ahmad, Khan, Munir, 2013; Javed, Juan, & Nazli, 2013; Siddiqui, 2007). However, there is still a need of further research that could explore the origin of these factors and their subsequent conversion into permanent writing problems of learners' written discourses.

The current study will explore the challenges experienced by grade 12 learners in essay writing.

Moreover, another research which confirmed writing difficulties was conducted by Salem as cited in Huwari and Al-Khasawneh (2013), in which he concluded that English second language learners encounter a number of difficulties impeding them to writing effectively. He argued that most learners faced difficulties in relation to vocabulary, idioms, cultural knowledge and less experience with second language rhetorical strategies. Learners in this study have displayed difficulty in beginning to write, developing ideas; they also found difficulties using technical skills and appropriate written compositions. In short, this implies that learners faced a variety of difficulties, and encountered different problems during their writing composition. It is therefore of paramount importance that these challenges are being addressed since this is not only a local problem but a large scale one which affects our second language learners. The aspects of difficulties experienced by learners in their compositions are outlined below.

2.8.1. Problems with grammar

Harmer (2001) defines grammar as the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences. These ways are called the grammar rules and are basic elements in every language inseparable from writing (Hartwell, 1985). The main writing difficulties learners find in relation to grammar is the low understanding of grammar, which results later on in difficulties in arranging proper writing (Bahri & Sugeng, 2010).

Writing could be a difficult skill to be learnt or taught due to the fact that it is not a simple cognitive activity; rather it is believed to be a complex mental production which requires "careful thought, discipline and concentration" (Grami, 2010: 9). Al Fadda (2012) conducted research and found out that the main challenges English Second Language (ESL) learners encounter are differentiating between written and spoken words and phrases, reviewing grammar including subject-verb agreement and joining sentences

together to make a coherent paragraph. Generating ideas about their topics could be also a barrier that hinders learners to move on in their writing (Al Murshidi, 2014). Another concern is to read and then to write in their own words. This could lead to grammar mistakes which may make learners reluctant to paraphrase and summarize other's work (Amin & Alamin, 2012); instead, they just copy and paste.

Furthermore, Farooq (2012) notes that grammar is the most difficult area for second language writers where learners face challenges in the use of correct sentence structure and paragraph development, and in creating coherent texts. Grammar skills include run-on sentences, use of different types of sentences, subject verb agreement, placement of modifiers, tense agreement and parallel construction. Grammar is more than just a set of rules; it is an ever-evolving structure of language. For instance, learners may know how to build sentences, but when applying them in written expression they face difficulties. The root of these problems is the traditional style of teaching grammar on the part of teachers and the lack of practice on the part of learners (Kleisar, 2005).

Another problem learners face in second language writing is that of organization of ideas. Producing a coherent and well-organised piece of writing is a challenging task. This is magnified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English texts such as the structure, organisation, lexis and grammar differ from those of other languages (Ahmed, 2010).

Darus and Subramanian (2009) investigated the types of errors made by four Malay learners in their L2 written work. The results of the study showed that the errors committed were basically grammatical. The learners also had relatively weak vocabulary and they committed errors in applying sentence structure rules in English language. They concluded that the learners had problems in acquiring grammatical rules in English language. From the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers ought to teach their learners on the mastery of various grammatical rules of L2.

2.8.2. Problems with vocabulary

Vocabulary is an important aspect in language skills as suggested by Nation as cited in Mehring (2005). Vocabulary related difficulties are generally; learners failing to recall on important words to use, failing to use the appropriate words and poor vocabulary. More importantly, knowing words generally means knowing their meanings, basic forms (Shejbalová, 2006) and their distribution (Lado, 1955) which often results to a confusion for learners at different occasions.

The lack of adequate vocabulary which leads to strained expression in second language writing is also contributing significantly to the challenges that learners face in learning second language writing skills (Ouma, 2005). In addition, Rabab'ah (2003) points out that learners often lack adequate vocabulary when engaged in second language writing. As a result, they find it challenging to express their ideas freely and accurately in second language writing. These difficulties can be addressed by encouraging wide reading among learners to improve their vocabulary level. Richards (2008) notes that learning to write in either first or second language is one of the most difficult tasks learners encounter and one that few people can be said to fully master.

2.8.3. Problems with spelling and punctuation

Spelling and punctuation are two commonly shared writing difficulties among learners. Learning to spell words correctly is expected to take place in the earliest stages of language teaching, yet it is not always the case for spelling may become difficult in some instances. Writing difficulties of relevance to spelling mainly include the misspelling of words which are a result of the irregularities of the English spelling system (Banacha, 2013). This related to the similarities of vowels, for instance, that can be decoded in different spelling. Additionally, Banacha (2003) further explained that spelling mistakes may occur when learners are less concentrated due to tiredness or carelessness about the correctness of words.

On the other hand, punctuation presents an obstacle in writing. Carroll and Wilson (1993) illustrate three problems linked to punctuation. The first is that punctuation rules are not totally exact, punctuation is complex, and it depends on one's style to determine the meaning. The way a learner punctuates writing can change the meaning completely, because each punctuation mark is a distinctive way of interpreting the meaning. Therefore, learners need to pay attention to the way they punctuate, which is in most cases a problem for them.

In investigating the low achievement in creative composition writing, Abaya (2006) carried out a study on the analysis of lexical errors in the written English compositions of standard eight pupils in Rigoma division, Nyamira district, Kenya. The findings revealed that the lexical errors learners made in their written compositions included: confusion of synonyms, inappropriate collocation, incomplete sentence structures, first language interference and coinage. From the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers need to expose learners to a variety of reading texts as sources of exposing them to new vocabulary items and sentence structures.

From the forgoing, it is evident that second language learners often face various difficulties in learning L2 writing skills. The difficulties are partly attributed to teaching methods used, learning strategies, L1 interference, limited vocabulary and inadequate mastery of grammatical structures of L2.

2.8.4 Language transfer

Language transfer is another cognitive factor that influences second language writing. Ellis (2003) notes that when writing or speaking in a second language situation, second language learners tend to rely on their first language or mother tongue structures to provide responses. If the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in second language, thus, indicating an interference of first language or mother tongue on second language

writing. Similarly, Cook (2001) points out that first language or mother tongue interference has important implications in the learning of a second language expression. This is because first language or mother tongue learning is different from that of second language. First language helps learners when it has common elements with second language but hinders the learning process when both language systems differ. Language is an enormous challenge to produce a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing in one's second language.

Manian (2010) investigated the influence of L1 grammar on L2 writing of Tamil secondary school learners from Malaysia. The findings indicated that learners constructed sentences with errors because of the differences of grammatical rules between their Malay (L1) and English. It was recommended that learners need to understand the differences between the two languages. Such measure would decrease the occurrence of errors. This is because learners tended to refer to their L1 whenever they faced difficulties in L2 writing.

In addition, Muriungi (2013) carried out a study on the influence of L1 on the acquisition of English language skills among secondary school learners in Imenti South District, Kenya. The study established that L1 influenced the acquisition of English language skills among secondary school learners. Since L1 is a challenge to the acquisition of English language skills among learners, it was recommended that teachers should develop a school language policy to limit the use of L1 among learners.

2.8.5 Social factors

Negari, (2011) asserts that writing in a second language seems to be the most difficult skill for language learners to acquire in the academic context. Myles (2002) argues that various social and cognitive factors help in assessing the underlying reasons why English second language learners exhibit writing errors. According to Myles (2002), social factors that influence English second additional writing include motivation and attitudes. Social factors explain why learners differ in the rate of second language learning and in proficiency type, for instance, conversational versus writing ability.

Furthermore, learners with positive attitudes and motivation towards writing for academic purposes experience success unlike those with negative attitudes. Myles (2002) suggests that in order for teachers to motivate learners in writing for academic purposes, they should encourage learners to read academic texts and work with other learners who are more acquainted with the discourse. However, if they do not engage in the text or actively contribute during the study sessions, these activities will have little effect or no effect at all on learners' progress. Thus, if learners are motivated to write in English first additional language, they will develop a higher level of proficiency and positive attitudes, which can have a positive effect on their writing.

In addition, Jarvis (2005) states that to motivate learners in English second language writing, teachers should write positive comments on learners' exercise books and verbally reinforce good language responses as part of their instructions. Sometimes, teachers can display exemplary learners' work on school notice boards. The aim is to help build learners' self-esteem and morale towards English first additional language writing. Furthermore, to improve motivation teachers can provide rewards for achievement to learners.

Koross (2012) researched on the use of oral language approaches in developing writing skills in English language among learners in Rift Valley secondary schools in Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that problems found in schools were associated with learners' attitudes, teachers' methodology of teaching, inadequate instructional materials and inability of learners to express themselves orally. This hindered development of competence in writing among learners. From the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers should be innovative in teaching oral skills by using classroom interactive activities such as debate, discussions, storytelling, dialogues, role plays and speech (oral presentation) in order to develop learners' writing competence.

2.9. Producing a piece of writing

Heaton cited in Damayanti (2009) describes four basic skills that has to do with writing proficiency. He points at the grammatical features which refers to the ability to write grammatically correct sentences, stylistic skills which indicate the ability to control and manipulate the sentences effectively, mechanical skill that applies to the skill clear, fluent, and effective communication of ideas of mastering the use of punctuation and spelling. Finally, Heaton concludes with the judgement skill as the ability to write appropriately with proper selection of relevant information.

2.10 Expert writer vs. novice writers

Writing among learners widely differs, for in every skill there exist a number of features by which we distinguish between expert and novice writers. Flower and Hayes (1981) found that writers of different skill levels employ different approaches to writing. Expert writers have shown a good response to factors such as rhetorical problem and tend to start their writing by focusing on the problem and purpose of writing to help the readers later on. Another feature is that expert writers take much time to revise their ideas before writing (Torrance as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003).

On the other hand, novice writers are concerned primarily with basic conventions of writing such as the number of pages (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Moreover, Singleton-Jackson (2003) indicates that novice writers have a tendency to write like they talk, not recognising the error in this approach, which leaves the reader with a sense of confusion and incomprehension. Unlike expert writers, novice writers put less effort in the writing process resulting in a slow progress while making many efforts and engage in writing with less planning (Singleton- Jackson, 2003).

2.11 Error analysis of learners' writing

Errors and mistakes are part of learners' writing as they progress in learning to write. Hadler as cited in Bahri & Sugeng (2010) argue that errors give the writer evidence of difficulty which learners have problem in practicing writing, although they do not provide them with all the possible evidence, nor are they to be taken as the only proof. To

conclude, error analysis is one way by which teachers are able to measure the learners' difficulties in writing and build on them a particular remedy to improve their writing instruction in the future. More importantly, errors are advantageous for both learners and teachers for they offer clear insights of the areas of difficulties not only related to learners, but also connected with teachers (Sawalmeh, 2013).

2.12 Provision of feedback on learners' written essays

Kroll (2003) points out that feedback on ESL learners' written assignments is an essential aspect of improving learner's ability in any L2 writing course. Thus, the goal of feedback is to teach skills that will help learners to improve their writing proficiency to the point where they recognise what is expected of them as writers. He further observes that learners should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate feedback themselves in order for it to be more effective. Similarly, Myles (2002) notes that feedback is of utmost importance to the writing process without which individual attention and sufficient feedback on errors, improvement will not take place. In addition, it is the teacher's responsibility to help learners to develop strategies for self-correction and regulation.

Nthiga (2010) carried out research on second language writing pedagogy: teachers' feedback practices in Kenya secondary school classrooms. The findings indicated that error feedback plus teacher written comments were the most commonly used feedback provision methods. In addition, the teachers' feedback was largely in form of directives generally highlighting weaknesses in the learners' written compositions which is likely to affect learners' confidence in L2 writing. It was recommended that there is need for better preparation of teachers with regard to provision of feedback on learners' written compositions. From the foregoing, it is noted that feedback on learners' written essays plays a key role in energizing the learning process among learners. It is also evident that methods of teacher feedback on learners' written assignments influence the developing of their writing skills. In view of this, it was imperative to establish whether teachers provide feedback on learners' written essays and its influence on effective learning of L2 essay writing skills among learners.

2.13 Use of teaching and learning resources

According to Omulando (2009) resources are valuable tools of enhancing teaching and learning in language learning situation. Lack of sufficient instructional resources limit teachers from adequately facilitating instructional process with particular reference to their use of appropriate language teaching methods and enhancing learners' use of language learning strategies. Similarly, Minae (2004) notes that teaching and learning resources facilitate and motivate learners to learn. Therefore, teachers should make teaching and learning resources an integral part of their instructional practices. According to the Secondary School English Language Syllabus (2002), teaching and learning resources for writing skills include: audio-visual resources such as video tapes, printed materials which include class readers and literature set books and other resources such as pictures which can be used to generate ideas for writing.

In addition, Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) point out that audio-visual materials such as tapes, pictures and diagrams should be used to make learners aware of the content of writing. They further note that good writing materials should be learner-centred rather than teacher-centred. They should also focus on helping learners to develop their own strategies for learning. Resources should allow learners to be creative and provide stimulating activities that focus learners' attention on the writing skill to be learnt. They should be task-based, that is, they should use purposeful tasks to motivate learners' learning and make them see the usefulness of writing.

A study by Ouma (2005) on achievement motivation in English composition writing among secondary school learners, showed that learners from schools with adequate teaching and learning resources were motivated to achieve in composition writing, unlike those from schools which were not adequately equipped with teaching and learning resources. This, therefore, shows that teaching and learning resources have a bearing on learners' motivation and achievement in L2 composition writing. It is in light of this, that the study established whether teaching and learning resources influence learners' learning of L2 essay writing skills.

2.14 Social constructivism

Constructivism theory is based on the idea that people construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world through experiences and reflecting on those experiences (Giesen, 2008). The theory views learning as a process whereby learners learn through social engagement and active participation (Christie, 2005). Furthermore, social constructivism helps learners with problem solving skills (Christie, 2005). This theory, if employed, would help address learners' writing challenges by engaging learners in writing activities so that they can fully participate to develop confidence and mastery over the skill.

Moreover, the teacher plays a facilitative role in a constructivist classroom wherein learners construct their own knowledge. According to Ndon (2011), the teacher in a constructivist classroom provides a conducive environment in which learners learn freely, collaboratively using authentic materials. The role of the teacher in the social constructivist classroom would be to help learners build their knowledge of essay writing by allowing them to work in groups, take control of their own learning and guide them where necessary. Learners would gain more knowledge of the skill through social interactions. The teacher plays a part of providing guidance and direction while learners are solving problems (Cole & Wertsch, 2002; Ozer, 2004).

The constructivism theory discourages traditional teaching methods while putting emphasis on learner centredness where learners construct their own knowledge using their past experiences (Meltem, 2007). Therefore, using the social constructivist concepts would be best in explaining how learners can overcome the challenges they experience in essay writing. When learners learn collaboratively, they are able to share experiences and improve in their learning. The following principles of constructivism can be employed in trying to address learners' challenges of essay writing: Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), scaffolding, more knowledgeable others (MKO) and social interaction.

ZPD refers to the gap between the knowledge learners possess and the knowledge they receive from others as they socially interact (Raymond, 2000; Warschauer, 2005). Brynes (2005) and Schwieter (2010) describe the ZPD as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. It is also described as the distance between what learners can achieve by themselves and when assisted by others through scaffolding of interactions (Raymond, 2000 & Warschauer, 2005). Similarly, Perry (2002) describes the ZPD as the difference between the problem solving that the child is capable of performing independently and the problem solving, he or she is capable of performing under guidance or collaboration.

Under the ZPD principle, there are two development levels namely, actual development and potential development. Actual development occurs when the learner is able to solve a problem independently while potential development occurs when a learner is able to solve a problem under guidance or assistance (Lee, 2007). In ZPD, the facilitator provides support to learners if the tasks are more challenging. As learners develop competence, the teacher starts fading or provides less support (Benson, 2004). This, as a result, would enable learners to develop the essay writing skills step by step, and it will also help them reflect on their writing, thus developing mastery over the skill.

The second principle of constructivism is scaffolding. Scaffolding refers to the method whereby the learner works with more capable peers to perform tasks (Culatta, 2011). It involves the breaking down of tasks into smaller subtasks. The teacher or more capable peers may provide assistance to the learners with necessary steps of essay writing in trying to scaffold their learning. The teacher may provide more support only if a learner faces challenges with writing steps or any other aspect of writing such as vocabulary, grammar, spelling, use of idioms, rhetorical devices and idea development of writing (McPherson, 2013). Furthermore, the teacher may provide instructions in steps, so learners comprehend and tackle the activities step by step and supervise or monitor learners as they complete the activities under instruction. Moreover, the teacher may employ Guided Writing by allowing learners to work in peers and work independently

when they develop mastery of the writing skill. This would make learners to develop confidence and feel interested in completing written activities. Furthermore, the facilitator needs to scaffold the activities into smaller subtasks. For example, when teaching essay writing, the teacher may allow the learners to master how to gather information first, write the introduction, followed by body and then conclusion while at the same time focusing on other aspects of writing.

The third principle of constructivism is the principle of MKO. MKO is someone who has a better knowledge or someone who is more capable than the learner (McPherson, 2013). MKOs may be other learners, books and teachers through which learners can gain knowledge of essay writing. It is therefore of vital importance to expose learners to authentic materials so they could gain more knowledge of the skill.

Furthermore, the fourth principle is social interaction. Social constructivism explains that knowledge construction occurs when learners share their experiences as they interact with one another. In addition, within the Vygotskian concept of ZPD, social interaction is the basis for cognitive growth (Clark, D'Angelo, & Touchman, 2009). It is suggested by De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) that, in order for intellectual growth to occur, a certain degree of social interaction and collaboration must occur between the novice writer and expert and must take place within the novice learner's ZPD. Thus, for learners to develop their thinking abilities in academic writing and overcome challenges, they should interact with the MKO (Kim, 2001; Raymond, 2000).

2.15 CONCLUSION

Writing skill is of paramount importance to the cognitive development of learners. According to Alexander (2008), strong writing skills may enhance learners' chances for success. It is therefore of vital importance that teachers take the writing skill seriously since it plays an important role to the learners' lives, not only academically but also professionally. The challenges learners face in writing need to be taken into careful consideration so that learners are able to write effectively and meaningfully. Moreover,

educators need to take into account the methods or approaches they apply when teaching the writing skill. Furthermore, learners need to be exposed to different types of writing to master the writing skill and other related language features.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is based on research methodology that guided the study. It outlines the research paradigm, research approach, data collection tools and data collection procedures, data analysis tools and data analysis procedures, quality criteria, ethical considerations and significance of the study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The study is premised under the interpretivism paradigm. According to Myers (2009), interpretivists' researchers access reality through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. Interpretive paradigm allows researchers to have a view of the world through the perceptions and experiences of participants. The researcher adopted this paradigm to explore the challenges learners experience in essay writing and use those experiences to interpret and construct her understanding from gathered data.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH (METHODOLOGY)

The qualitative research method was employed to gain full insights about the problems learners experience when writing essays. Qualitative research is a holistic approach that involves discovery (Holloway, 2005). Creswell, (2003) defines qualitative research as an effective model that occurs in a natural setting, which enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from being highly involved in the actual experiences. According to Myers (2009), qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people, and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Furthermore, Creswell (2003) states that qualitative research can help the researcher to gain an understanding of how the participants feel and their perceptions about a particular subject. The researcher employed this method to develop a level of detail regarding learners' experiences about the challenges they face when writing essays. Qualitative data sources include observation and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews and questionnaires, documents and texts, and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Myers, 2009).

3.3.1 Research design

A Case Study design was employed in this study whereby EFAL teachers and learners served as cases. Gillham (2000a) defines a case study as an investigation to answer specific research questions which seek a range of different evidence from the case settings. Furthermore, Yin (2003) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a case study examines a bounded system or a case over time in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. All the collected evidence are collated to arrive at the best possible responses to the research question(s). As a result, the researcher may gain a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research. The researcher used the case study design to obtain

first-hand information directly from the participants about the challenges experienced by learners in essay writing.

3.3.2 Population and sampling

Yount (2006) defines population as a complete set of elements, e.g., persons or objects sharing similar characteristics. On other hand, De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2002) stipulate that a population consists of all participants you want to study. The population of the study comprised of schools under Kgakotlou Circuit, consisting of 13 secondary schools of which Mothimako Secondary School was the focus with four EFAL educators. Nine Grade 12 EFAL learners were sampled. The researcher administered an essay to all Grade 12 EFAL learners and then sampled 3 Highest Achievers, 3 Moderate Achievers and 3 Lowest Achievers. The researcher sampled Grade 12 learners because they are on their exit level or final grade of high school, thus having the need to improve on their writing skills to prepare themselves for tertiary education and/or professional field. Furthermore, the researcher administered open-ended questionnaires to the EFAL teachers to dig out their perceptions in relation to challenging matters on teaching essay writing.

Furthermore, sampling is the process of selecting a group of subjects for the study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they are selected (Yount, 2006). Sampling is used to find objects or people that are best suited for the research (White, 2005). Participants are selected because they are likely to generate valuable data for the study (Brikci, 2007). The method of purposive sampling was used to develop the sample of the research under discussion. According to this non-probability method, sample members are chosen on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedman, Pisani & Purves, 2007). The researcher used purposive sampling as the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable the researcher to achieve the objectives.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Three data collection instruments were used to collect data namely, document analysis, open-ended questionnaires and observation.

3.4.1 Document analysis

Document analysis was used as data collection instrument whereby essays were administered to learners and a rubric was used to assess the essays. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). Analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed (Bowen, 2009).

3.4.2 Open-ended questionnaires

Open-ended questionnaires were used to get teachers' views about the challenges learners experience when writing essays. Open-ended questions are questions that do not provide participants with a predetermined set of answer choices, instead, they allow the participants to provide responses in their own words. Open-ended questions are often used in qualitative research methods and exploratory studies. Qualitative studies that utilize open-ended questions allow researchers to take a holistic and comprehensive look at the issues being studied because open-ended responses permit respondents to provide more options and opinions, giving the data more diversity (Mike, 2017).

3.4.3 Observation

Observation provides ways to check nonverbal expression of feelings; determine who interacts with whom; grasp how teachers communicate with learners; and check the amount of time spent on writing activities during lesson delivery in the classroom

(Kawulich 2005). Evaluation Research Team (2008) argues that observation is a way of collecting data by watching behaviour, events or noting physical characteristics in their natural setting such as a classroom in the school. The researcher directly observed EFAL teachers and learners during writing lessons from the classroom thus evaluating the efficacy of the lesson. Observation helped in the construction of a picture of what transpired during the classroom practices (Henn, Weinstein & Foard 2006). Moreover, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) indicate that observation provides good insights into how different teachers are behaving and interacting during lessons. It enabled the researcher to gain insights of what was transpiring in the learning and teaching environment.

Furthermore, observation was also used to collect data on the effectiveness of the lesson looking at classroom interaction and methods employed by teachers when teaching writing. These helped the researcher to gain insights into the kinds of methods teachers implement when teaching essay writing, and the effects such methods have on learners' writing. Writing strategies help learners to develop and formulate abstract ideas as well as use proper tools to successfully complete a written discourse (Lan, Hung & Hsu, 2011).

The study was conducted through non-participant observation. As a non-participant, the researcher as the observer participated indirectly in writing lessons. Abbott (2009) states that non-participant observers need to be physically present with research participants in the same study setting, but do not take part within the processes. Being non-participant observer allowed the researcher not to disturb and distract classroom interactions between the teacher and learners. It gave the researcher a chance to easily record in writing information and gain full knowledge of what is taking place in the setting (Ostrower, 1998). Therefore, the researcher entered EFAL classrooms to observe events, activities, content, classroom interactions, resources used, preparations and teaching methods and styles, with the aim of gaining a direct understanding of the way EFAL teachers are teaching writing skills (Liu & Maitlis, 2013). The researcher personally observed one lesson from each class in relation to writing.

The researcher was guided by questions such as:

- How do EFAL teachers manage the classrooms during the lesson delivery?
- How is lesson planning important to EFAL teachers?
- What teaching methods does the teacher employ?
- Do the teaching methods help learners of various proficiencies in English improve or not?
- Which language does the teacher use when giving instruction?
- Is the lesson teacher or learner centred?
- Are learners familiar with the writing stage?
- Is the classroom conducive for learning?
- Are teaching and learning resources sufficient?
- To what extent the classroom environment and size affect learners' writing?

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis involves categorising data with the intention of interpreting it so that it makes sense (Schwandt, 2007). The researcher employed Thematic Content Analysis in analysing the data. The necessity of Thematic Analysis is to classify data into themes or patterns as it minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail. According to Moore and McCabe (2005), this is the type of research whereby data gathered are categorised in themes and sub-themes to be comparable. The main advantage of Content Analysis is that it helps in data collected being reduced and simplified, while at the same time producing results that may then be measured using quantitative techniques. Furthermore, Content Analysis gives the ability to researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives (Krippendorff & Bock, 2008).

The essays were analysed first and marked out of 50, looking at the theme of content and planning, wherein the researcher assessed the relevance of the responses as well as the organisation of ideas (with regard to introduction, body and conclusion) and the awareness of audience, purpose and context for 30 marks. Furthermore, the language, style and editing skill was assessed by looking at the tone; register; style; appropriateness of vocabulary to purpose and context; word choice; language use and conventions; punctuation; grammar; and spelling. These was assessed out of 15 marks. Lastly, the researcher checked the structure of the essay whereby features of the text were looked into, namely: paragraph development as well as sentence construction. This was marked out of 5.

Moreover, open-ended questionnaire data was analysed using Thematic Content Analysis method. The researcher used theme coding, in which key themes were assigned through reviewing each response using a coding system. Furthermore, observation data was analysed under the Thematic Content whereby the researcher was taking notes which were later classified into themes. The researcher looked at the theme of classroom interaction: the interaction between the teacher and learners and the interaction between peers; the approaches and strategies teachers implement when teaching essay writing skills and their effectiveness; classroom environment and teaching and learning resources.

3.6 QUALITY CRITERIA

The researcher ensured rigour in the study. This was done by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These aspects help in insuring accuracy and consistency in a study (Bitsch, 2005).

3.6.1 Credibility

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2002) and Macnee and McCabe (2008), credibility refers to the truthfulness and sureness of the study's results. Furthermore, credibility ensures that the gathered data are interpreted appropriately and not made-up in any

way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). The study adapted to credibility to validate the confidence of the results. To consider credibility, participants were identified and described accurately by the researcher (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

3.6.2. Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent at which the study results can be confirmed or verified by other researchers (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Confirmability deals with establishing that data and interpretations of the research findings are not fabrications of the inquirer's imagination but are clearly derived from the data.

3.6.3. Dependability

Dependability is described as the constancy of the research results over a period of time. Participants assess the research results, analysis of the results and commendations of the study in confirming that they correspond with the data obtained (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Dependability guarantees that the findings can be repeated in a similar situation thus obtaining consistent results. The study ensured dependability by validating that the study's discoveries are congruous with the raw data gathered.

3.6.4 Transferability

Transferability is described as a way in which the study's findings can be applied to other situations or settings with other participants (Bitsch, 2005). The study ensured transferability by means of producing evidence that the results of the study could be applied to other contexts. The researcher established in-depth descriptions of the context where data were collected by providing the school profile, learner profile, description of where the observation took place, the background of the school and

setting so the reader is able to get a clear picture of the context and clearly link the research findings with the setting thus being able to make transferability judgements.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.7.1 Confidentiality

Confidentiality was adhered to in this study. All data collected was coded in order to protect the participants' identity. When reporting research findings, pseudonyms were used instead of their real names. The anonymity of research participants as well as their school was catered for.

3.7.2 Potential risks and discomforts

The personal boundaries of the participants were not overstepped. Participants were made aware that there were no anticipated risks/ harm to their participation.

3.7.3 Participation and withdrawal

Participants were made aware that participation is voluntarily, and they may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. No respondents were forced to participate or to answer questions if they felt uncomfortable with answering them. Throughout the research process, participants' dignity was recognised and respected. The research feedback was discussed with all the research participants to make show that they know the research outcome.

3.7.4 Consent

Permission to conduct research at school was sought from the Limpopo Department of Basic Education. The other permission necessary was obtained from the school principal. Also, Ethical Clearance was sought from the Turfloop Research Ethics Committee. Additionally, Consent Forms were given to both teachers and learners to request permission to partake in the study.

3.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Writing is one of the most important skills in studying English because not only is writing an academic skill, but it is also an important skill that translates into many career fields. The significance of the study will reflect greatly on EFAL teachers considering the writing skill as an important tool in academic performance. Teachers will find this study useful in exploring learners' major difficulties in writing. This study may help teachers significantly in the implementation of instruction and general classroom pedagogy of writing. Hopefully, the study might identify possible causes of writing difficulties among EFAL learners, in particular, and content. Finally, it might suggest possible strategies to minimize and/or curb the writing difficulties experienced by EFAL learners.

CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, the researcher analysed the results gained from the research. The open-ended questionnaires consisted of 13 questions related to the teachers' views about the writing problems learners encounter and were analysed thematically. The researcher used theme coding, in which key themes were assigned through reviewing each response using a coding system. Furthermore, observation data were analysed under the Thematic Content whereby the researcher was taking notes which were later classified into themes. Moreover, the essays were analysed according to themes and a

rubric was used as a marking tool to assess the essays and the findings were discussed.

4.2 DATA PRESENTATION

Data were presented and discussed under the themes that emerged from document analysis, questionnaires and observations. The researcher discussed the process of data presentation and discussion by first sharing the profiles of schools and teachers where those data were sourced. In this section, the generated data were presented and discussed in terms of the literature review and the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter two.

4.2.1 The school profile

The location of the school sampled for this study is in the rural areas. The school is classified as a quantile 3 school, it is a none-fee paying school. It has poor infrastructure, some of the classrooms have potholes with a shortage of desks. Some of the teachers use the library as a staffroom since there is a shortage of staff rooms. The library does not serve as a storage for books as there is a shortage of books. The school has 11 classes which accommodate more than 700 learners. There were no teaching aids such as charts or pictures displayed in the classrooms only classroom rules and class lists were displayed. Learners in the class shared pencils, pens, glue stick, rulers and many other stationeries that were important for everyday classroom activities in all schools. Since it is a non-paying fee school, learners are expected to buy sheets of paper (typex) every year. The learners were profiled according to their abilities, where class A had highest achievers, class B had moderate achievers and class C had lowest achievers. This was done to motivate learners so they could work hard to be in class A. Learners are profiled every term according to their performance. The school has one social worker. The learners benefit from the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

4.2.2 Teacher profile

There were 24 teachers at the school. Only six educators teach EFAL. 3 educators had honours degrees in Language Education, 1 educator had a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD), and 2 educators possessed a four-year teaching degree majoring in English. With regard to experience, only 1 educator had over ten years' experience teaching EFAL. The other educators had less than 5-year teaching experience. All the teachers were ranked as PL1 educators. The Head of department (HOD) did not have English as a major subject, but she majored in Sepedi and does not teach EFAL.

Sampled educator's profile

Teacher	Gender	Qualification	Home language	Subject taught	Teaching experience
A	F	STD	Sepedi	English	11
B	M	BED SPF & honours degree	Xitsonga	English and Geography	4
C	M	BED SPF	Sepedi	English and Sepedi	3

Teacher A, taught highest achievers in class A, teacher B taught moderate achievers in Class B and teacher C taught lowest achievers in class C.

4.2.3 Learners' biographical information

Learner	Gender	Age	Home language	Writing proficiency
A	F	18	Sepedi	Good
B	F	18	Sepedi	Good
C	M	20	Sepedi	Good
D	M	19	Sepedi	Average
E	F	18	Sepedi	Average
F	M	19	Sepedi	Average

G	F	18	Sepedi	Poor
H	F	18	Sepedi	Poor
I	M	19	Sepedi	Poor

Nine (9) learners were sampled for the study, 5 were female learners and 4 were male learners. They all speak Sepedi as a home language.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF THE DOCUMENTS (ESSAYS)

The essays were analysed according to the common problems found in the learners' writing. The problems were then grouped into the following themes: Capitalisation and punctuation, generating ideas prior to writing, spelling, organisation of structure, relevancy of ideas and vocabulary problem.

4.3.1 Capitalisation and punctuation problem

The researcher discovered from the results that the most frequent errors were made in capitalisation, whereby majority of learners did not know how to use capital letters appropriately. For instance, one learner wrote, "Even though it is though as long as it is right it fine. do not do what is easy because what come easy leave easy as well."

Furthermore, the study also revealed punctuation problem whereby frequent errors were made regarding comma, full stop, semicolon, quotation, hyphen, apostrophe, question mark and colon. The learners' essays were poorly punctuated. The participants misplace the above-mentioned punctuation marks, and some do not make use of punctuation marks at all in their writing. Moreover, some of the participants' essays revealed poor sentence construction whereby most constructed sentences consisted of more than five lines without using a comma or semi-colon. This may be because they have poor background knowledge of EFAL. The review of literature shows that the long-term result of poor writing skills among young learners is that they leave primary school with low literacy levels, and face ongoing problems in secondary schools, as evidenced by the poor matric results (UNESCO, 2010).

4.3.2 Generating ideas prior to writing

The research results revealed that majority of learners do plan their work prior to writing but most of the generated ideas are irrelevant, as they have made largely irrelevant responses as some of the content knowledge do not align with the topic. This is evidenced where one learner responded to the topic, “saving for the future must start at an early age” by stating “negative thing to does not save the future at a young age it that the person will not have that future. okay he/she can have it but not exacity on they dream or exacity that the person wanted. most children does not become to the career that they wanted to because they did’nt save it and become serious on their future.” This simply means that they do not analyse the topic before writing, they simply write ideas randomly without giving themselves time to think about the topic or gather ideas before they could compose a piece of writing, they write for the sake of completion and submission.

Furthermore, some of the ideas evident from their plan (mind map) do not appear on the main essay. This may be due to the fact that they generate ideas in their mother tongue and find it difficult to put them appropriately in EFAL. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that they do not know the importance of generating ideas prior to writing, they just plan because they have been instructed to.

The review of literature clearly shows that first language or mother tongue interference has important implications in the learning of a second language expression (Cook, 2001). This is because first language or mother tongue learning is different from that of second language. First language helps learners when it has common elements with second language but hinders the learning process when both language systems differ. When learners are given essay assignments to write, they find it difficult to generate ideas about what they can write. Failure to generate ideas prior to writing hinders learners from completing the essays successfully and as a result, they wait for submission dates and submit only the first draft of their writing (Al Murshidi, 2014).

4.3.3 Spelling problem

Majority of learners face a challenge of writing the correct spelling of words. The poor spelling then hampers with the contents of the essays whereby one does not get the meaning of the content as evidenced by one respondent who wrote, “you need to work very hard to do what is right and always doting that you not going to regrets about.” From the extracted sentence, the spelling hampers with the meaning of the text. This then results to unclear communication in the learner’s writing. Tangpermpoon (2008) confirms that many learners were never required to learn proper spelling or grammar. These learners come to think that English and writing are nothing but tiring spelling and grammar.

Poor spelling is evident from one of the extracts where the learner wrote “I go striant to the police station.” Furthermore, poor spelling causes anxiety for learners in learning writing skill and this is supported by Nyang’au Benard (2014). The learners have the habit to spell according to their pronunciation and this will lead to wrong spelling as mentioned by Afrin (2016). The learners will either add or leave letters of the words and some write incomprehensible language. Having good ability in spelling will lead to positive learning of writing skill. If the learners are struggling with spelling, it will hold them back to move forward. Review of literature suggests that memorisation of the spelling will help the learners to have good spelling (Nyang’au Benard, 2014).

4.3.5 Organisation of structure

The researcher discovered that most of the essays have inconsistently coherent responses, unclear ideas, as they tend to be disconnected. Most of the learners are unable to organise their ideas coherently into introduction, body and conclusion. They have shown illogical development of details. Furthermore, the results revealed that most learners have a problem of linking their ideas to make their arguments flow smoothly.

Some of the sentences and paragraphs are faulty; this shows that learners have a problem in structuring their work.

One main cause of this strain is the fact that learners must translate the language structures from their first language to the second language and this is difficult for most learners. Ahmed (2010) points out that producing a coherent and well-organised piece of writing is a challenging task. This is magnified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English texts such as the structure, lexis, organisation, or grammar differ from those of other languages.

Another challenge is that some learners find it difficult to adopt the structure of an academic essay. They cannot divide their written academic essay assignments into introduction, body and conclusion with clear paragraphs. Instead, they just continue writing in a non-academic writing style where the main components are not demarcated by the writer and just traced by the reader or marker (Mutwarasibo, 2011). Lastly, apart from dividing the texts into the three major divisions of the typical academic essay, learners find it challenging to shape the introduction to their essays, as well as the body and conclusion. For example, some learners cannot distinguish what to write in the conclusion and they still bring in new ideas there. Furthermore, some learners are not conversant with the processes of writing and given the time constraints, they fail to complete all the writing processes thereof. Traditionally, writing has been conducted and viewed as a solitary activity, focusing primarily on the final product and emphasising sentence-level correctness (Crème, & Lea, 2008). For instance, learners are given writing tasks to complete within an hour which does not reflect the process approach at all because if practised, it would not be efficient to complete within such a limited time (Neville, as cited in Mbirimi, 2012).

4.3.6 Relevancy of ideas

The results have revealed that learners have a problem of using irrelevant ideas. One of the learners' responses from the topic "saving for the future should start at an early age"

was “saving for the future is when you do things by passion It start when you are young to see how your future or career would be like. when you want to study or do something important you have to manage first.” Most of the ideas written do not align with the topic. They have shown vagueness and repetition.

“Saving for the future must start at a young age are agree with this because it help the children to see the wrong thing and the right thing just because the person know what he/she want in love and also want he/she futured need he/she to do get future or dream.”

Again, the results show confused and unfocused ideas. The language used is incomprehensible in some of the essays. The tone, register and style are less appropriate to purpose, audience, and context. Difficulties of supporting their ideas or topics have been shown. This may be an indication that learners were not prepared enough for the written task. Engstrom (2008) claims that students may be unprepared because of lack of English language competency. Review of literature suggests that learners need more practice in written activities (Jurecic, 2006).

4.3.7 Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the fundamental element in constructing sentences which is the core of effective writing skills (Asep, 2014). The researcher discovered that majority of learners have limited vocabulary. They have shown very basic use of language. One of the responses from the topic “saving for the future should start at an early age” was, “It is good to focus on what important thefore you can make things right. It start by studing your books and to do other things that it right and that lead you to success. If you want to do something that It right you don’t have to listen to other people because you know what it right and you know what it good to yourself.” To some learners, vocabulary limitations are so extreme which make comprehension impossible. Ouma (2005)

confirms that the lack of adequate vocabulary leads to strained expression in second language writing.

Misbah, Mohamad, Yunus, and Yaâcob, (2017) claimed that the lack of vocabulary has caused the learners to face challenges in acquiring writing skills. Learners almost use spoken and written words every single day to communicate their ideas, beliefs and feelings with people around them. Furthermore, good vocabulary repertoire can help learners to speak or write their thoughts. Usage of electronic dictionary and more reading activities can help learners with limited vocabulary.

4.3.8 Grammar

The study results have revealed that most of the learners have limited knowledge in grammar. Most learners make mistakes in subject verb agreement, tenses, prepositions, pronouns and mostly they find it difficult to structure their work. For instance, one learner wrote “I cell my father told her that my brother was arrested for driving your car with driving licence.” From the above extract, it is clear that learners face challenges with regard to grammar. According to Pineteh (2012), learners’ sentences are often shortened and complicated because they still grapple with grammatical aspects, such as subject-verb agreement, tenses, spelling and how to join sentences to make a coherent paragraph. These weaknesses recur because learners misconstrue academic writing as a product and not a process, meaning they do not revise and edit their texts after writing (Al Fadda, 2012). The review of literature suggests that teachers should help learners be aware of their errors and be able to correct them as this will help them to be less dependent on teachers (Shin, 2006).

4.3.9 Language, style and editing

The study revealed that learners do not take into account the tone, style and register when composing their writing. For example, when they are supposed to use formal language, they simply do not take that into account and use informal language. For

instance, one learner wrote “And he told me that he gonna arrested him and the car.” Furthermore, the essays also revealed that they do not edit their texts before submission, they consider essay writing as a product and not a process. The errors committed showed that they did not edit their work. The results highlight that learners need to be taken through the process approach to writing so they can produce coherent pieces of writing. Review of literature stresses that process approach focuses on varied classroom activities which promote the development of language use: brainstorming, group discussion and rewriting (Kroll, 2001). Kroll, (2001) further explains that learners are not expected to produce and submit complete responses to their writing without going through stages of drafting and receiving feedback followed by revision.

4.3.10 First language (L1) interference

The study revealed that learners find it difficult to translate ideas to the target language as they construct them on their mother tongue. This is confirmed by Ellis (2003) by arguing that when writing or speaking in a second language situation, second language learners tend to rely on their first language or mother tongue structures to provide responses. If the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in second language, thus, indicating an interference of first language or mother tongue on second language writing.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRES

The open-ended questionnaires had 13 questions. 3 grade 12 educations participated in the study. The responses were coded into themes that emerged from the questions and responses.

4.4.1 Writing levels of learners

Teacher A and teacher B described most learners writing proficiencies as average while teacher C described his learners writing level as below average. This could be due to

the fact that learners at the school have been profiled and placed to classes according to their learning abilities.

4.4.2 Time allocation for class activities

Teacher A

Teaching class as a whole	59%
Working with individual learners or small groups	24%
Administrative duties	11%
Maintaining discipline	2%
Other duties	4%

Teacher B

Teaching class as a whole	55%
Working with individual learners or small groups	26%
Administrative duties	13%
Maintaining discipline	4%
Other duties	2%

Teacher C

Teaching class as a whole	60%
Working with individual learners or small groups	20%
Administrative duties	8%
Maintaining discipline	8%
Other duties	4%

It was observed from the responses that teachers spend most of their weekly time with teaching the class as a whole. Learners are not given enough individual attention. This may be due to teaching large classes and the need to cover the curriculum within the allocated time. Leki (2001) supports the argument that overcrowded classrooms create problems for effective development of writing skills.

Furthermore, teachers spend most of the time doing admin work. Time for administrative work needs to be allocated on the timetable so that teachers do not spend their teaching time doing administrative work. It was further noted that teachers deal with discipline in their classrooms instead of teaching and this takes away their teaching time.

4.4.3 Time allocation for writing activities

All the participants give written activities every day. This allows learners to practice the skill and gain confidence in writing activities. It also helps them develop interest in the skill. However, giving learners a written activity such as an essay and expect them to submit the same day means that they will not undergo the process writing but rather the product approach to writing. The process approach to writing allows for scaffolding to take place while learners move on with the activity step by step. Teachers need to afford learners enough time to go through the process writing if they are to develop the skill especially in essay writing. For example, a teacher may give learners a topic, allow them to brainstorm ideas, research on the topic, write their first draft and edit. For these steps to be completed successfully, enough time needs to be afforded to both the teacher and learners. Review of literature suggests scaffolding as a writing approach so as to produce competent, versatile writers (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

4.4.4. Approaches to teaching writing

Teacher A teaches the writing skill mostly through modelled writing and group work. “I allow my learners to work in groups when completing written tasks so they could share ideas, I also show them examples of written activities and allow them to correct each other’s work.”

Teacher B teaches the skill by applying various teaching methods. “I apply demonstrative and group work when teaching my learners written activities. I go through with them with writing activities.”

Teacher C “I apply group work and peer teaching method when teaching the writing skill, but it becomes difficult to apply group work because it is time consuming.”

It was observed from the responses that most teachers apply group work when teaching writing. This allows learners to share knowledge and gain confidence. Some learners are afraid of teachers, so they tend to be shy and not get actively involved in the lesson, but when they work with their peers, they become actively engaged.

Review of literature indicates that class discussions can be fruitful as long as everyone is involved (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Therefore, there is a need to instil a culture of peer teaching and group work where learners get to share ideas.

4.4.5 Use of resources in teaching writing

All sampled teachers use the following resources: dictionaries, novel (my children my Africa), anthology of short stories, spot on English First Additional Language textbook. They mentioned that the teaching resources provided by the Department of Education (DoE) were not enough. As a result, learners were expected to buy their own dictionaries and they share textbooks.

The researcher discovered that the school does not have enough Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) particularly textbooks. Teachers complained that some learners do not return textbooks especially when they leave the school thus leading to a shortage. Learners are expected to buy sheets of papers so that they can copy contents from the textbooks. This method of photocopying only benefits those who can afford thus leaving others behind. This problem escalated when the government declared a state of national disaster which required citizens to keep distance from one another so they could not spread covid-19 virus thus making it difficult for learners to share textbooks.

Foster (2015) supports the idea that the lack of exposure to books and reading materials poses writing difficulties to high school learners. According to Fareed, Ashraf, and Bilal (2016), many learners find it very challenging to get enough and significant source of information. Lack of extensive reading contributes to poor sentence or paragraph construction by learners. This is because reading and writing are interrelated. If the learners are not reading books or other reading materials, they are going to have lack of ideas and vocabulary to write. Their brain neurons will be connected to each other to come out with a good piece of writing if they read more and connecting the ideas with their prior knowledge.

4.4.6 Difficulty in learning writing

Teacher A stated that her learners enjoy taking writing activities especially creative writing even though they face some challenges with the skill, but they enjoy writing.

Teacher B stated that some of his learners enjoy taking writing activities, but some do not as the level of writing varies greatly among them.

Teacher C expressed that most of his learners do not enjoy writing. They view writing as a strenuous exercise; therefore, it becomes hard for them to complete written activities. They write for the sake of submitting.

4.4.7 Problems experienced by learners in writing

Teacher A stated that her learners face a number of challenges. They face both academic and social challenges which affects their performance. Language problems observed are punctuation, concord, organisation and structure, coherence and cohesion, spelling. Some of the social problems they face includes late coming, coming to class tired, peer pressure and lack of motivation.

Teacher B “Grammar is a huge problem experienced by my learners. They make a lot of mistakes which hamper the meaning of the written work. Some learners do not have dictionaries and textbooks and they have to wait for those who have to lend them.” This disadvantages learners as they would have limited time to complete written tasks.

Teacher C “Most learners have poor vocabulary, spelling problem, and sentence and paragraph structure. They have a bad attitude towards the subject. They believe that language is easier compared to other subjects and they do not give it enough attention consequently resulting to poor performance.” The teacher also explained that learners in his class have difficulties in reading. Some learners are underprepared and are playful.

From the responses, it was discovered that attitude plays a huge role in learner performance. Learners with bad attitude tend to perform poorly. It was further noted that the major problem experienced by learners is grammar.

4.4.8 Aspects of grammar that affect learners’ writing

All the sampled teachers mentioned the below aspects of grammar as the most dominant problems in learners’ writing: subject-verb agreement, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structure, cohesion and coherence, and spelling.

4.4.9 Methods employed by teachers to teach writing and how they enhance the writing skill

Teacher A applies group work, peer teaching and modelled writing. She alluded that group work allows her learners to share knowledge of the writing skill and modelling helps them to learn other aspects of the skill.

Teacher B applies group work and demonstrative method. He stated that group work is the most effective method in his classroom as he mixes average learners with highest achievers to exchange ideas.

Teacher C applies groupwork and demonstrative method. “It is difficult to implement different methods in my class as most learners lack discipline and they vary greatly with language proficiency.”

Teachers complained that they have different learners with different learning levels, and they have to cater for them simultaneously. This poses a challenge to them as they have limited allocated time and they, therefore, cannot accommodate all the learners’

needs concurrently. Asep (2014) supports the idea that it is difficult for teachers to cater for all the learners' learning needs at once. Different levels of writing ability will require teachers to use different approaches. As a result, teachers find it challenging to plan their lessons and prepare suitable activities that would cater for all the learners.

Furthermore, most of the parents are not co-operative especially when educators identify learners with special needs and refer them to special schools. Parents are in denial and as a result, they refuse that their children be referred to special schools, and this too contributes to poor performance as teachers find it difficult to cater for all the needs of the learners at once given the limited time they have. The review of literature advises that parents should take their learners to schools that best suit their needs (Klinger, Hoover & Baca, 2008).

4.4.10 Attention given to learners during writing lessons

Teacher A stated that her learners get full individual attention sometimes as it is difficult to move around the classroom since it is overcrowded. "I do not give learners enough individual attention because I teach the whole class in most cases and there are many learners in my class. I sometimes insource teachers who are teaching lower grades to assist in offering extra-lessons."

Teacher B expressed that he gives learners individual attention when he offers Saturday classes. "I am supposed to cover the content for the whole year by June so we could do revision for trial and end of year examinations."

Teacher C expressed that his learners do not get individual attention all the time due to time constraints. "We are expected to submit curriculum coverage tools every week; therefore, it becomes difficult to give learners individual attention."

From the responses, it was observed that teachers are unable to give learners individual attention in the writing skill as they must focus on other skills as well and due to limited time allocated. Teachers are expected to cover the curriculum within a short space of time and as a result, they are unable to help learners individually.

4.4.11 Motivation

Teacher A: “most of my learners are motivated to learn, they portray some enthusiasm towards their schoolwork.”

Teacher B: stated that some of the learners portray interest in their schoolwork but majority lack the motivation to learn. They feel pressured as they must work more than they did in their previous grades. “Learners who are gifted remain for afternoon lessons but those who really need assistance do not.”

Teacher C: stated that most of his learners lacked motivation to learn. He explained that due to the profiling done at the school, learners lack confidence, they believe that they are not smart and slow since they were placed in the least performing class and as a result, they developed a bad attitude towards learning. The teacher also expressed that the school hires a motivational speaker every term to motivate the learners. This is done to develop interest in learners and help improve performance.

From the responses, the researcher discovered that the lack of motivation is a huge challenge faced by the learners. The teachers complained that most of the learners lack the motivation to learn. They further mentioned that learners complain that they are given a lot of work to complete which is something they were not doing from the lower grades hence they find it difficult to handle the pressure presented to them. If learners are not motivated, they lose interest in learning.

Teachers find it difficult to motivate learners nowadays because learners have the perception that they can do as they please and they are unenthusiastic to learning and the claim is supported by Asep (2014). Similarly, Abrar (2016) states that a sign of lack of motivation is portrayed when learners are reluctant in learning.

According to Gbollie and Keamu (2017), motivation is a crucial aspect of learning improvement. Teachers should adopt a positive reward system in trying to develop interest in learners. In this way, they will be motivated to learn and love the subject. Positive reward does not mean buying expensive items, verbal expression could also be used to motivate learners.

4.4.12 Teaching and learning conditions

All the sampled participants described the teaching and learning conditions as bad. The classrooms were described as not conducive to learning as they had shaky desks, potholes, old buildings, lack of LTSM (Charts, broken chalkboards etc.), classrooms did not have lighting. “The learners do not have enough desks; they have to sit in pairs in a single desk.” This shows lack of leadership and irresponsibility of the government to the South African learners’ education. This claim is supported by Chokwe (2013) who stresses that the learners’ writing reflect a dysfunctional education system. This ascribes to the lack of quality leadership.

4.4.13 Time allocated for writing

Teacher A “I believe the time allocated for writing activities according to CAPS is sufficient, but the challenge comes when we are expected to cover the curriculum within a short space of time.”

Teacher B expressed that the only time he gets to teach the skill extensively is when he offers extra-lessons.

Teacher C alluded that the time allocated is not enough since he teaches learners with different capabilities mostly learners who are slow, or below average learners and most parents do not help learners with home activities. Most parents are not involved in their children’s education.

From the responses, the researcher discovered that parents do not support their children with learning activities. They believe that it is the responsibility of the educator to make sure that the learners succeed in their educational journey. Parents are required to sign the learners’ books every day but only few parents do sign. This is a sign that they do not check their children’s books. Furthermore, when parents’ meetings are called, only few parents attend, and this makes teachers to have a difficult time to help and motivate the learners. Gündoğmuş (2018) believes that learners who do not experience affection and love from their parents tend to perform poorly in their activities.

In contrast, some parents are involved in their children's academic journey but since they are illiterate, they do not understand the activities given to the learners and as a result, they are unable to give support where they could (Chokwe, 2011). Moreover, some parents are working and as a result they do not have enough time to support and guide their children with schoolwork. Some illiterate parents do not see the need to buy books and newspapers for their kids to read. Consequently, because of this kind of upbringing, learners tend to behave the same way (Bharuthram & McKenna, 2006; Dison & Granville, 2009; Leibowitz 2000; Mbirimi 2012; Mpepo 2009; Schwartz 2004; Tshotsho 2012).

4.5 OBSERVATION DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher provides presentation and discussion of themes emerging from observation data.

4.5.1 Inadequate reading input and comprehension skills

The researcher observed that most learners are not engaged in reading activities. Teacher A try by all means to engage her learners in reading activities. Teacher B only allows one learner to read an instruction while others are silent. This, therefore, discourages learners to read in class as those who can read are the only ones given the opportunity to read. Teacher C reads the instructions for learners as some of them complain that they cannot read. Failing to read makes learners not to acquire enough input and as a result, they have limited vocabulary.

The researcher observed that learners cannot read on their own and they do not comprehend what they have read. Furthermore, they also face difficulties in following instructions given. Learners face difficulties in writing because they cannot read extensively thus experiencing difficulties in applying the language skills in their writing. Review of literature suggests that learners need to read extensively in order to gain knowledge of writing. According to Yagoda (2006), extensive reading is the only way that could enable learners to learn language structures such as punctuation, concord,

tenses, vocabulary, and other elements of writing. Learners, who read much, may become skilled writers because they benefit from what they have read more than those who do not read much.

4.5.2 Feedback

The researcher observed that the teachers take time to provide feedback of written activities especially essays. This discourages learners to undertake writing activities. Teacher A and B mark class activities and informal tasks with learners. This allows them finish up more quickly with learners being able to point out their own mistakes. On the other hand, teacher C marks informal tasks on his own. This helps him to identify learners' misconceptions himself so he could offer learners with expanded opportunities, but he takes time to provide his learners with feedback. The lack of constructive feedback makes learners to commit the same mistakes. Can (2009) claims that conflicting feedback provided by instructors from different departments in an institution also leads to a lack of learners' confidence in their writing skills. It is therefore important to show learners their strengths and weaknesses so they could improve in their writing.

4.5.3 Infrastructure

Most of the classrooms in the school are dilapidated with a shortage of desks. Most learners come to class late as they must look for desks before lessons commence. Some of the desks are wobbly, thus making learners uncomfortable while learning and they find it difficult to concentrate during lessons.

Furthermore, the teachers complained that the library does not have enough books and the learners do not visit it as most of the books are old. Some teachers use the library as a staffroom since the school does not have enough infrastructure. This poses a great challenge not only to language teachers but also to all the educators as learners fail to conduct research; they only rely on the internet to gather information which is not

possible to the underprivileged. The community does not have a library as well where learners could visit to gather information. The researcher observed that the socio-economic background of learners also contributes to the academic challenges learners face.

4.5.4 Learning and teaching strategies

From teacher A and teacher B's classroom, the researcher observed that the teacher engages her learners. Learners were actively participating. From teacher C's classroom, the researcher observed that the lesson was more teacher centred than learner centred. Most of the learners were passive. Only few gifted learners were active in class, engaging with the teacher using the language of instruction (EFAL). Most learners were using Sepedi language. Some learners were laughing at learners who were attempting to respond in the language of instruction.

Moreover, the teachers revealed that the use of grouping method seems to be effective in teaching writing but time consuming. In this regard, the review of literature addressed the issue by suggesting group work or group discussion method as necessary in learning and teaching thus making learners achieve reading and writing (Alzu'bi, 2012).

4.5.5 Classroom arrangement

Classroom management is the ability to control a classroom ensuring that lessons run effectively without any disruptive behaviour (Hester 2013). Many teachers have to deal with unruly, disruptive learners in their classrooms when conducting lessons and this affects teaching and learning. The researcher observed that the teachers portrayed good classroom management as they were able to control the learners, ensuring that lessons run smoothly. Classroom rules were displayed on the walls.

4.5.6 Lesson planning

The researcher observed that teachers plan and prepare for their lessons. All participant educators had lesson plans in their files. This indicates that they prepare lessons before

lesson delivery. Objectives were clearly stated and aligning with the assessment and activities.

4.5.7 Classroom interaction

Classroom interaction was observed where the researcher looked at the interaction between the teacher and the learners and the interaction between learners. From teacher A and B's classroom, it was observed that the learners were actively involved and were using the language of instruction even though some were interacting using their home language while in teacher C's classroom, learners were passive and 80% of the time they were engaging in their home language. The lesson was more teacher centred than learner centred. Most learners were unable to express themselves in the target language.

Littlejohn (1983) stated that when learners are involved in a lesson, they shift away teacher centredness, creating conducive learning environment and developing interests in learning. Lewis, (2013) stated that learners need to tackle reading and writing tasks in groups for them to enjoy and value learning. The researcher believes that little learner involvement may have been caused by the fears brought about by covid-19. Most of the learners seemed passive and not understanding what is really going on. Some of them were afraid to ask questions even though they did not understand the instruction. The language often used in the classroom is the learners' home language (Sepedi). The educator tried by all means to use the language of instruction but some of them did not comprehend at all, they seemed lost.

The researcher observed that teachers sometimes ignore the fact that all learners need to be involved in the lesson. Teachers tend to overlook an element of learners who have a habit of experiencing learning problems during lesson presentation (Kannan, 2009). Learners who are gifted tend to participate more while those who are not become passive.

From teacher C's classroom, the learners seemed not ready and prepared for the lesson. This was portrayed by not paying attention. Learners' readiness is another challenge in learning writing, and this is supported by Foster (2015). According to

Winarso (2016), in order to complete a task successfully, readiness is very important. The readiness can either be physical readiness and mental preparedness. If this is not occurring, learners will be having challenges in writing. Learners will not be mentally prepared to learn in the classroom if they are not ready. It is very important for the learners to be ready before they enter the classroom for successful teaching and learning.

4.5.8 Lack of interest

The researcher observed that many learners lack interest in writing activities. They see writing activities as strenuous especially essay writing as they have to undergo a lengthy process which poses a stress to them. Learners are expected to produce a good piece of writing which requires them to master all aspects of grammar such as punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, sentence and paragraph structure. Anyiendah (2017) supports the idea that the lack of learners' interest is a great challenge which affects learners' writing. According to Foster (2015), motivating and attracting the learners' attention can help learners' readiness in learning writing.

4.5.9 Low language proficiency

The researcher observed that most learners are not proficient in the target language. They use their mother tongue in the classroom more frequently than the second language. Furthermore, all the learners use their mother tongue during intervals outside the classroom. This, as a result, does not give them enough time to practice the target language. Javid and Umer (2014) assert that limited opportunities to practice the target language outside the classroom contributes greatly to weak academic writing. Furthermore, Pineteh (2012) supports the idea that low proficiency in the language of instruction has a negative impact on the learners hence they struggle to cope with the literacy expectations.

4.5.10 Lack of practice

The researcher observed that most learners do not practice the skill, they only rely on classroom activities provided by the educator. This may be due to lack of motivation and

poor vocabulary. The researcher also observed that learners lack confidence in speaking the target language as some learners laugh at them when they attempt to speak the language. This makes them not to have the confidence to practice the language outside the classroom as well as in the classroom. Teachers should not only teach the aspects of writing, but they should also give learners enough time to practice the skill. Moreover, teachers fail to give learners more writing activities because they teach large classes and this becomes difficult for them to assess the activities and provide feedback (Chokwe, 2011; Pineteh, 2012).

4.6 CONCLUSION

The findings of the study confirm that most of the learners' experience challenges with writing. This argues well for the need to help learners better equip themselves with writing skills to develop competency in the skill. Furthermore, the findings also confirmed that majority of learners do not have study materials to help them during writing lessons. Therefore, support in terms of authentic materials needs to be provided to aid the learners to develop competency in writing.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research. The discussion of the results incorporates the findings from document analysis, observation, and open-ended questionnaires. The findings are discussed in relation to the literature reviewed. In addition, recommendations resulting from the backing of gathered findings and the review of literature will also be drawn to help EFAL teachers, Head of Departments (HODs) and their Curriculum Advisors (CAs) to inculcate writing in a way that poor performance will be addressed.

The main research question:

- What are the challenges experienced by Grade 12 learners in essay writing?

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

- Which writing approaches or strategies do learners use in learning essay writing?
- Which writing methods do teachers use when teaching writing skills and how are they enhancing the writing skill?

The table below represents the summary of key findings based on the key themes for the study.

Table 5.1: Summary of key findings based on the key themes

Categories	Sub-categories
1. Lesson challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of writing skills• Poor time management• Lack of attention

2. Language challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive use of home language in the classroom • Poor use of language of instruction • Poor interaction • First language interference • Challenges with grammar
3. Methods/ strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few active learners • Difficulty in implementing various strategies in one lesson for different learners (differentiation methods)
4. Learner Teacher Support Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of LTSM • Lack of authentic materials
5. Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor infrastructure • Lack of desks • Old building • Lack of library
6. EFAL and CAPS gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to Adhere to time allocation for writing activities

5.2 Summary of the key identified findings for the study

- Discovery of writing challenges such as grammar, vocabulary, poor spelling, cohesion, and coherence
- Lack of Learner teacher support material (LTSM)
- Lack of motivation and interest
- Teaching methods and classroom interaction
- Lack of parental support
- Poor infrastructure
- The influence of home language to writing
- A gap between senior phase and FET phase
- CAPS and time allocation for writing activities

- Lack of practice
- Feedback

5.2.1 Discovery of writing challenges such as grammar, vocabulary, poor spelling, cohesion, and coherence

Through studying the documents, the researcher discovered that the learners have a serious problem with grammar. Grammar is the most important part of language; however, learners make a lot of mistakes in their essays. Thus, grammar limitation affects the ability of using EFAL appropriately in the classroom. The learners make a lot of mistakes such as spelling, punctuation, generating ideas prior to writing, structuring their essay. They have limited vocabulary and other language problems and as a result, they write for the sake of submission and not follow all the writing processes as they should to produce a good piece of writing. These findings are supported by the literature that learners write short and complicated sentences because they struggle with grammar problems such as spelling, proper use of punctuation marks, concord, tenses, sentence and paragraph construction (Pineteh, 2012; Yagoda, 2006).

5.2.2 Learner teacher support material (LTSM)

The data gained from observation and teacher questionnaire revealed that the school lacks resources for efficient teaching and learning. It was observed that the school and the community does not have a library where learners could conduct research and for extensive reading. Al Murshidi (2014) argues that through extensive reading, learners are able to familiarize themselves with various learning styles, structure and other elements of different genres.

Furthermore, it is also evident that the lack of study materials poses a great challenge to the development of writing abilities of learners. The Constitution (South Africa, 1996), and the South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996) state that all South African learners should have access to the same quality of learning and teaching, similar

facilities and equal educational opportunities. However, this is not yet the case as many schools are still struggling to get sufficient proper resources, especially rural schools. Many of the rural communities encounter socio-economic problems such as unemployment, crime, and poverty which negatively affect the quality of education learners receive. Most learners in the rural communities cannot afford to buy study materials such as study guides or dictionaries since majority of the parents are unemployed. This again impacts negatively on the writing proficiency of the learners since they do not get the proper exposure to learning material. They only rely on the teacher as a source of knowledge to learn grammar and other language skills.

5.2.3 Lack of motivation and interest

It was observed that most of the learners were not interested in the lessons. They seemed bored and frustrated hence they were not actively engaged in the lesson. Wessels (2007), stated that learners portray frustrations when they are not involved in the lesson and when they do not comprehend what is being taught in the class.

5.2.4 Ineffective teaching methods

The teaching methods employed by the educators were not effective as they did not accommodate all the learners' needs. The teachers find it difficult to employ different methods in one lesson to accommodate the different learning needs of learners. The school has a social worker who helps in identifying learners with special needs and refer them to specialists, but parents believe that their children do not have special needs and that they belong to the mainstream class. This, therefore, largely contributes to the challenges experienced in writing. These findings are supported by literature that when educators implement differentiated instructional strategies, they are able to cater for the needs of all learners and assist achieve set learning objectives (Levy, 2008).

5.2.5 Lack of parental support

The researcher observed that most of the parents are not involved in their children's education. This was noted from the parents' poor meeting attendance. They believe that their children's education is the responsibility of the educator. Parents are required to support their children in terms of helping them with home activities, buying study materials and provide psychological support as well but this is not possible at the rural school.

According to Silinskas and Kikas (2019), parental involvement helps learners to improve their performance and provides motivation for them to learn. Furthermore, parental involvement has the ability to help teachers and parents build good relations thus helping parents to have a good perspective on teachers' duties and the curriculum (Epstein, 2018; Owen, 2016). Also, when parents are involved in their children's education, they are able to gain a deeper understanding of the learners' family cultures and diversity (Epstein, 2018). Curriculum planners need to workshop parents on how they should be involved in their children's education so as to improve performance. It should not only be the teacher's duty to encourage learners to learn but parents or guardians need to be involved as well.

5.2.6 Poor infrastructure

The researcher discovered that the school does not have enough infrastructure, there are potholes in the classrooms and the desks are insufficient. For learning to take place, the environment must be conducive, but it is not the case at the school. According to research conducted by Fisher (2000) on the effects of school infrastructure, good infrastructure such as proper buildings, good lighting, quality air and temperatures result to an improvement in academic success.

5.2.7 The influence of home language to writing

It was discovered from the observations and document analysis that learners struggle to use EFAL appropriately. Some learners fail to translate words from their home language to EFAL. Some of them write incorrect spelling or incorrect words and try to provide an explanation in brackets using their mother tongue (Sepedi). This is an indication that learners fail to put words translated from Sepedi to EFAL appropriately.

5.2.8 A gap between GET phase and FET phase

The researcher discovered that more attention is given to higher grades (Further Education and Training) especially grade 12 than the other phases. For example, grade 12 learners attend extra-classes whilst the General Education and Training phase (GET) grades do not. This creates a gap in terms of seriousness whereby teachers themselves do not give the lower phases enough attention and as a result, learners start taking their education serious when they are in grade 12 thus experiencing stress in such a way that do not cope with the pressure presented to them. Educators may fill the gap by giving the different phases enough attention, plan their lessons with enough activities. They need to balance their work and provide enough lessons for the learners. Focus should not only be put on the higher grades (FET) but on the lower grades as well (GET). The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 states that all learners in South African Schools should have access to the same quality of learning and teaching. If this is achieved, performance along all the phases would be improved.

5.2.9 CAPS and time allocation for writing activities

The researcher discovered from open-ended questionnaires and observations that teachers do not adhere to time allocated for writing activities. For grade 12, educators are expected to cover the curriculum by the month of May/June to prepare the learners for National June examinations and Trial examinations in September, and as a result, they disregard the time allocated for writing activities in trying to cover the curriculum within a short space of time. According to Department of Education (2011), writing and presenting is allocated 3 hours (35%) per two-week cycle.

5.2.10 Lack of practice

The researcher discovered from observation that there was 100% use of Sepedi home language outside the classroom with little use of the target language inside the classroom. This as a result contribute to the poor performance in writing activities. Learners find it difficult to interact in the target language because they come from a rural community where they speak Sepedi most of the time. So, it becomes difficult to use the target language at home since majority of the parents are not conversant with the language. Furthermore, when learners practice the language, they are able to gain more skills thus improving their confidence and their writing competence may improve as well. If teachers implement a policy which requires learners to use more of the language of teaching and learning in the classroom and outside the classroom, their second language skills may improve.

The researcher believes that the learners were not used to practicing the target language at primary level outside the classroom, and this resulted to poor academic background. Chokwe (2011) supports the idea that the learner poor academic background plays a huge role to learner poor performance and thus likely to continue to higher education. Furthermore, according to Constructivism theory that shapes the research, learners need to associate with the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in order to gain more knowledge of the writing skill. Moreover, it was noted that learners have little exposure to the target language especially since they depend on the teacher for almost everything. Khan, (2011) and Tahaine (2010) supports the idea that learners with little exposure to the target language have few opportunities to acquire the language including the learning of writing skills.

5.2.11 Feedback

The researcher discovered that feedback contributes greatly to the writing difficulties experienced by learners. It was observed that teachers take time to give feedback to learners especially when marking longer transactional texts and essays. This may be because teachers have more classes to teach and as a result, they take time to show learners their strengths and weaknesses. Archer, (2007) and Can (2007) claim that some teachers find providing feedback time consuming. Hedge (2000) believes that when instructors give feedback to learners, it might assist them in monitoring their own progress and identifying specific language areas that need to be improved. Weaver (2006) also found that tutors should provide appropriate guidance and motivation during feedback rather than just diagnose problems and justify marks.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Learners should be provided with conducive learning environments if they are to learn the writing skill. They need a classroom environment which is supportive for their active participation in which they can get individual attention from the teacher especially in aspects of the lessons where they are lacking. They need a class where they are at the centre and the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator and guide. This, therefore, means that educators need scaffold learners' writing so as to help them develop their writing competence.

Furthermore, learners also need sufficient study material to help them in their studies such as dictionaries, textbooks, study guides and other learning materials to better equip themselves with grammar, vocabulary and other aspects of the language so they could not depend on the teacher only but develop their own independency. Since majority of learners do not receive adequate support at home, it is important that educators play a role in finding strategies to help the learners to improve their academic writing skill, for instance, allocating extra time for writing lessons so that learners develop competency in writing.

Additionally, learners need to learn in groups to effectively equip themselves with the writing skills. Most of learners learn best by interacting with their peers than the teacher, so it is important that they share ideas based on their writing abilities and again be encouraged to correct or edit each other's work. Teachers should also encourage learners to read more often to gain vocabulary and other language aspects which they may later apply when writing their compositions. Moreover, educators need to put more emphasis on the process approach than on the product approach and again encourage learners to practice the skill on daily basis.

Teachers should focus on helping learners to become aware of how they write and determine the purpose of writing and also find ways to encourage them to write fluently, freely and appropriately. Learners should be made aware that writing is an important skill necessary for communication and for assessment. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that educators devise various activities to develop the writing competency of learners because they are being assessed based on how they write. Teachers need to cooperate and collaborate to help develop proficiency levels of the learners.

Furthermore, teachers should use a reflective approach to review and refine their teaching styles. This means they need to adopt a more learner centered approach where learners are active participants than a traditional one where the teacher dictates knowledge. Moreover, they should vary their teaching methods to accommodate the learners' different learning styles and must clarify to the learners what is expected about the subject, provide enough information and ideas to write about, give and adequate feedback. Learners with special needs should be identified and thus be given the support they need. Furthermore, the use of mother tongue when teaching EFAL should be minimized. Also, workshops for parents should be conducted on how they should be involved in their children's educational journey.

5.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In conclusion, the above study has examined the challenges faced by grade 12 learners in essay writing. Various data collection methods were used to obtain data from the participants and as a result, the study achieved its main aims and objectives.

REFERENCES

- Abaya, R.N. (2006). "*An analysis of lexical errors in the written English of standard eight pupils in Rigoma division, Nyamira district*", Kenya. Unpublished masters thesis. Maseno University.
- Abbott, D. (2009). *Participant Observation and Non-Participation Observation*. Available at: <http://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/blog/participant-and-non-observation-participant>. [Accessed: 10 May 2015].
- Abdulkareem, M. (2013). Investigation Study of Academic Writing Problems Faced by Arab Postgraduate Learners at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(9): 1552-1557.
- Abrar, M. (2016). Teaching English Problems: An Analysis of EFL Primary School Teachers in Kuala Tungkal. Birmingham, UK: The 16th Indonesian Scholars International Convention.
- Abrahams, R., Carrasquillo, A. & Kucer, S. (2004). *Beyond the beginnings: Literacy interventions for upper elementary English language learners*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Adas, D. & Bakir, A. (2013). Writing Difficulties and New Solutions. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(9): 254-266.

Afrin, S. (2016). *Writing Problems of Non-English Major Undergraduate Learners in Bangladesh: An Observation*. Department of English, Stamford University Bangladesh, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Ahmed, A. (2010). *Learners' problems with cohesion and coherence in EFL essay writing in Egypt: Different perspectives: Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ)*, 1: 219-221.

Al-Khasawneh, F. & Maher, S. (2010). Writing for academic purposes: Problems faced by Arab postgraduate learners of the College of Business, UUM. *ESP World*. 9123.

Al-Khairy, M. A. (2013). Saudi English-major undergraduates' academic writing problems:

A taif university perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 6(6), 1–12.

Alexander, M. (2008). *Good writing leads to good testing*. Retrieved from [Http://www.stickyminds.com/sitewide.asp?ObjectId=3391&Function=edetail&ObjectType=ART](http://www.stickyminds.com/sitewide.asp?ObjectId=3391&Function=edetail&ObjectType=ART) on March 26 2012.

Al Fadda, H. (2012). Difficulties in Academic Writing: From the perspective of King Saud University postgraduate learners. *English Language Teaching*, 5(3), 123-130.

Al Murshidi, G. (2014). UAE University Male Learners' Interests Impact on Reading and Writing Performance and Improvement. *English Language Teaching*, 7(9), 57-63.

Alzu'bi, M. (2012). *The Effect of Jigsaw Strategy on Reading Comprehension - ATEL*. Available From: <http://www.atel-lb.org>. [02 May 2015].

- Amin, S. & Alamin, A. (2012). Skills and Strategies Used in the Comprehension and Production of Academic Writing in Taif University. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 2(3): 135-139.
- Anyiendah, M.S. (2017). *Challenges Faced by Teachers When Teaching English in Public Primary Schools in Kenya*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2017.00013>.
- Aragon Jiménez, C.E., Baires Mira, D.C., & Rodriguez, G.S. (2013). *An Analysis of the Writing Skill Difficulties of the English Composition* (License). University of El Salvador.
- Archer, A. (2007). Critical Access to Higher Education: Challenges and Goals for South African Writing Centres. *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, 32(3).
- Asep, S. (2014). The Challenges in Teaching Writing Skill at Junior High School: Problems and Solutions.
- Badger, R. & White, G. (2000). A Process Genre Approach to Teaching Writing. *ELT Journal*, 54(2): 153-160.
- Bahri, S. & Sugeng, B. (2010). *Difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar of the second-year learners of SMPN 1 Selong East Lombok West Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009*.
- Bancha, W. (2013). What causes spelling errors of the Thai EFL learners? *ARECLS*, 10: 107-129.
- Benson, C. (2004). *The Importance of Mother Tongue-Based Schooling for Educational Quality*. Stockholm University: Centre for Research on Bilingualism.
- Bitsch, V. (2005). Qualitative Research: A Grounded Theory example and evaluation criteria. *Journal of Agribusiness*, 23(1): 75-91.

- Bharuthram, S. & McKenna, S. (2006). A writer-respondent intervention as a means of developing academic literacy. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11(4): 495-507.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Supporting a grounded theory with an audit trail: *An illustration. International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4), 305-316. doi:10.1080/13645570802156196.
- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A.L. & Cocking, R. R. (Eds). (2000). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School*. Washington, D.C: National Academy Press.
- Breakwell, G., Hammon, S., Five-Schaw, C., & Smith, J.A. (2007). *Research Methods In Psychology*, 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage publications.
- Brikci, N. (2007). *A Guide to Using Qualitative Research Methodology*. London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
- Browker, N. (2007). *Academic Writing: A Guide to Tertiary Level Writing*. Palmerston North: Massey University.
- Brynes, H. (2005). Toward a comprehensive conceptualization of teaching Assistance education: Contents, commitments, structures. In D. Tedick (Ed.), *Second Language Teacher Education* (pp. 135-156). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Byrne, D. (1991). *Teaching writing skills-longman handbooks of language teachers*. Long-man: London.
- Cambridge learner's dictionary (2007) Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Cape Town, Singapore. Cambridge University Press

- Can, G. (2009). *A model for doctoral learners' perceptions and attitudes toward written feedback for academic writing* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Utah State University.
- Carlino, P. (2011). *¿Qu nos dicen las investigaciones internacionales sobre escritura en la universidad? In Democratización de la Universidad: Investigaciones y experiencias sobre el acceso y la permanencia de los/las estudiantes.*
- Caroll, J. & Wilson, E. (1993). *Acts of teaching*. Englewood, Colo: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Centre for Evaluation and Assessment (2006). *PIRLS. The What, Where, When and How of the International Reading Literacy Study in South Africa*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Chokwe, M. J. (2011). *Academic writing in English Second Language contexts: perceptions and experiences*. Pretoria, South Africa: UNISA.
- Chokwe,M.J. (2013). Factors Impacting Academic Writing Skills of English Second Language Students. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. University of South Africa: MCSER Publishing.
- Chou, L. (2011). An Investigation of Taiwanese Doctoral Learners' Academic Writing at a U.S. University. *Higher Education Studies*, 1(2), 47-60. Neuquén, Argentina.
- Christie, A. (2005). *Constructivism and Its Implications for Educator PowerPoint Slides*.
- Crene, P. & Lea, M. R. (2008). *Writing at university: A guide for learners* (3rd Ed.). New York, NY: Open University Press.
- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Clark, D.B., D'Angelo, C. M. & Touchman, S. (2009). *Constructivism Overview*. Retrieved December 23, 2009. from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/constructivism>.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7th ed). New York: Routledge.
- Cole, M. & Wertsch, J. V. (2002). *Beyond the individual – Social antinomy in discussions of Piaget and Vygotsky*. Retrieved January 1, 2002, from <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~alock/virtual/colevyg.htm>.
- Cook, V. (2001). *Second language learning and language teaching* (3rd Ed.). London: Oxford University Press.
- Cooperstein, S. E. & Kocevar-Weidinger, E. (2004). Beyond active learning: a constructivist approach. *Reference Services Review*. 32 (2): 141-148.
- Culatta, R. (2011). *Conversation Theory*. Gordon Pask.
- Damayanti, Y. (2009). *Micro and Macro Skills of Writing Found in the Writing Exercises of the Bridge English Competence for SMP Grade VIII*.
- Dar, M. & Khan, I. (2015). Writing Anxiety among Public and Private Sectors Pakistani Undergraduate University Learners. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*, 10(1); 121-136.
- Darus, S. & Subramaniam, K. (2009). Error Analysis of the Written English Essays of Secondary Schools' Learners in Malaysia: A case study. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 8(3): 483-495.
- De Guerrero, M.C.G. & Villamil, O.S. (2000). Activating the ZPD: Mutual Scaffolding in L2 Peer Revision. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84: 51-68.

Department of Education (2011). *National Curriculum Statement Senior Phase Grades 7-9*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. (2002). *Research at Grass Roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*, 2nd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Dirgeyasa, W. (2015). *What and How to Assess a Genre-Based Writing*. Proceeding of 4th International Conference on Language Education. State University of Makassar South Sulawesi Indonesia.

Dison, L. & Granville, S. (2009). Making connections through reflection: Writing and feedback in an academic literacy programme. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 27(1): 53-63.

Donohue, L. (2009). *The write beginning*. Markham: Pembroke Publishers.

Department of Education (2007). *National Reading Strategy*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Ellis, R. (2003). *Task-based language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Engstrom, C.M. (2008). Curricular Learning Communities and Unprepared Students: How Faculty can Provide a Foundation for Success. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, No. 115, pp. 5-19.

Epstein, J. L. (2018). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Routledge.

Evaluation Research Team (2008). *Data collection methods for programme evaluation: Observation*. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/evaluation/index.htm>. [19 May 2015].

Fareed, M., Ashraf, A. & Bilal, M. (2016). ESL Learners Writing Skills: *Problems, Factors and Suggestions*. *Journal of Education & Social Sciences*, 4(2): 83â 94. <https://doi.org/10.20547/jess0421604201>.

Farooq, M. (2012). *Opinion of second language learners about writing difficulties in English language: A research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 27: 183-194.

Fisher, K. (2000). Building better outcomes. the impact of school infrastructure on student outcome and behaviour. *Schools' issues digest*, Department of education, training and youth affairs, Australian Government.

Flower, L. S. & Hayes, J. R. (1980). The dynamics of composing. Making plans and juggling constraints *Cognitive processes in writing*, edited by L. W. Gregg & E. R. Steinberg. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Freedman, D.A., Pisani, R. & Purves, R.A. (2007). *Statistics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Freeman, D. & Freeman, Y. (2004). *Essential Linguistics*. What You Need to Know to Teach Reading, ESL, Spelling, Phonics, and Grammar. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Foster, B. (2015). *Teaching Children with Reading and Writing in Regular schools*.

Gathumbi, A.W. & Masenbe, C.S. (2005). *Principles and techniques in language teaching*. A text for teacher educators, teachers and pre-service teachers. Nairobi. Jomo Kenyatta foundation.

- Gbollie, C. & Keamu, H. P. (2017). Learner Academic Performance: The Role of Motivation, Strategies, and Perceived Factors Hindering Liberian Junior and Senior High School Learners Learning. *Education Research International*, 2017, Article ID: 1789084. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/1789084>
- Ghabool, N., Edwina, M. & Kashef, H. S. (2012). Investigating malaysian ESL learners 'writing problems on conventions, punctuation, and language use at secondary level. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 2(3): 131-143.
- Giesen, J. (2008). *Constructivism: A Holistic Approach to Teaching and Learning*. Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center: Northern Illinois.
- Gillham, B. (2000) *Case Study Research Methods*. Continuum, London.
- Graham, S., Harris, K.R. & Mason, L. (2005). *Improving the Writing Performance, Knowledge and Self-efficacy of Struggling Young Writers: The Effects of Self-regulated Strategy Development*, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*.
- Graham, S. & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next*. Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools. A report of cornegeic corporation of New York, Washington D.C.
- Graham, S. & Sandmel, K. (2011). *The process writing Research approach: The Journal of Educational Research*, 104(6): 396-407.
- Grami, G. M. A. (2010). *The Effects of Integrating Peer Feedback into University-Level ESL Writing Curriculum: A Comparative Study in a Saudi Context* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Newcastle University Retrieved from <https://theses.ncl.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/10443/933/1/grami>.

Graneheim, U. & Lundman, B. (2004). Qualitative Content Analysis in Nursing Research: Concepts, procedures and measures to achieve trustworthiness. *Nurse Education Today*, 24(2): 105-112. doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2003.10.001.

Gündogmus, H. D. (2018). The Difficulties Experienced by Teachers in the Process of Primary Reading and Writing Instruction and Their Solution Offers for Eliminating These Difficulties. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 6: 333-339.

Haider, G. (2012). An Insight into Difficulties Faced by Pakistani Learner Writers: Implications for teaching of writing. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2(3): 17–27.

Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/003368820103200109>.

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. Harlow: Longman.

Harmer, J. (2008). How to teach english. *ELT journal*, 62 (3), 313–316.

Hartwell, P. (1985). Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar. *Acts of teaching. Englewood*, edited by J. Carroll & E. Wilson. Colo: Teacher Ideas Press, 205-207. <https://doi.org/10.2307/376562>.

Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Henn, M., Weinstein, M. & Foard, N. (2006). *A Short Introduction to Social Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Hester, T. (2013). *Tips for Classroom Management*. Available from: <http://www.edutopia.org/classroom-management>. [01 July 2015].

Holloway, I. & Wheeler, S. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Nursing*, (2nd ed.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Holloway, I. (2005). *Qualitative Methods in Health Care*. Maidenhead, Open University Press.

Hosseini, H. & Nasrin H (2012). *A Comparative Study of Product, Process, and Post-process.*, 3(4): 722-729.

Hosseini, (2013). *In the Importance of EFL Learners' Writing Skill. Journal of Language Teaching and writing Skill: Is there any Relation between Writing and content score test?* 3(4): 722-729.

Huwari, I.F. & Al-Khasawneh, F.M. (2013). The Reasons behind the Weaknesses of Writing in English among Pre-year Learners' at Taibah University. *English for Specific Purposes World*. 14(38): 1-9.

Hyland, K. (2002). *Teaching and researching writing*. Harlow: Longman.

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second Language Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jahin, J.H. & Idrees, M.W. (2012). EFL Major Learner Teachers' Writing Proficiency and Attitudes Towards Learning English, *Journal of Taibah University* 4 (1).

Javed, M., Juan, W. X. & Nazli, S. (2013). A study of learners' assessment in writing skills of the english language. *Online Submission* ,6(2): 129–144.

- Javid C. Z. & Umer, M. (2014). Saudi EFL learners' writing problems: A move towards solution. *Proceeding of the Global Summit on Education GSE 2014, 4-5 March 2014*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: WorldConferences.net.
- Jarvis, M. (2005). *The Psychology of effective Learning*. Cheltenham. Nelson Thornes.
- Jones, C. (1999). The learner from overseas and the British university: Finding a way to succeed. In J. Turner C. Jones & B. Street (Eds.), *Learners writing in the university: Cultural and epistemological issues* (pp. 17-36). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Jurecic, A. (2006). Is Teaching Writing Still Possible? New Jersey Writing Alliance, pp.1-13. <http://www2.bergen.edu/njwa/NJWA-2006-materials-jurecic.pdf> Accessed on 03 March 2011.
- Kannan, R. (2009). *Difficulties in Learning English as a Second Language*, ESP World. Available from: <http://www.espworld.info>. [02 January 2016].
- Kellogg, R. & Raulerson, B.A. (2008). Improving the Writing Skills of College Learners. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 14, 237-242. doi: 10.3758/BF03194058.
- Khan, I. A. (2011). Learning difficulties in English: Diagnosis and pedagogy in Saudi Arabia. *Educational Research*, 2(7), 1248-1257. Available at: <http://www.interestjournals.org/ER>.
- Khairy, M.A. (2013) Saudi English-Major Undergraduates' Academic Writing Problems: A Taif University Perspective. *English Language Teaching*, 6: 1-2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n6p1>.
- Kim, B. (2001). Social Constructivism. In M. Orey (Ed.). *Emerging Perspectives on Learning, Teaching and Technology*.

Kirby, D.L. & Crovitz, D. (2013). *Inside Out*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kleisar, G. (2005). *Common errors in English*. New Delhi. APH Publishing Corporation.

Klinger, J.K., Hoover, J.J. & Baca, L.M. (2008). *Why Do English Language Learners Struggle with Reading? Distinguishing language acquisition from learning disabilities*. California: Corwin Press.

Koross, B.T. (2012). The use of oral language approaches in developing writing skills in English language among Kalenjin secondary school learners in Rift Valley, Kenya. *Developing Country Studies*, 2 (10): 28-33.

Krippendorff, K. & Bock, M.A. (2008). *The Content Analysis Reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kroll, B. (2003). *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524810>

Lado, R. (1955). *Patterns of difficulty in vocabulary*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1955.tb00829.x>.

Lan, Y., Hung, C. & Hsu, H. (2011). Effects of Guided Writing Strategies on Learners' Writing Attitudes Based on Media Richness Theory. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 10(4): 148-164.

Langan, J. (2001) *College Writing Skills with Readings*. 5th Edition, McGraw-Hill Companies Inc., New York.

Lea, M.R. & Strierer, B. (2000). *Learners Writing in Higher Education: New Contexts*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Lee, K. (2007). Online collaborative case study learning. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 37(2): 82–100.
- Leibowitz, B. (2000). The importance of writing and teaching writing in the academy. In Leibowitz, B. & Mohamed, Y(Eds.). (2000). *Routes to Writing in Southern Africa*. Cape Town, South Africa: Silk Road International Publishers.
- Levy, J.S. (2008). Qualitative methods and cross-method dialogue in political science. *Comparative Political Studies* 40(2): 196-214.
- Lewis, J. (2013). *Help Kids Read, Write and Count*: Basic skills and quality of teaching have to be improved, *Sowetan* 19 November, p.13.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (2010). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Littlejohn, A. (1983). *Learner Choice in Language Study*. Available at: <http://www.andrewlittlejohn.com>. [Accessed: 13 June 2015].
- Liu F. & Maitlis, S. (2013). *Nonparticipant observation*, Sage Research Methods. Available from: <http://www.srmo.sagepub.com>. [19 May 2015].
- Luu, T.T. (2011). Teaching Writing through Genre-Based Approach. *BELT Journal. Porto Alegre*, 2(1): 121-136.
- Maclellan, E. (2004). How Reflective is the Academic Essay? *Studies in Higher Education*, 29(1): 75-89.

- MacMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in Education. A Conceptual Introduction*. 5th Edition, Longman, Boston.
- Macnee, L.C. & McCabe, S. (2008). *Understanding Nursing Research: Using research evidence-based practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Mahboob, A. & Talaat, M. (2008). *English Language Teachers and Teacher Education in Pakistan*. TESOL. Alexandria, USA.
- Mahboob, A. (2014). *Epilogue: Understanding language variation: Implications for eil pedagogy*. Springer, Switzerland.
- Manian, M. (2010). "The influence of first language grammar (l1) on the English language (l2) writing of Tamil school learners: A Case Study from Malaysia". Unpublished doctorate thesis. Malaysia University.
- Mansoor, S. (2005). *Language planning in higher education: A case study of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press Karachi.
- Marlina, R. & Giri, R. (2014). *The pedagogy of English as an international language. Perspectives from scholars, teachers, and learners (Vol. 1)*. Springer.
- Mbirimi, V. (2012). *Academic writing challenges faced by first year B.Ed. learners at a South African university*. The school of education. Faculty of Humanities. University of the Witwatersrand: Johannesburg.
- McGuire, L., Lay, K. & Peters, J. (2009). *Pedagogy of reflective writing in professional education. Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9(1): 93-107.

- McKay, T.H. (2011). *An Investigation into a Communicative Approach to English Language Teaching in Governmental and Nongovernmental Primary Schools in Bangladesh*. Master of Arts, Department of Linguistics. University of Utah.
- McPherson, K. (2013). *Pathway to Teaching and Studying*. Retrieved August 05, 2015, from <http://pathtoteaching.com/author/chupsy13/page/2/>.
- Mehring, J. G. (2005). *Developing vocabulary in Second Language Acquisition: from theories to the classroom*.
- Meltem, T. E. (2007). *Constructivist Approach to developing academic Writing skills*. DELSU: Atilim University.
- Minae, M.I. (2004). *Selection and utilization of instructional resources by teachers of English in selected schools in Murang'a District*. Unpublished Med Thesis. Nairobi: Kenyatta University.
- Mike, A. (2017). *The sage encyclopaedia of communication research method*. sage publications.
- Misbah, N.H., Mohamad, M., Yunus, M. M. & Yaâcob, A. (2017). Identifying the factors Contributing to Learners' Difficulties in the English Language Learning. *Creative Education*, 08(13), 1999â2008. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2017.813136>.
- Moore, D.S. & McCabe, G.P. (2005). *Introduction to the Practice of Statistics* (5th ed.). New York, NY: W.H. Freeman & Company.
- Mpepo, M.V. (2009). Some of the problems in the first-year learners' academic writing in some SADC universities. *Inkanyiso: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(1).

- Mukulu, E., Indangasi, H., Mwangi, P., Gecaga, C. & Okanga, N. (2006). *KCSE revision English*. Nairobi. Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Muriungi, P.K. (2013). The influence of mother tongue maintenance on acquisition of English language skills among day secondary school learners in Imenti South Sub County, Kenya. *International journal of linguistics*, 5: 21-27.
- Mutwarasibo, F. (2013). Promoting university learners' collaborative learning through instructor-guided writing groups. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 2(2): 13-21.
- Myers, M.D. (2009). *'Qualitative Research in Business and Management'*. Sage: London.
- Myles, J. (2002). *Second language writing and research. The writing process and error analysis in learner texts*. *Teaching English as a second or foreign language Journal*, 6(2): 1-19.
- Negari, G.M. (2011). *A study on strategy instruction EFL learners' writing*. *International journal of English linguistics*, 1(2): 299-307.
- Ndon, U. (2011). Hybrid-Context Instructional Model. *The Internet and the Classrooms: The Way Teachers Experience It*. USA. Information Age Publishing Inc.
- Nik, Y.A., Hamzah, A. & Rafidee, H. (2010). A Comparative Study on the Factors Affecting the Writing Performance among Bachelor Learners. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 1(1): 54–59.
- NSW Department of Education and Training. (2007). *Writing and spelling strategies*. Darlinghurst: NSW.

- Nthiga, P.M. (2010). “*The pedagogic process of writing in English as a second language (ESL) in Kenyan secondary schools*”. Unpublished doctorate thesis. Kenyatta University.
- Nunan, D. (2003). *Practical English Language Teaching*. International Edition, McGraw-Hill, Singapore, 88.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching and learning*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.
- Nyang’au Benard, N. (2014). Challenges Learners Face in Learning Essay Writing Skills in English Language in Secondary Schools in Manga District, Nyamira County, Kenya.
- Olson, J. & Platt, J. (2000). The Instructional Cycle. *Teaching children and adolescents with special needs* (pp. 170-197). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Omulando, C. (2009). *An Investigation into Language Learning Strategies in the Instruction of English in Secondary Schools in Kenyan an Evolutionary Perspective: A case study of Kakamega Central District*. Unpublished doctorate thesis. Moi University.
- Ostrower, F. (1998). Nonparticipant Observation as Introduction to Qualitative Research, *Teaching Sociology*, 26 (1): 57–61. American Sociology Association. Available from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1318680>. [Accessed: 20 May 2015].
- Ouma, N. (2005). *Relationship between Achievement Motivation and Performance in English Composition among Secondary School Learners in Nyando District, Kenya*. Unpublished Master’s thesis. Kenyatta University.

- Owen, A.N. (2016). Forming collaborative parent–teacher relationships to increase parental involvement *Independent Studies and Capstones*, 728. https://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/pacs_capstones/728.
- Owuondo, E.O. (2011). *Instructional Methods for Compositional Writing in French at Secondary School Level in Nairobi, Kenya*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Kenyatta University.
- Ozer, O. (2004). Constructivism in Piaget and Vygotsky. *The Fountain Magazine*. Issue 48 Oct- Dec 2004. Retrieved July 21, 2015 from <http://fountainmagazine.com>.
- Palpanadan, S., Bin Salam, A.R. & Bte Ismail, F. (2014). *Comparative Analysis of Process versus Product Approach of Teaching Writing in Malaysian Schools: Review of Literature*. DOI: 10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2014.22.06.21943.
- Parsons, J. & Beauchamp, L. (2012). *From Knowledge to Action: Shaping the Future of Curriculum Development in Alberta, Canada*.
- Perry, J.D. (2002). *Unit 5: Cognitive Development Theories*. Retrieved November 16, 2002 from <http://www.education.indiana.edu/~p540/webcourse/develop.html>.
- Pineteh, E. A. (2012). Using virtual interactions to enhance the teaching of communication skills to information technology learners. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 43 (1): 85-96.
- Quintero, L.M. (2008). Blogging: A way to foster EFL writing. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 10 (1): 7–49.
- Rabab'ah, G. (2003). Communicating problems facing Arab learners of English. *Journal of language and learning*, 3(1): 180-197.

Rahman, T. (2002). *Language, ideology and power* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press, United Kingdom.

Raja, R. & Zahid, B. (2013). *Enhancing Writing Skills: An Analytical Study of Obstacles in Writing at B.A. Level in Najran University, KSA.*

Ransdell, S., Levy, C.M. & Kellogg, R.T. (2003). The Structure of Writing Processes as Revealed by Secondary Task Demands. *L-1: Educational Studies in Language & Literature*, 2: 141–163.

Raymond, E. (2000). *Cognitive Characteristics: Learners with mild disabilities.* Needham Heights, MA, Allyn & Bacon. A Pearson Education Company.

Republic of South Africa. (1996a). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, Act 108 of 1996.

Republic of South Africa. (1996b). *South African Schools Act*, Act 84 of 1996.

Richards, J.C. & Renandya, W.A. (2003). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An anthology of current practice.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. (2008). *Second language teacher education today.* *RELC Journal*, 39: 158-177.

Rico, L.J.A. (2014). Identifying Factors Causing Difficulties to Productive Skills among Foreign Languages Learners. *Opening Writing Doors Journal*, 11 (1), 65–86.

Salem, M.S.A.S. (2007). *The Effect of Journal Writing on Written Performance, Writing Apprehension and Attitudes of Egyptian English Majors.* PhD Dissertation, Pennsylvania State University.

- Sawalmeh, M.H.M. (2013). *Error Analysis of Written English Essays: The case of Learners of the Preparatory Year Program in Saudi Arabia*.
- Schenk, K. & Williamson J. (2005). *Ethical approaches to gathering information from children and adolescents in international settings: Guidelines and resources*. Washington, DC: Population Council.
- Schwandt, T.A. (2007). *The Sage Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, Thousand Oaks, California: sage Publication, Inc.
- Schwieter, J.W. (2010). Developing Second Language writing through scaffolding in the ZPD: A magazine project for an authentic audience. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 7(10).
- Scott Rebecca dan Avery Simon (eds). (2001). *Writing with Style*. London: Pearson Education Limited.
- Shafie, L. A., Maesin, A., Osman, N., Nayan, S. & Mansor, M. (2010). Understanding collaborative academica writing among beginner university writers in Malaysia. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 1: 58-69.
- Shangarfan, N. & Mamipour, M. (2011). The Impact of Teaching Critical Thinking on Intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Skill. *American Journal of Scientific Research*, (40): 119-125.
- Shin, S.J. (2006). *Learning to teach writing through tutoring and journal writing*. Baltimore: Taylor and Francis.
- Shwartz, S. (2004). *Should young people delay college? A modest proposal*. *Phi Kappa Phi FORUM*, 84(4).
- Siddiqui, S. (2007). Rethinking education in Pakistan: Perceptions, practices, and possi-

- bilities. Paramount Publishing Enterprise, United States.
- Singleton-Jackson. (2003). *Writing proficiency among graduate learners in higher education programs*. PhD thesis. North Texas.
- Silinskas, G. & Kikas, E. (2019). Parental involvement in math homework: Links to children's performance and motivation. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 63(1), 17–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2017.1324901>. South African Schools Act 84 (1996). Retrieved from <http://www.info.gov.za/acts/1996/a84-96.pdf>.
- Sun, C. & Feng, G. (2009). Process Approach to Teaching Writing Applied in Different Teaching Models. *English Language Teaching*, 2(1): 150-155.
- Tahaineh, Y. S. (2010). *Arab EFL university learners' errors in the use of prepositions*. *MJAL*, 2(1): 76-112.
- Tan, P. (2010). *A Justification in writing an essay*. *The Asian EFL Journal*. (2-10) 343.
- Tangpermpoon, T. (2008). *Intergraded approaches to improve learners' writing skills for English major learners*. *ABAC Journal*, 28: 1-9.
- Taylor, N., Fleisch, B. & Shindler, J. (2007). *Education Scenarios for 2019*. Paper prepared for the Key Driving Forces Scenarios 2019, The Office of the Presidency.
- Thoreau, M. (2006). *Write on Track*. New Zealand: Pearson Education New Zealand.
- Tobin, G. & Begley, C. (2004). *Methodological Rigour within a Qualitative Framework*. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(4): 388-396. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03207.x.

- Troyka, L. & Nudelman, J. (2004). *Steps in composition*. Upper Saddle River: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Tshotsho, B.P (2006). *An investigation into English second language academic writing strategies for Black learners at the Eastern Cape Technicon*. Doctoral Thesis. Cape Town: University of Western Cape.
- UNESCO. (2010). *Equal Education Statement on 2009 Matric Results*. Cape Town. University of Cape Town.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Walsh, K. (2010). *The Importance of Writing Skills: Online tools to encourage success*.
- Warschauer, M. (2005). First year evaluation report: Fullerton school district laptop program. *Teachers College Record*, 109(11): 2511–2540.
- Weaver, M.L. (2006). Do learners value feedback? Learner perceptions of tutor written responses. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(3): 379-394.
- Wessels, M. (2007). *Practical Guide to Facilitating Language Learning*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Westwood, P. (2008). *What teachers need to know about reading and writing difficulties*. Acer city press. Australia.
- White, G.C. (2005). Correcting Wildlife Counts Using Detection Probabilities. *Wildlife Research* 32:211-216.
- White, R. & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process Writing*. Harlow, UK: Longman.

Widdowson, H.G. (1978). *Teaching Language as Communication*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, J.D. (2003). *Preparing to teach writing* (3rd ed.). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410607461>.

Winarso, W. (2016). Assessing the Readiness of Learner Learning Activity and Learning Outcome. *Jurnal Pencerahan*, 10: 81-94.

Yagoda, B. (2006). The seven deadly sins of learner writers. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(3), B13. Retrieved January 16, 2010, from ProQuest Education Journals.

Yount, R. (2006). *Research Design and Statistical Analysis for Christian Ministry, Population and Sampling*. Available from: <http://www.napce.org>. [Accessed: 10 May 2015].

Zemach, D.E., & Rumisek, L.A (2005). *Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay*. Spain: McMillan Publisher.

APPENDIX A

Consent form for learners

Title of dissertation/ thesis Challenges Experienced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language Learners in Essay Writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou Circuit under Capricorn South District, Limpopo Province

I, Fankomo NC, a Master of Education Learner at University of Limpopo invite you to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to explore challenges experienced by grade 12 English First Additional learners in essay writing. You will be asked to write an essay for only one hour.

The study you are about to participate in is for advancing my career and my deepest interest in making a contribution in the learning and teaching of English writing. Therefore, as part of the research study, I am expected to collect information from you as the participants of this study. You are important and relevant to participate in this study because you are taught English writing as a skill in education.

All data collected from you will be coded in order to protect your identity. Following the study, there will be no way to connect your name with your data. I further reassure you that there are no anticipated risks to your participation

Any additional information about the study results will be provided to you at its conclusion, upon your request. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Should you agree to participate, please sign below, indicating that you have read and understood the nature of the study, and that all your inquiries concerning the activities have been answered to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of this form.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Thank you for participation

Fankomo NC

Signature.....

APPENDIX B

Consent form for teachers

University of Limpopo

Department of Languages, Social Sciences and Education Management Studies.

Faculty of humanities

Title of dissertation/ thesis Challenges Experienced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language Learners in Essay Writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou Circuit under Capricorn South District, Limpopo Province

I, Fankomo NC a Master of Education Learner from the university of Limpopo kindly invite you to participate in a research study titled: Challenges Experienced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language Learners in Essay Writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou Circuit under Capricorn South District, Limpopo Province. Your participation is voluntarily.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore the challenges experienced by grade 12 English First Additional Language learners in essay writing.

Procedures

You will be asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire and the location will be determined according to your preference. You will be asked some questions about the challenges learners experience when writing essays.

Potential risks and discomforts

There are no anticipated risks to your participation. When you feel some discomfort at responding some questions, please feel free to ask or skip the question.

Confidentiality

All information that is collected in this study will be treated confidentially. You are guaranteed that neither you, this school nor any of its personnel will be identified in any report of the results of the study. Participation in this survey is voluntary and any individual may withdraw at any time. All data collected from you will be coded in order to protect your identity.

Participation and withdrawal

Participation is voluntarily. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you are reluctant to answer and still remain in the study.

Rights of research subjects

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty.

Should you agree to participate, please sign below, indicating that you have read and understood the nature of the study, and that all your inquiries concerning the activities have been answered to your satisfaction.

Complete the following if you wish to receive a copy of the results of this study.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Thank you for participation

Date _____

Fankomo NC

APPENDIX C

ESSAY WRITING

GRADE: 12

MARKS: 50

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Choose ONE of the topics below and write an essay of 210-250 words.
 - Write the question number and title on your answer sheet.
 - There must be evidence of planning, drafting and editing.
 - Your essay should have an introduction, body and conclusion.
 - Pay special attention to the number of words and write the number of words used at the end of the essay.
-

1. Choose **ONE** of the topics below and write an essay. The essay should be between 210 and 250 words

- 1.1. My dream destination
- 1.2. This is why people travel...
- 1.3. Life is a journey
- 1.4. Why I would like to travel to outer space
- 1.5. The most interesting place I have ever visited
- 1.6. When I answered the call...
- 1.7. Saving for the future should start at an early age

APPENDIX D: ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: ESSAY

- Marks from 0-50 have been divided into five major level descriptions.
- In the Content, Language and Style criteria, each of the five level descriptors is divided into an upper and a lower-level subcategory with the applicable mark range and descriptors.
- Structure is not affected by the upper level and lower-level division.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC FOR ESSAY- FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE [50 MARKS]

Criteria		Exceptional	Skilful	Moderate	Elementary	Inadequate
CONTENT AND PLANNING (Response and	UPPER LEVEL	28-30	22-24	16-18	10-12	4-6
		Outstanding/s triking response beyond normal	-Very well-crafted response -Fully relevant and	Satisfactory response -Ideas are reasonably coherent	Inconsistently coherent response -Unclear	-Totally irrelevant response -Confused and

ideas) Organisation of ideas for planning; Awareness of purpose, audience and context 30 MARKS	expectations - Intelligent, thought-provoking and mature ideas - Exceptionally well organized and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion/ending.	interesting ideas with evidence of maturity -Very well organized and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion	and convincing -Reasonably organized and coherent, including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	ideas and unoriginal -Little evidence of organisation and coherence	unfocused ideas -Vague and repetitive - Unorganised and incoherent
	25-27	19-21	13-15	7-9	0-3

	LOWER LEVEL	-Excellent response but lacks the exceptionally striking qualities of the outstanding essay -Mature and intelligent ideas -Skilfully organized and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	-Well-crafted response -Relevant and interesting ideas -Well organised and coherent (connected), including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	-Satisfactory response but some lapses in clarity -Ideas are fairly coherent and convincing -Some degree of organisation and coherence, including introduction, body and conclusion/ending	-Largely irrelevant response -Ideas tend to be disconnected and confusing -Hardly any evidence of organisation and coherence	-No attempt to respond to the topic -Completely irrelevant and inappropriate -Unfocused and muddled
LANGUAGE, STYLE & EDITING Tone, register, style,	UPPER LEVEL	14-16	11-12	8-9	6-8	0-3
		-Tone, register, style and vocabulary highly appropriate to purpose, audience and context	-Tone, register, style and vocabulary very appropriate to purpose, audience and context	-Tone, register, style and vocabulary appropriate to purpose, audience and context -Appropriate	-Tone, register, style and vocabulary not appropriate to purpose, audience	-Language incomprehensible -Tone, register, style and vocabulary less appropriate

vocabulary appropriate to purpose/effect and context; Word choice; Language use and conventions, punctuation, grammar, spelling		-Language confident, exceptionally impressive -Compelling and rhetorically effective in tone -Virtually error-free in grammar and spelling -Very skilfully crafted	-Language is effective and consistently appropriate tone is used -Largely error-free in grammar and spelling -Very well crafted	use of language to convey meaning -Tone is appropriate -Rhetorical devices used to enhance content	and context -Very basic use of language -Tone and diction are inappropriate -Very limited vocabulary	to purpose, audience and context -Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make comprehension impossible
	15 MARKS	13	10	7	4	
	LOWER LEVEL	-Language excellent and rhetorically effective in tone -Virtually error-free in grammar and spelling -Skilfully crafted	-Language engaging and generally effective -Appropriate and effective tone -Few errors in grammar and spelling -Well crafted	-Adequate use of language with some inconsistencies -Tone generally appropriate and limited use of rhetorical devices	-Inadequate use of language -Little or no variety in sentence -Exceptionally limited vocabulary	

STRUCTURE	5	4	3	2	0-1
	-Excellent development of topic -Exceptional detail -Sentences, paragraphs exceptionally well-constructed	-Logical development of details -Coherent -Sentences, paragraphs logical, varied	-Relevant details developed -Sentences, paragraphs well-constructed - Essay still makes sense	-Some valid points - Sentence s and paragraphs faulty - Essay still makes some sense	-Necessary points lacking -Sentences and paragraphs faulty -Essay lacks sense
Features of text; Paragraph development and sentence construction					
5 MARKS					
MARK RANGE	43-50	33-40	23-30	13-20	0-10

APPENDIX E

Questionnaire for Educators

Kindly tick appropriate responses and/or provide relevant information which best describes each aspect in the questionnaire.

1. According to your experience, how would you describe the writing level of your grade 12 learners?

Most are above average	
Most are average	
Most are below average	
Writing level varies greatly	

2. In typical school week, what percentage of your time in class do you devote to the following activities:

Write the percentage on the appropriate block

Teaching class as a whole	
Working with individual learners or small groups	
Administrative duties	
Maintaining discipline	
Other duties	

3. How often do you have writing activities in your class?

Everyday	
Three or four days a week	
Fewer than three days a week	

4. How do you teach writing skill?

5. What kind of resources do you use in teaching writing? Are they sufficient?

6. Do you think it is hard for your learners to learn writing?

7. What are the difficulties faced by your learners in writing?

8. Which aspects of grammar affect your learners' writing?

9. Which writing methods do you employ when teaching writing and how are they enhancing the writing skill?

10. Do your learners get your full attention when teaching writing?

11. Do you think your learners are motivated to learn writing skill?

12. Describe the teaching and learning conditions in your class and explain how they are affecting the teaching and learning of the skill.

13. Do you think you have enough time to teach the skill, given the duration allocated for all the skill?



APPENDIX F

Observation schedule

1. 3 lessons will be observed from each class.
2. The following will be noted for:
 - Classroom infrastructure
 - Seating arrangements
 - Learning and teaching strategies
 - Classroom interaction

3. Guideline questions:

- What teaching methods does the teacher employ?
- Do the teaching methods help learners of various proficiencies in English improve or not?
- Which language does the teacher use when giving instruction?
- Is the lesson teacher or learner centred?
- Are learners familiar with the writing stage?
- Is the classroom conducive for learning?
- Are teaching and learning resources sufficient?
- To what extent the classroom environment and size affect learners' writing?

APPENDIX G

PO Box 1121

Hazyview

1242

13 March 2020

The Circuit Manager

Kgakotlou Circuit

Private Bag x1108

Sovenga

0727

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MOTHIMAKO SECONDARY SCHOOL

I am Fankomo N.C, learner number 201418754, a learner at the University of Limpopo doing masters in Language Education at Department of Languages, Social Sciences and Education Management Studies, Faculty of Humanities.

I kindly request you to grant me permission to collect data from one of your schools. The title of my dissertation is: Challenges Experienced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language (EFAL) Learners in Essay Writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou Circuit, under Capricorn South District, Limpopo Province. The purpose of the study is to explore challenges experienced by grade 12 EFAL learners in essay writing. The research questions are:

- Which writing approaches or strategies do learners use in learning essay writing skills?
- Which writing methods do teachers use when teaching writing skills and how are they enhancing the writing skill?

There are no risks associated with the study as data will be collected through observation, questionnaires and document analysis (essays).

Please allow me to express my grateful thanks in anticipation of your assistance.

Yours Sincerely

Date

APPENDIX H

PO Box 1121

Hazyview

1242

13 March 2020

The principal
Mothimako Secondary School

Private Bag X1118

Sovenga

0727

Dear Mrs Marolen

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MOTHIMAKO SECONDARY SCHOOL

I am Fankomo N.C, learner number 201418754, a learner at the University of Limpopo doing masters in Language Education at Department of Languages, Social Sciences and Education Management Studies, Faculty of Humanities.

I kindly request you to grant me permission to collect data from the school. The title of my dissertation is: Challenges Experienced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language (EFAL) Learners in Essay Writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou Circuit, under Capricorn South District, Limpopo Province. The purpose of the study is to explore challenges experienced by grade 12 EFAL learners in essay writing. The research questions are:

- Which writing approaches or strategies do learners use in learning essay writing skills?
- Which writing methods do teachers use when teaching writing skills and how are they enhancing the writing skill?

There are no risks associated with the study as data will be collected through observation, questionnaires and document analysis (essays).

Anticipating your kind cooperation and positive response.

Yours Sincerely

Date

Fankomo NC

APPENDIX I

PO Box 1121
Hazyview
1242
26 August 2020

Limpopo Department of Education
Polokwane Head Office
Private Bag X9489
Polokwane
0700

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MOTHIMAKO SECONDARY SCHOOL

I am Fankomo N.C, student number 201418754, a student at the University of Limpopo doing masters in Language Education at Department of Languages, Social Sciences and Education Management Studies, Faculty of Humanities. I am currently teaching English at Mothimako secondary school.

I kindly request you to grant me permission to collect data from the school. The title of my dissertation is: Challenges Experienced by Grade 12 English First Additional Language Learners in Essay Writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou Circuit, under Capricorn South District Limpopo Province. The purpose of the study is to explore challenges experienced by grade 12 EFAL learners in essay writing. The research questions are:

- Which writing approaches or strategies do learners use in learning essay writing skills?
- Which writing methods do teachers use when teaching writing skills and how are they enhancing the writing skill?

There are no risks associated with the study as data will be collected through observation, questionnaires and document analysis (essays).

Please allow me to express my grateful thanks in anticipation to your assistance.

Yours Faithfully

Date

Fankomo NC



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2 Enq: Makola MC Tel No: 015 290 9448 E-mail: MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Fankomo NC
P O Box 1121
Hazyview
1242

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **“CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN ESSAY WRITING AT MOTHIMAKO SECONDARY SCHOOL:KGOKOTLOU CIRCUIT UNDER LEBOWAKGOMO DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE ”**
3. The following conditions should be considered:
 - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
 - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.
 - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
 - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
 - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: FANKOMO NC

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

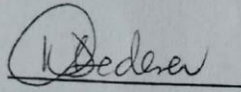
The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



Dederen KO
Head of Department

06/07/2021
Date



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: 12 August 2020

PROJECT NUMBER: TREC/160/2020: PG

PROJECT:

Title: Challenges experienced by grade 12 English First Additional Language learners in essay writing at Mothimako Secondary School: Kgakotlou circuit under Lebowakgomo district, Limpopo province

Researcher: NC Fankomo
Supervisor: Dr TW Molotja
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Education
Degree: Master 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.



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT
KGAKOTLOU CIRCUIT

Ref: 8/2/1

Eng: Rammala MF

Tel: 082 386 9542

Office: 079 209 5834

Email: kgakotloucircuitoffice@gmail.com

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: 01/09/2021

TO: THE PRINCIPAL
MOTHIMAKO SECONDARY SCHOOL

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL BY FANKOMO NC

1. The above matter refers.
2. Kindly allow **FANKOMO NC** to conduct research at your school. The research should be conducted in a way that it will not disrupt teaching and learning.
3. Topic "CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY GRADE 12 ENGLISH FAL LEARNERS IN ESSAY WRITING".
4. Thanking you in advance.

DR. SEPURU MG
KGAKOTLOU CIRCUIT



In life time one may Chalkes you will face but like only thing you have to do is what is right. Even though it is though as long as it is right it is fine. Do not do what is easy because what comes easy leave easy as well. Do not do what is popular because of peer pressure.

You need to work very hard to do what is right and always doing ~~you~~ that you not going to regrets about. Friends are the most dangerous person that can run your life by the bad influence they will put in your Sobelab you will become like them anyway you have to do what is right.

Friends can lead you to death like e.g Smoking not writing Classwork and homeworks ~~write~~ and tell you that Smoking is popular every one is doing it. It is ~~easy~~ easy to smoke but it is not a right thing to do because you will end up Sicking, you might even die because of drug what is popular and easy.

No matter how hard something is, as long as it is right you have to do it. Such as Studying. Studying is not easy but if you will do so you will be success full one day. It won't help to do what is easy but you are going nowhere.

There is an important thing you have to understand in life is your Home Situation. No matter how happy or sad you are don't fake your back ground because if you do that bad lucks will follow you all the time do what is right for your self. 257

2-2
6-7
E-3

Saving for the future must start at a young age. Because it can help you to have the future you wished and dream. Yes, it must start at a young age so that person can do anything wisely in life only to avoid on their future.

A child must start to have a dream when he/she started schooling and plan what he/she wants to be in life so they he/she can learn more about it and understand about the thing he/she wish to be. believe me that child can make the future to become true and also save it.

Negative thing to does not save the future at a young age. It that the person will not have that future. okay he/she can have it but not exactly on their dream or exactly that the person wanted. most children does not become to the career that they wanted to be because they didn't save it and become serious on their future.

It good to bring your child at school because she/he can learn more about everything and choose for his dream he/she wish to become or to see what he/she love the most on they subject they do and plan for the future. but some they see outside when they travel with their family.

Saving for the future must start at a young age are agree with this because it help the children to see the wrong thing and the right thing just because the person know what he/she want in love and also want he/she future need he/she to do to get their future or dream.

13
1-1
1-3

279 world

12 When I answered the call...

It was on January 2018. Early in the morning unexpected I received a call from my sister. It was all about my Grade 11 results. She firstly lied to me before she told the truth.

I was having a little fear because I did not participated very well. My report was about to fail but not because she sent me on WhatsApp after call. After that, she told me about challenges I will face in grade 12. She said, "you must concentrate on your studies and forget about your back ground situation".

I was very surprised because all of my friends were fair. And I was played with them. There was an handsome teacher his name was J.J Nyambi. He don't like nonsense that's where I realised that school or being educated is the way to success in this crazy world. What feared me by all is to be in Senior grade which is grade 12.

My sister saw me suffering on my studies and give some strategies to fight against such a problem. She said use when I get back at home I should focus on what I did at school before eating. After she told me that, I saw the big different ~~and~~ because I really did what she said to me.

She is my sister but not in law. After her strategies, I realised that, my peer was not my mistake but my peer will be my mistake. Most of the time at school I kept quiet and listened to the educator only to prove my enemies wrong. During listening every time I remember my sister's words and what she said after she called me.

Now I am a best learner in class because of the words she gave to me. To be rich is not about in your bank account. Just pay attention to your educator and enjoy life (age word)

C-17
L-08
S-04

Saving for the future is when you do things by passion it starts when you are young to see how your future or career would be like. when you want to study or do something important you have to manage your time first.

It is good to focus on what important ^{so} therefore you can make things right. It starts by studying your books and to do other things that ^{is} right and that lead you to success. if you want to do something that ^{is} right you don't have to listen to other people because you know what ^{is} right and you know what it good for yourself.

What is right ^{is} that you have to study your books in order to succeed. It doesn't matter that you come from poor or rich family but that is in your hand to upgrade your background. we have a lot of children out there that come from poor families but they were able to make it at the end of the year.

To make my life easy, I have to choose good friends that would lead me to success. not friends that would put ^{too} pressure on me to make things that ^{is} out of order. I have to choose friends that will ^{to} tell me about the importance of education. It is good to choose friends that commit ^{to} themselves in their books.

It is good to exercise and warm up your body. if you want to study well you have to go out and get a fresh ^{then} you come back at continue with what you

were doing. It is good to exercise so that your blood can flow well. It is right to be active always before your mind can think of good things.

To achieve my goals I have to study hard so I can get good marks. To make it at the end of the year I have to study my books and manage my time on it. since I am in grade 12 I have to study hard in order to make it end of the day. when I go out with my friends I have to manage my time and know what time will I get back home. It up to me that I want to achieve or not but it up to ^{be} what I want I want to be successful in future because education is a key to success.

[290 words]

C-12
L-7
S-3

It was Sunday afternoon watching television and relaxing with my younger sibling when I received a call. I took me some like 20 seconds to answer the call. After I have answered the phone I received bad news about my parent who got into an accident. I was shocked, terrified and asking myself what I am going to tell my younger siblings.

I asked God to give me the courage to tell them. I told them what happened to our parents and I also called other family members letting them know about the bad situation we are facing right now. I had no choice than to rush into the hospital to know about their conditions because they did not explain much in the phone call. It only took about 20 minutes to get to the hospital. Seeing them lying in that hospital bed helples without knowing what kind of help I should give to them broke my heart.

The doctor came and explained the situation they said they will recover the accident did not affect them that much but they were affected a little. Hearing that news made my heart at peace because I was so scared what if they do not recover what I am going to do without them - they are the only thing that are precious to me.

I was so happy about the good news I have received about my parents. There is no need to worry anymore. I called other family members letting them know about the situation that is not bad at all. They were so relieved at home about the great news. I have told them all we were waiting for is for them to wake up.

After few days they required constant care and they were recovering slowly and they were discharged and he continued living as a happy family. The accident made me learn how much they mean to me. I was not ready of being an orphan at an early age.

That accident almost ruined my life. What if my parents died that day that call I received almost ruined my life.

C - 20	C - 20
L - 10	L - 10
S - 4	S - 4

It was 20th December 2019 I was home alone because my parent was at Malaysia to buy some new clothes for me.

Before they left, my mother told me to do all the house chores so that they will buy that expensive sneakers that I saw on the advert yesterday. I did all the house chores because I promised them and they also promise me sneakers.

By 11am I was sitting outside waiting for them to come back because they left early in the morning my day was boring because I was home alone and there's no one that is paying a visit for me. My cellphone was also boring me but I was waiting a call that is coming for my parent to tell me to be ready to wear my new clothes and sneakers.

When I answered the call that is coming from my mother, I was so happy and expecting good news, but unfortunately my happiness became tears because my mother told me to be sorry about my new clothes and sneakers they did not buy it and they went to Limpopo because my grandmother is sick.

I just hang up my cellphone and I ran to my bedroom. My heart was so broken because I was not expecting bad news about my clothes and my grandmother.

←
L-
S-4