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**TEACHERS' AND LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS' WRITING IN
ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF ISIXHOSA AND
AFRIKAANS LEARNERS**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

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ABSTRACT

A central concern of education internationally is to develop children's literacy skills. In many parts of the world, the need to become fluent in a second language is essential for gaining meaningful access to education, the labour market and broader social functioning. In spite of these efforts, the problem still continues. The level of English language proficiency is far from satisfactory and these goals are unattainable by others. The issue is more complex in South Africa as learners are immersed in a second language (L2) curriculum. South Africa is a prime example of a country facing the dilemma of how to effectively equip a majority of its population with English as a second language.

There is however, insufficient literature that looks into writing experiences of isiXhosa and Afrikaans background learners in English First Additional Language (EFAL). Hence, the study investigates teachers' and learners' experiences on learners' writing in English. Moreover, the possible causes of writing difficulties and teacher's practices for teaching writing are explored. The theoretical and conceptual framework for the study is provided by studies on constructivist theories and sociocultural theories. In exploring these issues, a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and document analysis was adopted. This data is analysed using the critical discourse analysis (CDA).

The study identified a weak correlation between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching practices. Although the teachers believe that writing is as important as listening, speaking, reading, grammar and vocabulary, and that it needs regular practice, the data reveal that they fail to put their beliefs into practice. Moreover, the data revealed that learners were disturbed by their home language because when they do not know a word they would write either the isiXhosa or the Afrikaans equivalent. Code-switching seems to have instilled a sense of "dependence on translations" where some learners would not even try to answer English questions but would wait for the teacher to translate the questions into isiXhosa or Afrikaans before they could attempt to give answers. The findings show a marked improvement in the writing performance of learners who used the process approach in writing. These findings demonstrate the need for assisting teachers to shift away

from focusing only on learners' performance (testing and grading) towards a stronger emphasis on the process of writing.

The study concludes that the process approach to writing could enable teachers to focus on the various parts of the writing process which can give more freedom to learners to experiment their language proficiency. It would require that teachers develop a deeper understanding of the process/genre approaches to teaching writing advocated by CAPS.

Overall, the study shows that both learners and teachers face numerous challenges relating to writing. This means that more work still needs to be done in this area. The present study argues that teachers teaching EFAL learners should approach writing as a critical and core aspect of learners' education. Learners should be exposed to intensive writing activities throughout their school years.

Key words: writing, home language, English first additional languages, English second language, language of learning and teaching, language proficiency, language competence, learning as social practice, constructivism.

DECLARATION

I, Thandiswa Mpiti declare that the *Teachers' and Learners' experiences of learners' writing in English first additional language: a case of isiXhosa and Afrikaans learners* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This research has not been previously submitted for any degree at this or any other university.

.....

Thandiswa Mpiti

.....

Date

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my very first role model and early life mentor, my late father, Milton Bonani Vuyelele, who has been my inspiration.

To you Ngconde, Togu, Phalo, Tshiwo, Butsolo Bentonga, Mdange...

Many thanks for your love, support, spiritual guidance and for showing me the way before you went to meet the Lord.

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ACRONYMS

ACE – Advanced Certificate in Education

ANA – Annual National Assessment

ASLPR – Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings

B.Ed – Bachelor of Education Degree

B.Ed (Hons.) – Honours in Bachelor of Education

CA – Critical Analysis

CAPS – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CL – Critical Linguistics

CR – Consciousness-raising

DoBE – Department of Basic Education

EFAL – English First Additional Language

EFL – English Foreign Language

ELL – English Language Learners

ELRC – Education Labour Relations Council

ESL – English Second Language

FAL – First Additional Language

F – Female

FDE – Further Diploma in Education

ICT – Information Communication Technology

JPTD – Junior Primary Teachers Diploma

LiEP – Language-in-Education Policy

LIFE – Literacy Initiative for Empowerment

Ln - Learner

LoLT – Language of Learning and Teaching

L.O – Life Orientation

L1 – Home language

L2 – Second language

L3 - Language and Learning Literacy

M – Male

Mol – Medium of Instruction

NCCA – National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NS & Tech – Natural Sciences and Technology

PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

REQV – Relative Education Qualification Value

RNCS – Revised National Curriculum Statement

SACE – South African Council of Educators

SACMEQ – South African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

SAQA – South African Qualifications Authority

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

SPTD – Senior Primary Teachers Diploma

SPDE – Senior Primary Diploma in Education

S.S – Social Sciences

TESOL – Teaching English as a Second Language

TLA – Teacher Language Awareness

TL – Target Language

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

US – United States

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction/Background Information

What we, in everyday parlance, call 'writing' is a very complex set of semiotic practices that involve the visualization and materialization of ideas and concepts, their achievability and transferability across time and space. Any consideration of writing, consequently, is forced to address material aspects as well as ideational ones, and both categories of aspects are of course in turn lodged in social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts (Blommaert 2008, p.7).

In view of the above quotation, Foncha *et al.* (Forthcoming, p.68) argue that the complexity that is hidden by the simple word 'writing' or 'reading' is tremendous, and many studies of writing/reading have been plagued by the legacies of this suggestive simplicity, assuming a degree of homogeneity in the practices, their products and functions, which can no longer be sustained.

In this regard, there is a huge literature that deals with the acquisition of second language. In fact, second language acquisition is an entire sub-discipline of applied linguistics. In many parts of the world, the need to become fluent in a second language is essential for gaining meaningful access to education, the labour market and broader social functioning. Moreover, the central goal of English education around the globe is to develop writing and communicative skills and abilities of English Second Language (ESL) learners so that they might better navigate higher education (Parsons and Beauchamp, 2012). On the other hand, the goal of others is to provide content-area and language knowledge simultaneously (e.g. content-based instruction) so that they might be able to convey and interpret a message via written or spoken modalities to other persons (Mckay, 2011). However, the level of English language proficiency is far from satisfactory and these goals are unattainable to others just as the quotation above echoes.

Based on this, Choudhury (2001) states that working with English language students at a private university in Bangladesh revealed that even after 12 years of English education, students cannot communicate effectively and as a result, they are failing to develop an acceptable level of English proficiency. Other researchers in their comparison of English test grades and Secondary School Certificate English grades at the high school level, remark upon “an alarming rate of failure of rural students in English” (Hamid and Baldauf, 2008, p.21). In the study of immigrants in the United States, Chiswick and Miller (2002) find far higher returns to an additional year of schooling among immigrants fluent in English. English language learners (ELL) require additional time to acclimate to school routines and expectations in the United States (Short and Fitzsimmons, 2007). As much as ELL may be growing in numbers in America, their proficiency in spoken and/or written English is not yet developed enough to permit them to succeed in an English-language classroom setting without extra support (Batalova *et al.*, 2007).

In addition, studies carried out by Richmond, *et al.* (2008) indicate that one in five adults in today’s world – seven hundred and seventy four million men and women – have no access to written communication through literacy. From another context, Mahmoud (2005) argues that Arabic- speaking students commit errors when they produce collocations in English, especially the English lexical combinations.

In favour of the above, the world is making progress in literacy but the challenges remain huge. There is a growing awareness of the need for people in education to be constantly developing and reviewing curricula in accordance with changing circumstances (Richmond *et al.*, 2008). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has established the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) framework which accelerates progress in making action on literacy more effective and taking it to reach the large illiterate population (De Klerk, 2002).

In spite all these efforts, a lot of problems still exists. A study conducted by Moja (2000) reveal a decline in the quality of the education system in Nigeria, resulting in a negative effect on literacy development in primary school learners. The findings

also reveal that low morale of teachers, the poor quality of teachers, and lack of adequate professional support for teachers in the system impacted negatively on literacy development. Hence Olusoji (2012) states that the common problem in learning English in Nigeria is that majority of the teachers who teach the language, are incompetent and apart from that, the teachers themselves are victims of incompetent teaching.

On the other hand, Okech (2005) conducted a case study of literacy education in Uganda where the findings reveal that there is a very poor performance in literacy at the sixth year of primary education. Implementing the primary curriculum by teachers who have difficulties in reading and writing; English the language of instruction, is a big challenge in Uganda (Kagoda, 2012). Kagoda (2012) further states that this implies teachers cannot express themselves and are not able to write “correct English” for their pupils. Something, therefore, needs to be done to bring about improvement in writing instructions at the level of the primary schools as well as in adult literacy provision.

Another study conducted by Pearce (2009) on the literacy challenge in eleven West African countries is of significance for this research. The findings, drawn from recent statistics, indicated that in sixty five million young people and adults, more than 40% of the population are unable to read and write. Of these, forty million are women who are; on average, poorer and often from rural areas (Pearce, 2009). The findings also revealed that the low literacy level is determined by problems in the formal school system and a lack of learning opportunities. Furthermore, the study revealed that there are insufficient learners in schools: fourteen million learners of primary school age are not attending in the eleven West African countries with more than half of them being girls. The quality of education is also poor: the disastrous lack of trained teachers and literacy facilitators is a key factor (Pearce, 2009).

However, the issue is more complex in South Africa as learners are immersed in a second language (L2) curriculum. South Africa is a prime example of a country facing the dilemma of most effectively equipping majority of its population with an additional language, in this case English. South African children perform poorly in

international assessments of educational achievement. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) surveys of 2006 and 2011 statistics indicated that SACMEQ II (2000) and SACMEQ III (2007) show that there was no improvement in South African Grade Six literacy performance over the seven year period. Given that 13 other African countries also participated, it is possible to compare the achievement levels of South African Grade Six pupils with other Grade Six learners from the continent. In the most recent round of SACMEQ (2007), South African pupils ranked 10th of the 14 education systems for reading, behind much poorer countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and Swaziland.

The study found that 27 per cent of South African Grade Six pupils were illiterate since they could not read a short and simple text to extract meaning, with the proportion varying significantly by province: about half (49 per cent) of all Grade Six pupils in Limpopo were illiterate, while only 5 per cent of pupils in the Western Cape were classified thus (SACMEQ, 2007). By using a variety of independently conducted assessments of pupil's achievement, the report shows that with the exception of a wealthy minority, most South African pupils cannot read, write and compute at grade-appropriate levels, with large proportions being functionally illiterate and innumerate (Trong, 2010). In the 2006 PIRLS, South African Grade Five pupils achieved the lowest score of the 45 countries that participated, including other middle-income countries such as Morocco, Iran, Trinidad and Tobago, Indonesia, and Macedonia. In PIRLS 2006, only 13 per cent of Grade Four and 22 per cent of Grade Five South African pupils reached the Low International Benchmark of 400. This is in stark contrast to a majority of other participating countries.

In half of the participating countries, 94 per cent of pupils reached this Low International Benchmark. Trong (2010, p.2) elucidates the practical value of this benchmark and concludes that "learners who are not able to demonstrate even the basic reading skills of the Low International Benchmark by the fourth grade are considered at serious risk of not learning how to read." Using this framework, 87 per cent of Grade Four and 78 per cent of Grade Five pupils in South Africa were deemed to be at serious risk of not learning to read. These results show that as far as educational outcomes are concerned, South Africa has the worst education

system of all middle-income countries that participated in cross-national assessments of educational achievement. What is more, South Africa performs worse than many low-income African countries (Spaull, 2013). Therefore, in view of the above statistics, reading and writing are posing problems to academic success not only in English but other languages and subjects.

The extent to which language factors contribute to this low performance is not clear, given that language disadvantages are so strongly correlated with other confounding factors such as historical, socio-economic status, geography, the quality of school management and the quality of teachers. However, there are many in the South African education community who feel that language, and in particular the language policy, is a key determinant of education outcomes. Proponents of Mother Tongue education argue that a later transition to English is necessary given that children cannot understand the language of instruction (Brock-Utne, 2007).

On the other hand, English is widely perceived to be the language of upward mobility and this leads to a preference for instruction in English from as early as possible. The birth of democracy in South Africa in 1994 meant that many changes had to be implemented in various spheres (education, health, justice, etc.) of the government in order to redress the imbalances of the apartheid government. As a result, in 1996 the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa acknowledged the richness of language diversity in the country. It adopted a progressive constitution which gave official status to 11 languages (nine of which are African languages). This language policy promotes (but does not mandate) the use of African languages alongside English, encouraging schools to maintain the learners' home languages at the same time as they learn an additional language (Probyn *et al.*, 2002; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004).

With this transition the government also adopted a very progressive Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP, 1997), which devolves the decision on the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) to the individual schools (through the School Governing Bodies) (Probyn *et al.*, 2002; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004). Most schools, however, have not conformed to the proposals of LiEP, and have maintained the use

of English as the LoLT from at least Grade 4 (Casale and Posel, 2011). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (DoBE, 2011) indicate that one should attain proficiency in the selected LoLT at a level fundamental for successful learning of the curriculum.

A brief description of language use in South Africa is necessary in order to give a broader picture of how the present study was conceived. South Africa is an example of a developing country in which a majority of the population speaks indigenous languages as their home languages. English is mostly used in urban areas, especially in city centres, for official and economic purposes. This kind of situation is influenced by the fact that many businesses are still owned by whites who are either English or Afrikaans speakers. But for people living in the rural areas, exposure to English is limited because a majority of these people communicate in their local languages.

In view of the above, it is also necessary to take a glimpse at the background of the school where the researcher is teaching. The researcher is a Multigrade teacher in a historically disadvantaged and poorly resourced school, Found in a community in which English is not used and learners have no exposure to the print media, no exposure to technology and where most of the learners have never been to a library. They have less and some have no books and magazines at their homes. As a result, some of these learners enter schools having little or no previous knowledge of English because they live with illiterate grandparents who have never attended school before. Due to insufficient exposure to English and support from home, these learners struggle to grasp the content of subjects taught through the English medium, and this affects their academic performance adversely (McKay and Keith, 2001; Heugh, 2003). The problem of coping with the language and the complexity of academic writing make matters even worse which is the rationale for this study.

Moreover, parents cannot check their children's exercise books, or help them with their homework because they are illiterate who can neither read nor write. When the kids start schooling, it takes a longer time for some to adapt to the learning environment and some of these learners start school older than the recommended

age. They do not have sufficient time in the classroom, to acquire a threshold level of English language proficiency which can allow them to engage effectively with learning. In this case, reading and writing to these learners is a form of a nightmare which places them at an obscured position to navigate in their reading and writing.

To get a good understanding of the situation in schools, it is worth looking at the findings of 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 Annual National Assessment (ANA) results of the English FAL paper written by Grade 6 learners. The national average performance in English FAL by Grade 6 learners was 36% and in 2013 it was 46%. Looking back in 2011, results were dismal; Grade 6 learners' national average performance was 28% and 30% of learners achieved above 35% in English FAL. In terms of CAPS, at least a 50% mark is required for adequate and higher achievement in English. These findings reveal that South African children in grade 4 - 6 and 9 do not understand simple English and are significantly inadequate in writing meaningfully.

Hence, Motshekga (minister of Education, 2012) says that it is worrying precisely because the critical skills of literacy and numeracy are fundamental to further education and achievement in the worlds of both education and work and many of these learners lack proper foundation in literacy. Hence, they struggle to progress in the system and into post-school education and training. In spite the above situation, the government aspires to elevate pass rates on tests of literacy from the current average of 35-40% to a minimum of 60% by 2014. In favour of the above, literacy is the ability to read and write especially given that reading and writing are inseparable components of literacy (Baton, 2007). For anyone to be a competent reader and writer, he or she requires the fundamental literacy skills. Munro (2003, p.327) confirms this view and argues that dealing effectively with students' literacy difficulties and poor academic writing skills is a challenge that universities across the world have to contend with. In this study the researcher focuses on one of the literacy component which is writing. Elizabeth (2004, p.295) affirms that whatever is written remains forever; unless it is destroyed. She also asserts that without the writing aspect, learning of a language remains incomplete.

According to Raja and Zahid (2013), writing is considered perhaps the most challenging and difficult skill in terms of L2. It is one of the four basic language skills, which is given a unique importance. The value of writing is confirmed by research, thus showing its value for academic as well as occupational purposes. Writing is a valuable tool for communicating one's thoughts to others. It helps to promote both the sense of ownership and express inner feelings. Writing is the commonest way of assessing students' performance in schools (Salem, 2013). Al-Saleem (2008, p.77) emphasizes that writing is an essential component of classroom activities as it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary. He also adds that writing helps students to express themselves and provide their ideas without being pressured by face-to-face communication. This is affirmed by Helal (2003, p.18) who states that challenging writing activities add variety to writing instruction and develop writing instruction and important literacy skills.

In spite of its ultimate importance, writing is one of the most difficult language skills to master. According to Hirose (2003), EFL students have difficulties in writing cohesive paragraphs in English given that most high school EFL classes focus on sentence-level translations. Msanjila (2005) also notes with great concern that students face writing obstacles in expressing themselves systematically and logically. Apart from this, students mix English structures and expressions with those of L1 (Msanjila, 2005).

It is worth mentioning that the above description indicates a problem and this has been a concern to the Department of Education, language educators and practitioners. Thus, several studies have been carried out in an attempt to find solutions to this problem but the problem still exists. It is therefore necessary for this current study to find the remedial procedures that can improve the learners' writing.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

Concerns have been raised regarding the challenges learners face in writing (Salem, 2013). These ESL learners are not exposed to writing before going to school and as a result, they lack basic writing skills. Their poor writing skills make them to struggle with writing in English FAL proficiently. They tend to rely on their home language

when attempting to write resulting to misunderstanding and miscommunication. To complicate matters further, CAPS requires learners in Grade six to develop the ability to write simple sentences that have correct grammar, spelling, punctuation and meaning (DoBE, 2011). These learners are also expected to develop and present appropriate written, visual and multi-media texts for a variety of purposes. The problem is not only limited to the learners. English teachers on the other hand also struggle with writing tasks (Kagoda, 2012). This has been manifested by an acute awareness, on the researcher's part, of the educationally disadvantaged context in which she teaches (rural area). Teachers require learners to know writing without teaching because they believe that by giving assignments to learners, learners can learn writing which is in line with Blommaert (2008). Therefore, it is necessary to embark on researching on the effects of writing English FAL in order to find solutions to these academic writing problems.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study sets out to explore the causes of the difficulties in writing effectively as an attempt to seek strategies that can address the problem. The study seeks to find the mystery that is in the teaching of writing that educators avoid the most in an attempt to bring forth recommendations and suggestions on how to unravel such a headache for educators and learners.

1.4 Research questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1.4.1 Major Research Question

- What are the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in English first additional language?

1.4.2 Sub-Research Questions

- What strategies do teachers use in teaching writing in EFAL?
- What is the influence of home languages on EFAL writing competency?
- What are the teachers' perceptions of writing EFAL?
- What are the learners' perceptions of writing EFAL?

- What are the possible causes of EFAL writing difficulties?
- What strategies can be put in place to minimize/curb the problem?

1.6 Scope of the study

The study focused on Grade 6 ESL learners in two schools of the East London Education District. The choice of Grade 6 is based on the fact that CAPS stipulates that these learners are required to know the process approach to writing as well as the language structure and use (DoBE, 2011). More so Grade 6 learners are required to write proficiently and to understand writing rules. Again, it is a transitional phase where learners move from the Intermediate to a Senior Phase. The population comprised four Grade 6 teachers (2 from each school) and twenty-four learners (12 from each school).

1.7 Significance of the study

Since the study investigates teachers' and learners' experiences in writing, it might be of significance to the National Department of Education and the Eastern Cape Education Department in particular, curriculum developers and advisors, language practitioners, teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders as it may inform them about the kind of writing challenges learners face. This study may help teachers greatly in the implementation of instruction and general classroom pedagogy of writing. Hopefully the study might identify the possible cause of the writing difficulties in EFAL in particular and content subjects and other indigenous languages at large. Finally, it might suggest possible strategies to minimise and or curb these writing difficulties.

1.8 Brief overview of the chapters

The study is structured in six chapters outlined as follows:

Chapter one: is a brief introduction of the topics considered central to the current study by presenting the introduction and background with an overview of the study in *Perspective to Teachers' and Learners' Experiences of Grade 6 Learners' Writing in EFAL*. It lays the groundwork for the research project and includes the statement of

the problem, the research questions, research objectives, problem statement, the purpose for undertaking the study and the significance thereof.

Chapter two: is the theoretical framework and the review of related literature which provides a more detailed context for the research project. The researcher reviews works on the language of instruction and critically engages the information with the study. This provides a solid theoretical and conceptual background to which the findings of the research are related.

Chapter three: gives an overview of the methodology and details the research design, paradigm and the data gathering instruments. Ethical issues are duly observed.

Chapter four: is the presentation and analysis of the empirical data gathered through interviews, observations and document analysis. The data is then coded under identical themes with the researcher signposting and making commentaries where necessary.

In **chapter five:** is the discussion of the findings which pertain to the interpreted data that was supported by literature.

Chapter 6: states the conclusion of the study with reference to the research questions and the findings. It also presents the valuable recommendations regarding the enhancement of quality education in writing EFAL settings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant in the investigation of teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing. In understanding these experiences, it is important to shed light on classroom practices when learners are dealing with writing particularly in English Second Language (ESL) classrooms. A set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry has been adopted to structure this chapter in understanding these phenomena (Smyth, 2004). Therefore theoretical roots contributing to learner's outcomes of home language in writing ESL, acquisition of writing in English Second Language, teaching language with limited English proficiency and the role of vocabulary in ESL learners form the core of discussion in this chapter.

In addition to the theoretical roots above, the chapter further focuses on concepts like Language Learning as social practice, writing, multilingualism and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In view of the above, the discussion focuses particularly with special reference on conditions that relate to language context, preference and behaviours of English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners where writing is concerned.

In the classroom situation, English dominates since it is used as a medium of instruction. Therefore, students do not have any choice but to communicate and interact with each other using English despite the fact that it is a FAL to most of them (Foncha, 2013; Sivasubramaniam, 2004). This affects more students particularly those who were not fortunate enough to be exposed to English at early age (Banda, 2009). In this regard, they may become afraid to express themselves freely as well as struggle with writing. In this case, the researcher decided to discuss the above mentioned topics as part of the literature with a view to show how language context influences both language preference and language behaviours on conditions under which languages are learnt and used both in formal or informal contexts (Sivasubramaniam, 2011). In this study, EFAL students use English in formal

conditions, because it is the lingua franca in the country at large and language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in most if not all high schools and universities.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study is structured within the framework of Foncha's (2013) English as an international language based on the constructivist theory of learning. With Sivasubramaniam (2011) argues that to sustain the vitality of the enquiry into English as International Language, we need to add an alternative route of investigation into the notion of academic competence and literacy. In view of this, L2 or FAL should be learnt as a social practice in order to take away fear and anxiety from the learners and thereby create a conducive atmosphere. This new way of acquiring literacy is against the traditional notion of "correct grammar" where competency used to be measured statistically (Foncha 2013). Thus the study is advocating constructivist qualification of a context-based proficiency.

2.2.1 English as an international language

It goes without saying that English language is of prime importance and being able to communicate in this language is one of the keys for success in any field. It is the most widely spoken language in the world and so many people need to communicate in it. English language is around us, "displayed on shop windows, commercial signs, posters, official notices, traffic signs etc." (Gorter and Cenoz, 2008, p.1). Based on the foregoing debate, teaching and learning in English as the international language is essential in any society. An increasing need to teach and learn English as a foreign language has been observed in many countries in recent years. Many people admit its key role as a link-language, a library language and a medium of instruction in any educational system (Van Weijen *et al.*, 2009; Mallozzi and Malloy, 2007). However, the educational system in many countries has produced students the majority of whom are not able to communicate effectively after many years studying in English (Batalova *et al.*, 2007; Choudhury, 2001; Okech, 2005; Moja, 2000).

Moreover English is the language of wider communication in the world as the result of British colonial power in the nineteenth century and the first decades of the

twentieth century and the leadership of the US in the twentieth century (Gorter and Cenoz, 2008). It is also the main language of science and technology in the world and its spread is advancing in many countries and regions where English has not been traditionally spoken. The spread of English has been visualized in terms of three circles representing the historical and sociolinguistic profile of English in different parts of the world (Kachru, 2005). On the other hand, English has also been considered a threat for linguistic diversity (Phillipson, 2006) which is not convincing enough since the use of English does not impose its culture on the users unlike other languages like French. This therefore appears to be one of the reasons why people find English as a liberator and should be used as a lingua franca.

Considering the regularities and discernible patterns residing in English, English foreign language (EFL) teachers can nevertheless, provide learners with precise guidelines and, more specifically, with activities which encourage them to reflect on samples of language. These samples need to highlight such patterns and regularities so as to help learners reach (Ellis, 2003) their own conclusions regarding how language is used (Hyland, 2007). According to activities of this type are generally referred to as consciousness-raising (CR) and have been a component of language teaching for quite a long time (Ellis, 2003). Ellis (2010) defines a CR task as "a pedagogic activity where the learners are provided with L2 data in some form and required to perform some operation on or with it, the purpose of which is to arrive at an explicit understanding of some linguistic property or properties of the target language" (p. 160). Thus, Jin (2011) argues that for consciousness-raising to be brought about, learners should pass through three stages- namely, attending, noticing, and understanding. This is in line with the constructivist perspective which reduces fear and anxiety from the learners.

In other words, CR activities attempt to raise learners' awareness through initially helping them attend to and subsequently notice formal features of language so as to convert them into knowledge which is the outcome of understanding (Orey, 2010). The common practice of CR tasks is described by Ellis (2010) in the following quotation:

The 'attempt to isolate a specific linguistic feature for focused attention'; from the wealth of language data to which learners are exposed, we identify particular features and draw the learner's attention specifically to these. The provision of 'data which illustrate the targeted feature'; it is our contention that this data should as far as possible be drawn from texts, both spoken and written, which learners have already processed for meaning, and that as far as possible those texts should have been produced for a communicative purpose, not simply to illustrate features of the language. The requirement that learners 'utilize intellectual effort' to understand the targeted feature; there is a deliberate attempt to involve the learner in hypothesizing about the data and to encourage hypothesis testing (p. 6).

Following the quotation above, Ellis stresses that the aim of CR is to produce communicative competence and not simply showing learners the structure of the language which is in line with the constructivist view. Secondly, Ellis is interested in how the learner develops as a language learner and not how proficient the learner has become. This notion is terribly against the traditional view of language as a science of in-put and out-put view of cognition.

With regard to the above, Nunan (2001) states that learners who engage in consciousness-raising activities should be exposed to a body of text, written or spoken. This implies that the text should illustrate for the learners the important linguistic features that they are required to learn. Once an appropriate set of texts have been drawn up, it is time to design a series of communicative tasks which would obligate learners to process the texts for meaning, so that the texts become a part of the learners' learning experience (Ellis, 2003). Despite the fact that CR activities could potentially serve to enhance language learning in various areas, they have mainly been utilized to improve grammar instruction/learning (Jin, 2011; Orey, 2010; Mohamed, 2003). There are a good number of studies that have nevertheless made use of consciousness-raising activities in language learning areas other than grammar. Walsh (2005) for instance, employed CR activities for a writing class more specifically, to raise his learners' awareness of cohesion before subsequently instructing them on writing more cohesive texts. The learning of grammar from this

perspective is just part of the whole process of communication rather than the product itself. To illustrate this further, it would be needful to look at the importance of context in language learning in the view of language as social practice.

2.2.1.1 Language as a social practice

Language is inextricably entwined with our mental life, our perceiving, our remembering, our attending, our comprehending, and our thinking; in short all of our attempts to make sense of our experiences in the world (Clark and Owtram, 2012). It is regarded as a tool that enables people to organize and control mental processes such as planning, problem solving and learning (Shrum and Glisan, 2000, p.11). Sivasubramaniam (2011, p.53) views language as a creative instrument of meaning making which “has the power to create meaning anew and afresh” each time that someone uses it. It is also the medium through which teachers introduce and convey concepts and procedures and through which texts are read and problems are solved (Bohlmann, 2001). This explains why Sivasubramaniam (2011) states that language is a set of higher psychological processes that include creativity, critical and hypothetical thinking and reasoning. These views can make it easier for the researcher to explain the social context of language use and also the relationship that language has with the culture of its participants.

An understanding of language as “open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal” (Shohamy, 2007, p.5) encompass all the rich complexities of communication. This expanded view of language can also make the educational experience more engaging for the learners. Language is not a thing to be studied but a way of seeing, understanding and communicating about the world and each language user uses his or her language(s) differently to do this (Foncha 2013). People use language for purposive communication and learning a new language involves learning how to use words, rules and knowledge about that language and its use in order to communicate with speakers of the language.

Language also is something that people do in their daily lives and something they use to express, create and interpret meanings and to establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships. If language is a social practice of meaning-making

and interpretation, then it is not enough for language learners just to know grammar and vocabulary. They also need to know how that language is used to create and represent meanings and how to communicate with others and to engage with the communication of others. This requires the development of awareness of the nature of language and its impact on the world (Svalberg, 2007). It is necessary to make clear 'what kinds of language practices are valued and considered good, normal, appropriate, or correct' in particular classrooms and schools, and who are likely to be the winners and losers in the ideological orientations (Heller and Martin-Jones, 2001, p.2).

To take this one step further, Hornberger (2002, p.30) argues that "multilingual language policies are essentially about opening up ideological and implementation space in the environment for as many languages as possible." Pennycook (2007, p.2) also claims that language is best understood as an emergent social act, rather than something external that we acquire and reproduce: "a material part of social and cultural life rather than...an abstract entity". Pennycook (2007) is interested in how meaning emerges from social interactions involving language in different physical and symbolic spaces and equally how language as a social act can interpret and transform locality. As he argues: "Everything happens locally. However global a practice may be, it still happens locally" (Pennycook, 2007, p.128). Learning as the production of practice creates boundaries, not because participants are trying to exclude others (though this can be the case) but because sharing a history of learning ends up distinguishing those who were involved from those who were not (Hornberger, 2002).

In other words, language can bring people together, especially when those people communicate in a language that is understood by all of them. It reflects one's understanding (conceptualization) of certain issues and it also mirrors the culture of its speakers. Thus learning a new language should therefore be seen as a form of acculturation (Donato, 2000). Therefore, to be able to gain competence in a foreign language, one requires the ability to take the context of interaction seriously during interpretation and this should be seen as an ecological view of language (Shrum and Glisan, 2000). In other words language has to do with communication (verbal and

non-verbal), expression of feelings and thoughts and conceptualization. Hence this study investigates teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing of English FAL not as a product, but rather as a process where the researcher strives to see how these learners develop in their writing which is consistent with the constructivist and ecological perspectives of language learning.

2.2.2 Constructivist theory

The constructivist approach to language learning is based on the premise that knowledge is a construction of reality. It focuses on the ways in which young learners think as they interact with the world. That is, it emphasizes active participation and engagement of learners in constructing knowledge that can enable them to build their own views about the world. According to the constructivists, people learn by constructing their knowledge and also by comparing it with their prior knowledge in order to come to a new understanding. Following this Leach and Scott (2000, p.43) view the constructivist perspective of learners as natural scientists and active learners who should be given the opportunity to participate and engage in their own experimentation and problem solving.

von Glaserfeld (2003) points out that constructivism is a "viewpoint in learning theory which holds that individuals acquire knowledge by building it from innate capabilities and also by interacting with their environment" (p. 351). The Constructivist theory suggests that as learners learn, they do not simply memorize or take on others' conceptions of reality; instead, they create their own meaning and understanding which serves as the rationale for this study (Leach and Scott, 2000).

In addition, Leach and Scott (2000, p.43) state that personal constructivism focuses on the individual learner's conceptual framework which stresses that new knowledge needs to be intelligible and fruitful for the learner to make sense of it. That is, the learner can construct his or her own knowledge as she/he tries to connect it with her/his own experiences from various sources including the home and the school. Personal constructivism, is therefore, equally important in knowledge construction. It might also be needful to stress that learning in this case should be viewed as social practice where there is neither right nor wrong but with the essence of making meaning from interactions, participation and engagement.

In a constructivist classroom, the teacher is no longer responsible for transmitting knowledge, but acts as a facilitator with numerous roles: a presenter (of learner activities), an observer, a question and problem poser, an environmental organizer, a public relations manager (understanding and supporting), a documenter (of children's learning), a contributor to the classroom culture and a theory builder (Nomlomo, 2007). The teachers' roles mentioned above are related to or complement the roles of the teacher that are outlined in the South African Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, 2002), namely, mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of materials and learning programmes, leaders, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, etc. (RNCS, 2002, p.3). Through mediation, the teachers must acknowledge the need for learners to play an active role in acquiring new knowledge. In other words, the learners should take control of their own learning in order to construct new knowledge.

Martin *et al.* (1994, p.46) are of the opinion that a Constructivist Teaching and Learning Model is based on four key activities by the learner (i.e. the 4 E Learning Cycle): (i) exploration, (ii) explanation, (iii) expansion and (iv), evaluation. All the (4E) activities have implications for proficiency in the language of teaching and learning (Martin *et al.*, 1994). Learners cannot explore and explain concepts meaningfully if they are using a language in which they lack competence. Likewise, the language used in evaluating knowledge is very important. Thus it might be argued that if learners are evaluated in a language which they do not understand well, the evaluation results may be distorted in one way or another. In each case, the teacher has a significant role to play as a facilitator of knowledge construction. In the process of knowledge construction the teacher should create learning circumstances which are meaningful to the learners (Martin *et al.*, 1994). In order to deepen their understanding, learners should be encouraged to think and to exchange views with their peers.

The Constructivist Teaching and Learning Model (or Learning Cycle) suggests a learner-centred approach to language teaching and learning that requires the learners to explore learning activities in order to discover new knowledge (Martin *et*

al., 1994, p.46). Exploratory activity such as cooperative learning should be encouraged to explain the ideas they discovered in their exploration in meaningful ways. They should be encouraged to expand their knowledge through interactions and communication with peers, teachers, and parents and with other people in their communities. Having explored and extended their language understanding, the learners should evaluate their knowledge. At this stage the teacher should assess them in order to see whether there is any change in learners' understanding and their mastery of science process skills (Martin *et al.*, 1994). Evaluation in this case is meant to assess the level of development in the learner's acquisition and generation of new knowledge.

The effectiveness of the interaction between the teacher (as a facilitator) and the learners depends on the language used in the teaching-learning process (Giri, 2011). Also, literacy (reading and writing) plays a major role in generating new knowledge. In other words, learners should make use of language skills, (reading and writing) to interpret and apply scientific knowledge in meaningful ways. As learners construct knowledge from different stimuli in the environment, meaningful knowledge construction depends on the way learners cope with the language of instruction. For example, Honig, *et al.* (2008) assert that learners may not comprehend or make meaning of what is said by the teacher if the teacher uses unfamiliar words or words with specialist meanings. Therefore, the language used in teaching should not be oversimplified because it is important in constructing new knowledge consistent with the socio-cultural theory.

2.2.2.1 Sociocultural theory

The Sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of language competence in classroom communication or interaction. Vygotsky's (1934) sociocultural theory is used to explain how language is used by teachers and learners to mediate learning. At the centre of mediation is language (input). In other words, the sociocultural aspect features in this study clarifies how language input is processed through social interaction (between teachers and learners, and between learners themselves) to produce meaningful outputs. In a nutshell, the sociocultural theory highlights the roles of the different participants (teacher and learners) in classroom interaction. To

illustrate the status and the role of the learners' L1 and the L2 in classroom interaction, models of bilingual education are discussed within the South African context. Leach and Scott (2000, p.43) state that social constructivism looks at how learning is influenced by the social environment e.g. interaction between teachers and learners, and among learners themselves. In the education context, constructivism (social) is very crucial because learning involves making sense of what is being learned which in most cases occur when the learner interacts with the people and the environment surrounding him/her (e.g. parents, friends, etc.).

Furthermore, the Sociocultural theory perceives language as a tool for developing thoughts, and it believes that all learning is social (Fahim, 2012). It takes into consideration the role of social interaction in learning and development. That is, sociocultural theory sees learning and development as cognitive and social processes that occur as a result of interaction between 'experts' (more capable) and 'novices' (less capable) (Shrum and Glisan, 2000, p.7). In the context of this study, the experts are teachers while the novices are the learners who have to be assisted to get to a higher level of development by means of interaction through language in what Vygotsky refer to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

There are three concepts that are involved in learning within the sociocultural theory, namely, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), mediation and scaffolding (Shrum and Glisan, 2000; Fahim, 2012).

2.2.2.2 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) assumes that the learner brings two levels of development to the learning task: (i) what the learner can do or the actual developmental level, (ii) what the learner should be able to do in the future or potential developmental level. As the learner interacts with others, she progresses from the actual developmental level to the potential developmental level. The distance between these two developmental levels is referred to as the Zone of Proximal Development (Lantolf, 2000; Shrum and Glisan, 2000; Ohta, 2000; Fahim, 2012).

For learning to take place, instruction must occur in the learner's ZPD (Freeman and Freeman, 1994, p.57). In other words, the learner must be guided by an adult (teacher in this case) to reach his/her potential developmental level. The interaction between the learner and the teacher is scaffolding. Scaffolding is a collaborative process which enhances learning by providing assistance to one another (Ohta, 2000, p.52). In the process of scaffolding, the expert (teacher or more capable peer) supports the learner until he/she reaches a stage where he/she can do the tasks without the teacher's or expert's support. Thus Freeman and Freeman (1994, p.59) perceive a scaffold as a temporary framework for a building or construction because it supports a building during its construction, and then it is taken down once the building is finished. In this case, construction refers to knowledge construction or meaning making.

The ZPD or learner's attainment of his/her potential level has implications for the teaching approaches that the teacher employs in the lessons, as well as the kind of interactions that occur in the classroom between the teacher and the learner, and between the learner and his/her peers. Problem-solving under the teacher's guidance (or a parent or a more capable peer) is seen as one of the effective strategies of achieving the ZPD (Shrum and Glisan, 2000, p.8). Collaborative or interactive learning in the form of group work is also essential as children learn from each other. Effectiveness in the ZPD depends on a number of factors such as the expertise of the helper, the nature of the task, the goal of the task, and the developmental level of the learner (Ohta, 2000, p.52). For instance, if the helper is not more knowledgeable than the learner (e.g. $i + 1$), or the task is too easy, or there is too much assistance, the development of the learner may be negatively affected.

The learner's level of actual development can only be seen when the learner is performing a task without assistance from a more knowledgeable person. But when he/she is able to do the learning tasks under the guidance of a more capable individual, then he/she is working on his/her potential level of development. The ZPD is only reached when the learner can do the task without full assistance from the more knowledgeable other. The ZPD level then becomes the actual level of

development for further learning. This shows that performance and assistance in learning complement each other (Shrum and Glisan, 2000, p.8).

It should be noted that language is very crucial as a tool of interaction in the achievement of the ZPD. If there is a mismatch between the languages of the people or parties involved in interaction, it may be difficult for learners to get into a higher or potential level of development. For instance, if there is no mutual understanding between the teacher and the learner, learning can hardly take place. Thus Freeman and Freeman (1994) and Shrum and Glisan (2000) put forward the importance of language in sociocultural theory.

2.2.2.3 Ecological theory

The Ecological view of language conceptualizes language as an inventive, innovative and creative force (Foncha, 2013). Both the constructivist and ecological paradigms argue that when learning a language, it is also a way of learning its sociocultural aspects which is suggestive of the participants' differences in their interpretations. This argument is summed up in the words of Leontiev (1981) that "these meanings could become available gradually as the learner may act and interact within and with [his/her] environment". Learning should not therefore be seen as a "holus bolus or a piecemeal migration of meaning to the inside of the learner's head, but rather the development of the increasingly effective ways of dealing with words and their meaning" (Leontiev, 1981, p.246).

Since the constructivist view of language locates meaning in language use in context, it tallies with the ecological approach where everything is being connected (Foncha, 2013). Thus the ecological view and the constructivist view of language assign a particular prominence to the learning environment, which is relevant to the context of this study. In light of this, language is representational and figurative (McRae, 1991), dialogical and as a result, expansive (Bakhtin, 1981); imminent and therefore semiotic (Peirce, 1995). The above observation reinforces an Ecological view of language as it has the potential to open alternative route of human enquiry to all other rational approaches in order for the participants to gain competence in the language used in the process of learning (Foncha, 2013).

2.2.2.4 Affordances

Language learning is not a process of representing linguistic objects from the brain on the basis of input received (van Lier, 2000). A human being does not have or possess language, but is capable of learning and living in it in any given context (Foncha, 2013). Their environment is full of language repertoires that provide opportunities for learning and for the active participating learner. Mohr and Mohr (2007) sum this up in an argument that the linguistic world in which the learner has access to and in which the learner is actively involved is full of “demands and requirements, opportunities and limitations, rejections and invitations, enablement and constraints in short, affordances.” Learners therefore require a rich “semiotic budget” to be able to structure their activities and participation so that access is made available, and engagement is encouraged (Foncha, 2013). Summarily, language eases interaction between peers without necessarily being part of the interaction and action. Thus, affordances are therefore all the resources available for using during interactions that may not necessarily form part of the interaction.

2.2.2.5 Constructivist View of Learning

Accordingly, von Glaserfeld (2003, p.351) constructivism is a “viewpoint in learning theory which holds that individuals acquire knowledge by building it from innate capabilities by interacting with their environment.” The Constructivist theory suggests that as students learn, they do not simply memorize or take on others' conceptions of reality; instead, they create their own meaning and understanding. In the classroom, learners use similar ways to construct their own meanings from stimuli and the input that are available to them. In view of this, it appears that the task of the human brain is to make sense of an experience. From all the input and past experiences, the learners continually construct a view of what is real and truthful. Each learner can do this in a unique way through inventiveness and creativity. These learners therefore need regular opportunities to do more than just memorize what their teachers and books convey to them. Therefore for competence/learning/understanding to occur, the participants need to deal with information and experience and putting it together to make meaningful sense (Moore, 2006).

Sivsubramaniam (2004) observes that teachers can only help students to acquire deep learning through:

- Listening to students' ideas and encouraging their questions.
- Encouraging students to actively participate in doing, discussing, and creating.
- Providing more than one source of information so that the students can see different perspectives and have many inputs.
- Encouraging students to compare and contrast ideas.
- Including writing so students can think through their ideas.

This is meant to suggest that learners are not empty vessels that need to be filled in but they have their own stock of knowledge that they simply need to develop through the interaction with participative others. To make this clearer, this study would go further to look at the levels of development in English second language learners around the world to conceptualise L2 learning in this study.

2.3 English Second Language learners – globally

The studies reviewed below are representative of a widely found incongruity between learners expected and actual level in English proficiency in writing.

2.3.1 Asia

Yin and Ung (2001, p.2) investigated ESL students' written work with a focus on subjects with low language proficiency. They attempted to analyse, describe, and explain the cross-linguistic influence found in 50 English written essays of low proficiency students (that is students with a score that was less than 50% of the total marks (30 marks) to determine how the native language or mother tongue (in their case, Bahasa Melayu) influenced the acquisition of English. The written pieces were analysed for substratum transfer in the areas of lexis, grammar and syntax produced. The analysis reveals items which have been incorrectly used due to the interference from L1 and low proficiency of the target language. In their findings, they identified items like: approximation; coined words and slang; language switch; medium transfer; inappropriate use of tenses; omission of articles; omission or wrong

usage of articles; adjective morphology errors; prefabricated patterns; and literal translation (p.3-4). The findings of this study are relevant to the present study because the present study also focuses on experiences of L1 learners in their writing activities in English language as an additional language to these learners.

2.3.2 Taiwan

Other researchers examined the types of errors in Taiwanese English foreign language (EFL) students' English writing (Lin, 2002; Kao, 1999). Kao (1999) studied 169 compositions from 53 Taiwanese college students who were English major students. A total of 928 errors were found, among which grammatical errors occurred with the greatest frequency, 66%, semantic errors occurred 18% of the time, and lexical errors occurred with the least frequency, 16%. Lin (2002) examined 26 essays from Taiwanese EFL students at college level. The results of this study indicates that the four highest error frequencies were sentence structures (30.43%), wrong verb forms (21.01%), sentence fragments (15.94%), and wrong use of words (15.94%).

Furthermore, another grammatical error that is frequently found in Taiwanese EFL students' compositions is the misuse of English articles (Chen, 2000). Chen (2000) considered that English articles could be one of the most difficult grammatical parts for Taiwanese EFL students as there is not an equivalent syntactical device to the English article system. Overall, all 3 studies on Taiwanese learners are interesting and could be useful to the present study, since they dealt with learners who write English as a second language.

2.3.3 Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese and Cambodian

Learners were given two sets of sequential pictures, one at a time, and asked to write a story in English beginning with the first picture and ending with the last, in the order presented in each set. Unlike in many other studies where learners were given limited time to do the tasks, there was no time limit for this task. However, the four subjects completed their tasks in an hour; the four learners were assessed before the tasks, using the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR) in order to determine their L2 writing proficiency level in their writing skills. The study

might have some similarities with the present study, because both studies involve different L2 learners. The findings indicate that when learners are writing in the target language, they rely on their native structures to produce a response.

Wolfersberger's (2003) study examines the composition process and writing strategies of three lower proficiency Japanese subjects in their L1 and L2. Wolfersberger's (2003) study reveals that while some L1 strategies may transfer to the L2 writing process, lower proficiency writers struggle in utilising all strategies that could help their writing process in L2. This is to suggest that L2 learners are faced with writing tasks requiring an L1 proficiency level above to the L2 writing process, even though the learner may have a multiplicity of strategies available when completing the same task in the L1.

2.3.4 German and Spanish ESL speakers

Ilomaki (2005) conducted a cross-sectional study with particular reference to Finnish-speaking and English-speaking learners of German. The researcher used learners' written output to analyse learner errors and identify reasons why different errors may have occurred. Ilomaki (2005, p.12) concludes that learners do not necessarily make the same errors in written and oral production, due to different processing conditions and learners with one native language do not necessarily make the same errors as learners with different native language. The study also reveals that adult learners' errors resulted from cross-linguistic influence that is one language influences another through borrowing, interference and language transfer. Ilomaki (2005, p.12) argues that the age factor is not necessarily a decisive factor in second language learning or in cross-linguistic influence. Ilomaki's (2005) study is unique because the aspect of previously acquired language other than mother tongue tends to be neglected in L2 learning acquisition process.

In their study of Spanish and German English second language speakers, Llach *et al.* (2005, p.1) investigated the quantitative and qualitative differences in the production of lexical errors in English written performance by young Spanish and German learners. One crucial aspect highlighted in Llach *et al.*'s (2005, p.1) study is the issue of length of the written work. In light of these results, both mother tongue

groups were ascribed to the same proficiency level in English. Since it is not clear in Llach *et al.*'s (2005, p.1-19) findings why German learners produced more lexical errors than their Spanish counterparts, further research needs to be conducted on this aspect.

All these studies discussed above are useful and informative and provides guidance on how to carry out research like the present study. These studies do not only give insight into how a learner learns a second language and the factors that impact on that process, but they also assist a researcher to understand some of the experiences that L2 learners have in writing ESL.

2.3.5 Uganda

Uganda declared Kiswahili as the official language, but it has continuously promoted the use of English language and, in one way or another failed to promote the use of Kiswahili language nationally (Legère, 2002). In Uganda, the medium of instruction (MoI) is English in all educational systems. However, for urban primary schools, the MoI is English throughout, and in rural primary schools, the MoI from Grade 3 to Grade 5 is the language of the area and for the rest of the classes, English remains the MoI. Languages of Instruction have been used differently in different educational levels as mentioned above. This has affected learners not only in the mastering of the languages of instruction, but also in the conceptualization of subject contents in classrooms. This situation is evident in Ugandan schools where learners especially from rural primary schools fail to understand the subject content when English becomes the MoI (Grade 5 to Grade 9) (Legère, 2002).

2.3.6 Tanzania

In Tanzania, the MoI in government primary schools is Kiswahili while English remains the MoI in private primary and all secondary schools and at the higher institutions of learning (King'ei, 2010; Msanjila, 2005). In Tanzania, languages of instruction have been used differently in different educational levels as mentioned above. This has affected learners not only in the mastering of the languages of instruction, but also in the conceptualization of subject contents in classrooms. It has been maintained that, Tanzanian students fail to excel in their studies not only

because of language barrier, but also because of insufficient English language background (Gran, 2007). Furthermore, Senkoro (2005) observes that, English language problems at the University of Dar es salaam (UDSM) deny students the opportunity to engage in fruitful discussions with their lecturers. According to Mwananchi (2009, p.5) lack of the English language commands, negatively affects Tanzanian students' performance in their examinations.

2.3.7 Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya

Adedimeji, (2007); Adeniyi (2006, p.25) and Babatunde (2001) argue that "... the very obvious deviations from Standard English ... may suggest that the speaker was translating directly from his/[her] mother tongue." They identify the following deviations in syntax in Nigerian, Ghanian and Kenyan English:

- Omission of function words;
- Semantic extension of certain lexical items from African languages to cover various meanings and functions in English;
- Occurrence of certain redundancies, including plurarisation of mass nouns;
- Retention of anaphoric pronouns in non-subject relativisation;
- Use of affirmative to yes/no questions;
- Unusual word order in adjectival phrases containing demonstrative or possessive pronouns.

2.3.8 South Africa

According to the 2011 census, only about 23% of South Africans speak Afrikaans or English as their first language (Statistics South Africa, 2012). In order to achieve educational and hence labour market success, the majority of South African children therefore need to become fluent in either English or Afrikaans. In reality, a vast majority choose to learn English rather than Afrikaans as the second language, given its status as a global language. Casale and Posel (2011) demonstrate that English proficiency also improves labour market returns directly.

However Nel (2005, p.151) confirms that many learners in South Africa (especially in rural areas) are hardly exposed to English outside the classroom. Hence teachers

resort to code-switching and code-mixing, although the learners are expected to write their examinations in English. Holmardottir's (2005) observations in Cape Town schools show that isiXhosa was used for most of the time when the teachers interacted with their learners. After explaining everything in isiXhosa, sentences were written in English on the board (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004). That alone confuses the learners as they have to start forming a connection between the verbal statements in their mother tongue, and the statements written in English. As stated above, this could be attributed to teachers' limited proficiency in English. This often results in producing students with low competence in English (Holmardottir, 2005). In some cases, the same students are sent back to teach English, probably in the same way. No one would expect good results under such conditions, instead "unofficial" code-switching and mixing in teaching and learning becomes the order of the day (ibid). In the context of this study all of the above findings are useful because they investigate teachers and learners experiences of learners when writing ESL.

2.4 Acquisition of writing in English Second Language

The acquisition of a second language is often viewed as a process that differs from native-language acquisition (Kaushanskaya, 2011), and it is frequently assumed that factors influencing one's ability to acquire a second language do not play a role in native-language development (Dörnyei, 2001). However, it is also well-established that knowledge of a second language impacts on the ability to manage information in the native language (Marian and Spivey, 2003). In the same light, current cognitive and psycholinguistic models of bilingualism explicitly posit that the two languages interact, even during language-specific processing (Dijkstra and Van Heuven, 2002; Costa *et al.*, 2000). Yet, the degree to which acquisition of a second language influences native-language function remains underspecified. Thus, knowledge regarding the interactivity of two languages within a single cognitive system remains incomplete.

Writing is highly complex; its importance in our society today cannot be overemphasized. Learning how to write requires metacognitive activities such as planning, monitoring and reflection (Bhagwan-Snetselaar, 2008). Writing in L2 makes the task further complicated as it requires sufficient command over the L2 to

fulfill all the formalities; composing, developing logical ideas, which are essential for a written text to be comprehensible (Sarfraz, 2011). The process of writing, specifically writing through a practical research task, also helps to develop the students' cognitive skills in acquiring the necessary strategies such as analyzing results of a research task, inferring from the significant differences observed in comparing means, frequencies etc. (Bacha, 2002, p.164). Therefore producing a piece of writing relies on putting ideas into a written form. That is, being able to write by hand or produce all the words through some other form (Bazerman, 2010). For these reasons, writing has always been an essential aspect of the curriculum of English as a major, and for academic purposes (Al-Khuwaileh and Shoumali, 2000).

Hence, Lyon (2001) states that learning to read and write is the foundation of academic ability. Failure to acquire writing in early grade levels is likely to hinder children's progress in all subjects throughout the rest of their school years because they would not be able to comprehend grade-level textbooks (Elbro and Scarborough, 2004). In the later stage of life they would not also be able to take notes, answer written questions, and write experimental reports and taking minutes when they are obliged to in the work place.

Some eminent second language acquisition researchers (Pearson and Burns, 2008; Ellis, 2003) believe that language learning strategies are key factors in the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language and understanding them could help language teachers in providing the students with the best possible instruction. Hence learners' writing in a second language are faced with challenges related to second language acquisition such as language proficiency in target language (TL) and competence which underpins the ability to write in the Second language (L2) (Sarfraz, 2011). It is equally important for teachers to help English language learners (ELLs) understand how a variety of sentence structures are used to convey meaning in different types of texts like compare–contrast, persuasive, descriptive and argumentative texts.

Learning a language is a complex process where the development of grammar is only one part (Clark, 2003). It needs to be understood that while writing, a learner is

engaged into a cognitive process of formulating ideas in mother tongue (MT) and then translating them into the TL (Sarfraz, 2011). Dreher and Gray (2010) pointed out that, if ELLs are not familiar with the sentence structures within a compare and contrast text, this might hinder their comprehension of the information or content in the text and hence hamper their construction of meaning. Chamot (2004, p.14) stated that language learning strategies are “the conscious thoughts and actions that learners need to take in order to achieve a learning goal”.

Additionally, Dreher and Gray (2010, p.141) suggested that, once ELLs’ understanding of certain text structures is improved, teachers can further help ELLs to activate and extend their understandings of the text by building upon their background knowledge as “ELL students are also likely to draw from different types of background knowledge than native English-speaking students. This is particularly true because they come from cultural and linguistic backgrounds that may be different from that of either their peers or their teacher”.

Other social and psychological factors are important in understanding the processes of language acquisition. The following quotation justifies some of these factors.

Research has shown that learner’s use and development of English is not restricted to the development of grammatical structures and vocabulary but also includes the development of communicative aspects such as attracting and sustaining attention, managing interactions in groups and with different speakers and the development of positive attitudes towards themselves as learners (Clark, 2003, p.108).

In developing a framework for monitoring the progress of learners of English as a second language, it is essential to include social aspects of learning rather than concentrate on the development of morphology and syntax (Clarke, 2009). The stages described here take account of both grammatical progress and communicative competence (Richards, 2006; Clark, 2003). In the early years, young learners of English as a second language are likely to progress through the following stages (Clarke, 2009; Clark, 2003):

- Continued use of the home language in the new

- Language context use of non-verbal communication
- A period of silence for some learners
- Use of repetition and language play
- Use of single words, formulae and routines
- Development of productive language
- Metalinguistic awareness.

Learner's progress through these stages can only be described in terms of achieving outcomes at various levels.

2.4.1 Teaching of English language

While English is an international language, and a means to economic benefits, it is not without its problems, and is definitely not neutral (Mda and Mothata, 2000). The deliberate teaching of English is problematic for many mainstream teachers who are limited in conceptualizing language development within the content areas in the simplistic form of vocabulary (Echevarria and Short, 2004). Fillmore and Snow (2000) summarize the point in their statement that "the more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better students will learn." While this focus on knowledge about language may seem counterintuitive to communicative language teaching approaches that reduce the role of deliberate grammar teaching, Andrews (2007) argues that knowledge about language is necessary to effectively implement communicative methods.

On the other hand, research with native English speakers indicates that educational television programs can be a source of language learning for these students (Linebarger, 2001). In a similar study, Uchikoshi (2005) found that watching Arthur, a television program that emphasizes narrative storytelling, improved Spanish-speaking ELLs' oral language development more than watching Between the Lions, a television program emphasizing phonics. Taken together, these studies indicate that ELLs may benefit from increased exposure to rich language experiences using media such as television.

According to National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA, 2006, p.4) the teacher can help to develop the learner's language and his/her engagement with the curriculum by:

- Using gestures to illustrate actions and activities (pointing, miming)
- Using visual cues to support the development of oral interactions (photographs, posters, pictures)
- Displaying printed phrases that are commonly used by teachers and learners (flashcards)
- Writing and sounding out words and phrases the learner can use to look for clarification (for example; 'can you explain that again please?'.)
- Simplifying texts that contain complex sentences and ideas
- Providing opportunities for learners to create their own monolingual or bilingual dictionaries and enabling the learner to use dictionary skills where appropriate
- Displaying flip charts and posters used to record new words, groups of words or word structures
- Setting aside time for independent and guided reading
- Asking questions about errors that the learner has made during the writing process and discussing with him/her how the errors might be corrected.

All these suggestions go a long way to signpost that the first step to learning a language is being exposed to that language which is in line with the constructivist perspective of language learning as a social practice.

2.4.2 Teaching language with limited English proficiency

In the South African context, most of the African teachers are L2 speakers of English, and many of them have limited proficiency in the language. As a consequence, the teachers themselves are not competent and confident enough to teach English, thus resulting to code-mixing and code-switching in the teachers' and learners' mother tongue and this occurs frequently in the classrooms. Teachers resort to code-mixing and code-switching in the classroom (Probyn *et al.*, 2002; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004), although school-leavers are required to write their final (matriculation) examinations in English.

Moreover teachers are held responsible for literacy crisis resulting from the use of L2 as LoLT. Where teachers' own L2 knowledge is not at an acceptable standard for the use of English as the LoLT, This can be true because their poor usage and knowledge of the language can be transferred to the learners (Nel and Muller, 2010). The minister of Basic Education, Mrs. Motshekga (2013) pointed out that the challenge here will be improving the English language skills of teachers whose mother tongue is not English. Pandor (2004), in her speech as the National Minister of Education acknowledged the importance of quality education and she promised to provide intensive training to teachers in preparation for the curriculum.

In light of the above, poor English teaching has an impact on L2 on South African learners' poor proficiency in English first additional language. Most teachers are lacking the training, knowledge, tools and time to support students with limited English proficiency to ascertain that students achieve their full potential (Nel, 2007). Nunan (2001) states that proponents of Contrastive Analysis claim that where the L1 and L2 rules are not the same, errors are likely to occur as a result of interference between the two languages. Hence, Kannan (2009) once indicated that English is not taught properly in the classroom by second language teachers. With all these problems arising from the poor teaching of English one would not expect good teaching of writing given that it is even more complex than the other literacy skills.

2.4.3 Teacher perception

Perception refers to the sorting out, interpretation, analysis and integration of stimuli involving our sense organs and brain, and our behaviour is essentially a reflection of how we react to and interpret stimuli from the world around us (Smith 2000). This implies that our perception shapes our belief system and determines our practice. It follows that teachers' beliefs influence their judgments and practices, thereby determining how they behave in the classroom. That is, if teachers fail to consider writing important, their perceptions can influence their teaching of this skill, since, according to Noe (2004), perception has a relationship with our actions and practices. This condition may force one to critically consider Noe's (2004) claim that

an individual's perception is realized through action because in this case, either the teachers' perception is only a claimed one, or it can be argued that not all perceptions are shown in action.

Earlier studies, employing the approach of surveys, on L2 students' reactions to and perceptions of teachers' written feedback tended to focus on necessarily limited perspective of a particular group of informants, often without any effort to triangulate data by, for example, surveying teachers or examining comments (Ferris, 2003). Both teachers' comments and student's perceptions of those comments are slippery constructs which are difficult to define with any precision (Noe, 2004). This is meant to caution that statistics alone cannot give an insight into the understanding of the difficulties in writing which is why this study prefers to dig in-depth qualitatively to go beyond simple numbers.

2.5 Writing

Writing and its indispensable role for learning a language cannot be denied. It is one of the four language skills needed for written communication. Despite this, it is a neglected skill. That is why the current study focuses on investigating teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in English FAL. However, writing is not developed in isolation from other skills. All language skills should be integrated if language is to be taught properly (Burns, 2001, p.89). In the case of English, writing as a skill becomes extremely important because it is a means of communication through which every branch of human thought is made available (Quitadamo and Kurtz, 2007). Moreover, writing skills enhance cognitive and linguistic awareness (Abu-Jalil, 2001).

In this regard, Hamp-Lyons (2002) believes that writing is considered as a principal medium of communication through which people can understand each other from different points and geographical spots of the globe. Writing as a skill requires language learners to master a number of complex rhetorical, linguistic and mechanical conventions (Myles, 2002). By nature, such conventions are complex as well as tend to be difficult to teach and therefore require mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements

(Salem, 2013). These conventions have been analyzed and categorized under such rubrics as 'writing components' (Msanjila, 2005), 'writing criteria' (Salem, 2013) and 'writing skills' (Myles, 2002).

2.5.1 What is writing?

Writing has been considered as a support skill which was previously done to reinforce the grammar acquisition, support the memorization of language structures and to emphasize on even oral proficiency as in grammar-translation, audio-lingual and communicative methods respectively (Chang, 2011). "A student's writing is not only used to evaluate her/his English proficiency, but also to assess her/his understanding of other subjects such as social studies, law, economics, physical and natural sciences. Writing is also considered an important part of almost all university level courses" (Darus and Hei Ching, 2009, p.10). Massi (2007) considers writing as a tool for the creation of ideas and the consolidation of the linguistic system by using it for communication in an interactive way. Therefore writing is an interactive process by nature, since it results from the symbolic interplay between the writer, text, and reader.

Aracena *et al.* (2006) explain the writing process in terms of an interaction of three processing systems in which each processing system is made up of two sub-systems comprising:

- formulation, which is made up of planning and translating;
- execution, which is made up of programming and execution; and
- Monitoring, this consists of reading and editing and provides detailed information about what goes on in each system and how the systems interact with each other.

In this model, ideas and languages are already determined at the formulation stage. Then the ideas and languages become the input to the execution system where the writer decides how to execute them. Once they are executed, the monitoring system looks for a discrepancy and a solution in conjunction with the formulation system.

The formulation system starts again for new ideas or language to resolve the discrepancy detected in the previous system.

Ferris (2002) maintains that notwithstanding that issues and skills related to writing process are important, we must be aware that problems and also disorders of grammar can have negative impact and impression on the general quality of student's writing. Based on this, teachers need to help learners develop their editing as well as their composing skills.

2.5.2 Components of writing

The components of the writing mechanics are classified in various ways. The most comprehensive classification among these seems to have been proposed by Salem (2013) who defines the mechanics of writing as comprising punctuation, capitalization, spelling and paragraphing. To date, a number of studies have attempted to analyse problems which learners encounter with writing (Darus and Hei Ching, 2009; Msanjila, 2005). The most commonly reported problems are the misuse of capital letters, the inadequate use of punctuation, and wrong spelling which all rank at the apex of the hierarchies depicted by these studies. It follows that emphasizing the proper use of the mechanics of writing is not merely for the sake of exercises and examinations but also for communicative purposes. In other words, failure to appropriately use the writing mechanics may result in misinterpretation of information.

Furthermore, it appears that although incorrect spelling, violation of well-established punctuation customs, and misuse of capitalization do not generally prevent comprehension of a written message, they can adversely affect the reader's judgment and make the piece of writing look awkward (Harmer, 2007). Despite the availability of some form of literature in this area, the question of how EFL teachers can effectively address this issue; working on improving the correct use of the mechanics of writing seems to be unanswered (Harmer, 2007). Due to the enormity and complexity of language, the provision of a viable and comprehensive description of language as a whole is simply not feasible (Harmer, 2007).

2.5.3 Pedagogical aspect of writing

From a pedagogical point of view, writing is one of the four basic language skills, namely: speaking, listening, reading and writing which the teacher, as an instructor, ought to explore (Msanjila, 2005). It is not a natural activity, and has to be taught.

In this regard, Stubbs (2014, p.87) distinguishes formal features which are used in written language as follows:

Writing: spacing between words; punctuation, including parentheses; typography, including style of typeface, italicization, underlining, upper and lower case, capitalization to indicate sentence beginnings and proper nouns; inverted commas, for example to indicate that a term is being used critically (Chimpanzees' "language" is...); graphics, including lines, shapes, borders, diagrams, tables, abbreviations; logograms, for example; and layout, including paragraphing, margination, pagination, footnotes, headings and ... sub-headings....

This indicates that writing as a skill involves a number of complex rhetorical and linguistic operations which must be taught (Msanjila, 2005). Thus, for effective writing, the writer has to use a large number of formal features in order to help his/her readers infer the intended meaning. Failure to use these features correctly causes vagueness, ellipsis and ambiguity in some writings (Msanjila, 2005). In developing writing as a communicative skill, learners should constantly be made aware that particular topics in writing fit particular situations and conform to particular conventions. Conventionally, legal writings use long sentences, formal language and precise definitions to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretations (Msanjila, 2005).

2.5.4 The nature of writing

Writing is not always words put on paper. Crystal (2005) lists a number of differences between speaking and writing.

- Writing has text-types different from those of speech, e.g. letters and e-mails.
- Writing can use devices not used in speech. These are visual devices different from stress and intonation patterns used in speech.

- Spelling sometimes differs from spoken sounds.
- Writing and speaking are used for different social activities.
- The writer does not get immediate feedback from the reader. (Mohamed, 2003)

In line with Crystals, Richards (2006) explains that written language employs different syntax and vocabulary. It uses complex rather than simple clauses, a greater variety of clause types, more specific vocabulary, more complex verb phrases and tenses and more devices. Therefore writing is not limited to using orthographic symbols, according to a certain purpose (Johnstone *et al.*, 2002). It also requires selecting and organizing experience according to a particular purpose (Johnstone *et al.*, 2002). In addition to this, Lee and Van Patten (2003) view writing as a communicative act that involves the interpretation and negotiation of meaning. It is also a decision making process. This includes all the aspects of the writing situation; the purpose of writing, the likely audience, the topic, the writer's knowledge of the topic and the writer's own goal in writing (Lee and Van Patten, 2003).

2.5.5 The importance of writing

Writing in one's native language is necessary but writing in a foreign language like English which has an international and global status is an essential skill nowadays. It is important for the following reasons:

- It can help students to communicate, learn and express creativity. Moreover, helping students to become more skilful writers remains a vital educational task because writing plays a key role in the student's conceptual and linguistic development (Isleem, 2012, p.5);
- It is also important because writing skills are being assessed more often in standardized assessment for purposes of educational accountability (White and Brunning, 2005, p.66-169);
- Command of good writing skills is an essential instrument for anybody to succeed in his/her career (Pornpan, 2005, p.76);
- Writing helps non- English native students to learn as writing firstly enhances the grammar, structure idioms and vocabulary that instructors have been teaching their students. Secondly, when the students write, they have also the

opportunity to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just to say, and to take risks. Thirdly, when they write, they necessarily become involved with the new language (Mohamed, 2003, p.3-4).

- The close relationship between writing and thinking makes writing an invaluable part of any language course (Mohamed 2003, p.4).
- Writing is a vital part of thinking and learning in school contexts, particularly in the light of twenty-first century demands, and writing tasks are a critical tool for intellectual and social development (Bruning and Horn, 2000, p.30).
- Academic writing serves a variety of educational goals such as assessing knowledge, promoting critical thinking, stimulating creativity, encouraging discourse as part of a professional community and supporting cognition (Massi, 2007, p.15)
- Students' ability to present information and ideas through writing has a significant role in the academic and the professional success (Johnstone *et al.*, 2002).

According to Isleem (2012) writing is very important due to the following reasons:

- (1) It is the primary basis upon which one's work, learning, intellect will be judged whether in school, college, work place in the community
- (2) It expresses one's personality
- (3) It is portable and permanent which makes one's thinking visible
- (4) It helps one move easily among facts, inferences, and an opinion without getting confused and without confusing one's readers
- (5) It fosters one's ability to explain a complex position to readers, and oneself;
- (6) Writing stimulates one to extend a line of thought beyond one's first impressions or responses
- (7) It equips one with the communication and thinking skill he/she needs to participate in social and academic events.

In view of this, Banat (2007) points out that writing skill is invaluable for helping students communicate and understand how the parts of language go together. Moreover, writing is one of the four major language skills that need to be mastered by language learners. It involves the creation of ideas as well as the ability to express them logically and coherently (Al Souqi, 2001). Within this line of thought,

Abu- Jaleel (2001) also argues that writing is a more recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of re- planning in between.

2.5.6 Approaches to Teaching Writing

Writing for EFL learners is not an easy task, especially when the learners' English competence is not very well developed. Darayseh (2003) notes that teaching writing no longer means simply having students do grammar exercises in writing or getting writing which is free from grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes. Instead, writing should be about what students are interested in and what they really want to communicate to the reader and how they reach their final writing products. Scholars such as Raimes (2003) and Khater (2002) discuss a variety of approaches to teaching writing. These approaches vary according to the area on which to focus. They are as follows:

- *Approaches focusing on accuracy:*

a) The controlled – to – free approach:

Raimes (2003) shows how this approach developed in the 1960s with the audio-lingual method. It aims at reinforcing what was learnt in the speaking phases of the lesson through the mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms. Learners are given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or rewrite using a different structure. At a high intermediate or advanced level, learners can try some free compositions.

b) The paragraph pattern approach:

This approach stresses organization; learners copy paragraphs, analyse their forms and imitate model passages.

c) The grammar – syntax- organization approach:

This approach is based on the assumption that writing is not composed of separate skills developed one by one while writing. It stresses on working simultaneously on more than one composition feature in which the learners are trained to pay close attention to organization, grammar and syntax. This approach links the purpose of writing to the form needed to convey the message.

- *Approaches focusing on text:*

a) The product approach:

This approach is concerned mainly with the finished product aimed at directing learners toward pre-specified objectives. With this approach, teachers focus on the final shape of a piece of writing and measure it against criteria of vocabulary use, grammatical use and mechanics of writing. Normally, learners in product approach writing classes would study model texts and then attempt various drills aiming to draw the learner-writers' attention to the relevant features of a text. The ultimate goal is for learners to produce a similar text to the one they have gone through. Such an approach fails to take into consideration the non-native learner's individual needs. Besides, the product approach requires that learners focus on model, form and duplication. This is the same as the genre approach to writing.

Additionally, Richards (2006, p.36) goes through some assumptions and features of the product approach:

- Learners' needs for writing are specific and the writing programs should meet these needs.
- Model compositions that include rules and structures learners should use are presented.
- There is great emphasis on correct grammar and structures.
- Errors are avoided through guiding and controlling learners' writing.
- The mechanics of grammar are taught.

However, Sun (2009) argues that such an approach provides little or no insight into the actual processes involved in managing to arrive at the final product but also restricts students to what they can write. This critique does not appear to be valuable because Sun fails to provide an alternative to what he condemns.

- *An approach focusing on fluency:*

This approach stresses quantity rather than quality. Grammatical accuracy and organization are expected to develop gradually. The focus is on "audience" and "content". Free writing is often based on pupils' interests (Raimes, 2003). Khater (2002) recommends giving pupils the opportunity to write a lot, regardless of the mistakes they make in grammar and mechanics of writing. Rinvoluceri (2005) advises teachers to allow pupils to write fluently and give "a blind eye to their plethoric errors".

- *Approaches focusing on purpose:*

a) The communicative approach.

This approach focuses on the purpose of writing and the audience. Learners are encouraged to act like writers in real life and to ask themselves crucial questions about purpose and audience. They may write to the teacher, to other learners in the class or to others. The readers may respond to pupils' writing, e.g. through letters (Raimes, 2003).

b) English for academic purposes

This approach deals with some specific issues in writing. For example, it prepares learners for essay exams and gives much attention to socio-cultural functioning.

- *Approaches focusing on the process of writing:*

a) The process approach

Cramer (2001, p.53) sees a writing process as “a set of theories, procedures, and activities which emphasizes the operations, changes and procedures by which writing is accomplished. According to Richards (2006) and Hedge (2001) the process approach is based on the research into the strategies writers apply when they compose a piece of writing. Stanley (2007) explains that the learner is the centre of the process. Based on this, he emphasizes that learner's previous knowledge, needs and interests should be taken into consideration during writing. Furthermore, Brown (2001) claims that the process approach is advantageous to students in language learning because students are the creators of language, they need to focus on content and message, and their own intrinsic motives are valued (p. 335). It is strongly believed that students can discover what they want to say and write more successfully through the process model as the process approach is viewed as writer-centered (Walsh, 2004, p.15).

Furthermore, the process approach has a very restricted view of writing, in that the approach presumes that writing proficiency takes place only with the support of the repeated exercise of the same writing procedures (Kim, 2007). Although it is obvious that the amounts of pre-writing necessary for writing a personal letter and for creating an academic research paper are different, in the process model, the practice of writing is identical regardless of what the topic is and who the writer or the

reader is (Badger and White, 2000, p.154-155). The process approach came as a reaction to the restraints posed by the product approach. It focuses on the composing processes writers use and so assigns much importance to meaning rather than form. Khater (2002) indicates that the process approach was developed in reaction to traditional types of writing teaching which focused on the final product.

In the process approach, writing is an on-going process that follows several steps. However, these steps are not linear, the writer moves forwards or backwards between them (Khater, 2002). Moreover, the process approaches is seen as predominantly dealing with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure” (Badger and White 2000, p. 154). Holmes (2004) explains that the use of a process-oriented approach is to facilitate the planning and production stages of writing for adult students of English as a Foreign or Second Language. Holmes identifies some features of this approach and provides suggestions to develop activities in order to humanize and make a more positive and effective experience from writing.

In favour of this approach, studies conducted in the writing show that the process approach to writing includes a number of steps as follows: pre- writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. It allows students to manage their own writing by giving students a chance to think as they write (Brown, 2001, p.336). That is, students are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process to help them to write freely to arrive at a product of good quality (Ho, 2006).

- Pre- writing: The pre- writing or the planning stage aims at preparing students to write and generate ideas. Harp and Brewer (1996) point out that this stage is based on a number of steps such as determining the topic and the audience as well as activating student's previous knowledge through brainstorming and other activities. At this stage, students may listen to a text related to the topic, read about the topic, watch a film or even describe a picture about the topic. Richards (2006) posits that the more time students spend on pre- writing activities, the more successful their writing would be. Al

Abed (1992) asserts that "the pre- writing stage encourages effective writing because it prompts originality, creativity, and personal awareness".

- Drafting: At this stage, students write down their ideas on paper focusing on content not mechanics. Based on this, Gaber (2003) opines that when writing their first draft, students should not expect perfection or even work towards it. The first draft should be considered as a further means of discovering ideas and what one wants to do.
- Revising: Revising is viewed as looking at organization, main points, support for main ideas, examples, and connections between ideas. In view of this, Noskin (2000) notes that revising is considered the heart of the writing process, the means through which ideas emerge and evolve and meanings are clarified. Putting on the same thinking hat, Manzo and Manzo (1995) argue that revising should be viewed as a thinking process that helps students to refine their ideas, discover new connections and explore them more deeply in an attempt to communicate their ideas with an audience.

Smith (2000); Wyse and Jones (2001) state the main features of the process approach as:

- It includes a variety of writing models, expressive as well as expository.
- It emphasizes writing conferences in which the teacher sits with the students as they are writing and offers advice on how to progress.
- Writing normally takes place through a series of multiple drafts.
- Writing should be a cooperative activity; students assist one another composing texts.
- Errors are considered natural and are corrected in the final stages.
- Teachers respond to students' drafts with fewer judgment and more questions and suggestions.
- Grammar is learned in the context of writing for communication.
- It emphasizes revision as critical to the writing process as teachers give their students opportunities to review, clarify, and re organize what they have written.

b) Genre approach

In terms of writing in a second language, *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning* defines the genre approach as “a framework for language instruction” (2013). In the genre approach, samples of a specific genre are introduced, and some distinctive characteristics of the given genre are pointed out so that students notice specific configurations of that genre (Kim, 2007). Furthermore, the genre approach encourages students to participate in the world around them, to comprehend writing as a tool that they can utilize, and to realize how writers manage content to promote logical organization (Kim, 2007). It also allows students to become more flexible in their thinking and eventually to realize how authors organize their writings (Kim, 2007). The genre framework supports students’ writing with generalized, systematic guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages (Kim, 2007).

In the genre approach, the knowledge of language is intimately attached to a social purpose, and more focus is on the viewpoint of the reader than on that of the writer. Writing is mostly viewed as the students’ reproduction of text based on the genre offered by the teacher (Kim, 2007). The genre approach is blamed for limiting learners’ creative thoughts about content and is criticized in that it overlooks natural processes of learning and learners’ creativity (Badger and White, 2000, p.157). However Bawarshi (2000) observes that at its best, it helps learners to identify and interpret literary texts, while at its worst, it interferes with the learners’ creativity (p. 343).

Burns (2001) proposes “a wheel model of a teaching- learning cycle in three phases: modelling, joint negotiation of text by learners and teacher, and the independent construction of texts by learners” (p. 202). Modelling, as noted by Hammond is the time when the target genre that students should construct is introduced to them [the students]. At this stage, all the discussion focuses on the educational and social function of the genre and the analysis focuses on the text structure and language. Joint negotiation of text refers to the stage where learners carry out exercises which manipulate relevant language forms. It fosters a negotiating process between the teacher and the students. It involves reading, research, disseminating information

and the text of the genre is dependent on those activities. The independent construction of texts is the final phase in which learners produce the actual text through activities such as choosing a topic, researching, and writing (p. 202).

Hayland (2004, p.10-11) echoes the advantages of a genre based writing instruction that can be summarized as follows:

- Explicit – makes clear what is to be learned to facilitate the acquisition of writing skills
- Systematic – provides a coherent framework for focusing on both language and contexts
- Needs-based – ensures that course objectives and content are derived from students' needs
- Supportive – gives teacher a central role in scaffolding student learning and creativity
- Empowering – provides access to the patterns and possibilities of variation in valued texts
- Critical – provides the resources for students to understand and challenge valued discourses
- Consciousness raising – increases teacher awareness of texts and confidently advise students on their writing

Despite the beneficial roles of genres in helping learners to produce written work with confidence, there are two concerns about this approach. One is that it underestimates the skills required to produce content, and the other concern is that it neglects learners' self-sufficiency (Byram, 2004, p.236). Likewise, if teachers spend class time explaining how language is used for a range of purposes and with a variety of readers, learners are likely to be largely passive. This concern means that students may end up writing genres as meaningless reproductions.

2.5.7 Writing Assessment

Writing like other skills, must definitely be assessed and rated. In this regard, Weigle (2007) believes that:

Assessment of student writing is an essential task for writing teachers. Unfortunately, however, many graduate programs in TESOL and rhetoric/composition do not require students to take a course in assessment or evaluation, and courses on teaching writing often devote only a limited amount of time to the discussion of assessment. Moreover, teachers often feel that assessment is a necessary evil rather than a central aspect of teaching that has the potential to be beneficial to both teacher and students. They may believe, rightly or wrongly, that assessment courses focus too much on statistics and large-scale assessment and have little to offer classroom teachers. As a result, teachers sometimes avoid learning about assessment or, worse, delay thinking about how they will assess their students until they are forced to do so, a situation which unfortunately decreases the chances that assessments will be fair and valid. (p.1)

One of the greatest aspects of writing assessment is called self-assessment. Traditional approaches to the self-assessment of language ability are of two main types: (i) objectively- marked discrete-point tests of linguistic knowledge, and (ii) rating scales or checklists (Brown, 2005; Hamp-Lyons, 2002). Objectively markable tests, although reliable as self-assessment instruments, do not allow learners the opportunity to produce a complex or sustained piece of written or oral communicative performance. Self-assessment also leads to gaining writing skills when it is accomplished under the supervision of the teacher (Brown, 2005). There are three ways of developing writing:

- a) Focusing on form,
- b) Focusing on the writer and
- c) Focusing on the reader.

Some scholars have reflected on how writing assignments can be designed to elicit critical thinking and active learning to across disciplinary boundaries (ibid.). Critical thinking allows individuals to analyse, interpret, and synthesize information.

Moreover students' progress, their learning needs and their achievements are some activities which are constantly and continuously evaluated and assessed by the teachers (Brown, 2005). Assessment can be divided into two functional and main parts including formal and informal assessments. By formal assessment, it is meant

traditional writing of tests, a kind of writing exercise in which the subjects are required to make, in a limited time period, one or more pieces of related discourse which are scored numerically or other sorts of activities such as answering to portfolios, homework assignments or out of class writing activities (Hamp-Lyons, 2002). Informal assessment can be referred to some activities like making sure subjects understand special teaching points, choosing students' answers on style and usage related questions, or adopting peer response policy among students to ensure they are on task (Brown, 2005).

2.5.8 Difficulties of writing

It seems that there is a consensus among educationists that writing, either in L1 or L2, is the most difficult skill to master. Crystal (2005) thinks that an ability to write well and effectively evades many people either in L1 or L2. Richards and Renandya (2003) concur that writing is the most difficult task for L2 learners. This difficulty lies in both generating and organizing ideas, and translating these ideas into a readable text. In view of the above, Tessem (2005) explains that even with the simplest exercises, learners often lose interest and do not complete them because of the difficulty in mastering writing. Thus, learners lack the motivation needed for language learning.

In favour of the above Tessem (2005) attributes the difficulty of writing to the following reasons:

- It requires knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.
- It requires clear organized presentation of ideas.

Johnstone *et al.* (2002) concur that the difficulty of writing is due to the cognitive processes such as generating ideas and translating them into sentences. These processes are difficult to measure. Therefore, it is highly recommended to provide repeated practice in writing.

Khater (2002) sums up the difficulties that affect the writing learning processes as follows:

- Psychological difficulties:

The learner usually works in isolation and has no immediate contact with the reader. Thus the learner creates a mental image of the audience and imagines the responses. When the reader receives the piece of writing, the learner cannot modify it.

- Linguistic difficulties:

The learner has to write carefully, concisely and coherently to convey the message to the reader.

- Cognitive difficulties:

When writing, learners have to carry out many cognitive processes simultaneously. They generate ideas, translate them into sentences, and take care of the correct form, mechanics and / or orthography as well as think of the readers and social setting in addition

, Yan (2005) points out that the education system emphasizes writing for taking tests only. Therefore, the main purpose of writing is to pass examinations. This reduces writing to producing a product and receiving a grade from the teacher.

According to Isleem (2012) most teachers do not have enough writing activities that consider the needs or match learners' interests and motivate them to learn. She further points out that learners:

- Make many errors when they write, and consider composition the most difficult task for them;
- Are exposed to inconsistent teaching methods and have a poor attitude towards writing;
- Do not have sufficient opportunities to practice writing and
- Lack the skills related to spelling, handwriting and sentence structure (pp. 6-7).

2.5.9 Outcomes of home language in writing English Second Language

It has been well established in literature today that language learners use the knowledge of their first language when they learn to write in ESL. Research on bilingual learners also indicates that all the participants use their home language (L1) to some extent when writing in ESL (Van Weijen *et al.*, 2009). When L2 writers do

not have enough language skills to express what they say in comprehensible way, they have a greater possibility for errors at the morpho-syntactic level (Myles, 2002). Moreover similar research revealed a constant significant gap in both vocabulary ability and comprehension ability between L1 and L2 English medium learners (Winnett, 2008). These gaps are warning signals that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the L2 (Gass and Selinker, 2001). Therefore, an accurate and early identification of the perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences in writing in English is essential and vital for learners' prognosis.

Writing encourages learners to think in a structured way and to express their thoughts freely in order to show their scientific knowledge (Jones, 2000). If the learner cannot explain a concept clearly in writing, it is likely that the learner does not really understand that particular concept (Freire, 2002, p.100). Implementing the primary curriculum by teachers who have difficulties in reading and writing English (the language of instruction) is a big challenge. This implies teachers cannot express themselves and are not able to write current English for their pupils (ibid).

2.5.10. What constitutes ESL errors in writing?

Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.184) define an error as the use of language in a way that a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as faulty or incomplete learning. It refers to a systematic error of competence, both covert and overt, that deviates from the norms of the target language (Eun-pyo, 2002, p.1). Brown (2002, p.220) differentiates between covert and overt errors. Brown (2002, p.220) defines covert errors as grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to the obviously ungrammatical utterances. Vahdatinejad (2008) makes a distinction between errors and lapses (simple mistakes). According to him, lapses are produced even by native speakers and can be corrected by themselves. They call for on the spot correction rather than remediation, which is needed for errors.

Additionally, learners' errors are systematic rather than random. In this regard, many learners tend to commit the same kinds of errors during a certain stage of language learning (Nunan, 2001, p.87). It is therefore the obligation of teachers to summarise

these frequently appearing errors to remind learners as often as possible so that they can make greater efforts to avoid them. Researchers are attaching a great importance to the social and cognitive factors in the studies of sources of errors. Investigating social factors provide evidence as to why some learners have better writing ability than the others and vice versa.

According to Sarfraz (2011), students are weak in English, especially in their writing skills, and commit multiple errors because they have been inadequately exposed to learning of L2. Sarfraz (2011) further states that committing errors is a reflection of a cognitive activity of a learner and tells us a great deal about the internalized process of language production. However as a way forward, Lightbown and Spada (2000, p.176) argue that when errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, it is useful for teachers to bring the problem to the students' attention.

Hence, Xie and Jiang (2007) point out that student error should form valuable feedbacks for teachers teaching writing. They are important because they are a device that learners' use in order to learn (Stark, 2001). They are potentially important for the understanding of the processes of Second Language Acquisition (Candling, 2001). Olasehinde (2002) agrees that it is inevitable that learners make errors. He also suggested that errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of the learning curve. Keshavarz (2003) claims that errors, if studied can reveal a developing system of the student's L2 language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters. This view is supported by Stark's (2001, p.19) study which also explains that teachers need to view students' errors positively and should not regard them as the learners' failure to grasp the rules and structures.

2.5.10.1 Language transfer

Transfer is defined as the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired (Murphy, 2005). The study of transfer involves negative transfer, facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance of target language forms, and their over-use (Ellis,

2010). Behaviourist accounts claim that transfer is the cause of errors, whereas from a cognitive perspective, transfer is seen as a resource that the learner actively draws upon in interlanguage development (Selinker, 1972). According to McLaughlin and Yee (1988), transfer can occur because learners lack the necessary information in the second language or the attentional capacity to activate the appropriate second-language routine. But such an account says little about why certain linguistic forms transfer and others do not. In other words, "the L1 can have a direct effect on interlanguage development by influencing the hypotheses that learners construct" (Ellis, 2010).

Some studies show that learners benefit from their native language, whether it is used in the classroom or at home. These studies argue that learners who maintain their native language while they learn English, can achieve a valuable goal by becoming bilingual. Furthermore, it is believed that students who continue to speak their native language have greater success in learning English (Miller and Endo, 2004). Reinman (2001) proposes that there is no hard fast rule for when a first or common language should be allowed or prohibited in the classroom. She further says that the use of L1 should be allowed conditionally. When introducing new vocabulary, in which meaning can be expressed through drawings, pantomimes, noises, target language can be fully used and this will allow the students the ability to tap into their prior knowledge.

2.5.11 Code – switching

According to Numan and Carter (2001, p.275) code-switching is "a phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse". Myers-Scotton's (2006, p. 239) defines code switching as "the use of two languages or language varieties in the same conversation". It occurs when an individual alternates between two or more languages (Myers-Scotton, 2006). Code switching can be regarded as a diverse linguistic resource from which an individual speaker can choose to draw in order to communicate effectively (Evans, 2008).

In view of the above, code-switching cannot be overlooked, especially in a class where English is taught and learnt as an additional language. In order to bridge the

communication and comprehension gap, code-switching cannot be avoided in classroom. It plays an important role in classroom interaction in order to enhance positive contribution of the use of code switching (Sert, 2005). The teachers' ability to interpret difficult concepts into learners' mother tongue is acknowledged by Trudgill (2000, p.105) who affirms that 'speakers switch to manipulate or influence or define the situation as they wish and to convey nuances of meaning and personal intention'. Hence the DoE (2002) supports the use of code-switching by learners under certain circumstances, but is silent on code-switching by teachers, implying disapproval.

Considering code switching as a resource for teaching and learning L2, a number of studies show that in some learning contexts where a foreign language is used as the language of teaching and learning, code switching is allowed as a supplement to maximize the learners' understanding. In line with this Mati (2004), code switching is a strategy for education in the South African context. Sert (2005) asserts that code switching is an important element to language teaching because, if used effectively, it serves to bridge the gap between the known and the unknown. Clegg and Afitska (2010) point out that those who code-switch are fully competent in the two languages and also agree that code-switching provides an additional resource for meeting classroom needs.

Probyn (2005) emphasizes that code-switching is a verbal skill requiring a large degree of competence in more than one language rather than a defect arising from insufficient knowledge of one or the other. Cleghorn (2005) argues that code switching enables learners to understand the content of the lesson. Code-switching can be used in many ways for different reasons; an educator may use the learners' main language as a code for encouragement which implies that the educator is on the learners' side and is helping them to overcome learning barriers (Martin, 2005). Burden (2001) invites educators and learners to reconsider the role that code switching plays in the classroom interaction and to break with the methodologically imposed code constraints in order to use code switching strategically to achieve their pedagogical aims. Tien and Liu (2006) state that low proficiency students consider code-switching in their EFAL classes as helpful towards gaining better comprehension especially when providing equivalent comprehension as well as

giving classroom procedures. It is not an allowance for educators to use it excessively whenever they want to, but should be considered as a strategy and not taken as a teaching method (Burden, 2001). This is also supported by Palmer (2009) in the Dual Language Program which believes that learners learn language more fluently if they “stay” in the desired language. The more they are “forced” to use the target language, the better they learn it (Palmer, 2009).

2.5.12 English proficiency

Proficiency is one of the most important factors determining the likelihood of language transfer. Jarvis (2000) presents six ways in which proficiency can affect L1 influence. With regard to conceptual transfer, in particular the Transfer to Nowhere perspective, it seems likely that L1 influence will increase with L2 proficiency as the learner acquires more L2 tools that can express their L1 perspective (Jarvis, 2000). Regardless of the direction of the correlation, it is clear that proficiency has a strong effect on the likelihood of language transfer. Proficiency figures prominently in discussions of L3 acquisition, and the general consensus is that much L2 and L3 transfer is the result of low L3 proficiency (Dewaele, 2001; Hammarberg, 2001). However, given the complex linguistic configuration of multilingualism, the effects of proficiency in all languages known to the speaker must be taken into account. In order for the second language to provide material for transfer, the speaker must have a certain degree of L2 competence (Hammarberg, 2001). Consequently, if a certain level of language proficiency and understanding of the principles of literacy (e.g. decoding text) has not been reached in the L1 (in which a child already possesses a substantial oral vocabulary) then academic mastery of an L2 will be beyond (Brock-Utne, 2007).

2.5.12.1 Amount of Target Language Exposure and Use

This variable interacts significantly with age and with proficiency. Jarvis (2000) addresses the importance of teasing out the variables of age and L2 exposure, although the results of his study of Finnish and Swedish L2 English learners indicate that the effects of age versus L2 exposure vary according to the task and that both have less effect on language transfer than L1 background. The role of linguistic

exposure functions similarly in L2 and L3 acquisition. Increased L3 exposure and use leads to less language transfer, although a comparison of L2 and L3 speakers shows that while increased target language exposure and use lead to less language switching in both cases, the decline is more pronounced for L2 speakers than it is for L3 (Dewaele, 2001).

2.5.12.2 Language Mode

The concept of language mode (Grosjean, 2001) has guided many recent studies of cross-linguistic influence (Dewaele, 2001). Grosjean (2001) claims that the amount of language transfer, in particular lexical transfer, depends directly on the speaker's language mode, defined as "the state of activation of the bilingual's languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time" (p. 2). Grosjean's model is easily adapted to trilingual speech. For an L3 speaker, the base language is always fully activated, and the two guest languages are at varying degrees of activation (Grosjean, 2001). Both bilingual and trilingual modes allow mixed utterances and frequent language switches without evidence of hesitation or editing (Grosjean, 2001).

2.6 Strategies for monitoring learners writing in ESL

2.6.1 Teacher cognition and teacher practices

To fully understand how teachers do what they do when they teach, and to gain insights into their cognitive and affective processes, it is necessary to go beyond a behavioural model of teacher research, and to move into areas that examine teacher intentions, beliefs, knowledge, affect, and reasoning in addition to behaviours before, during, and/or after teaching. In discussing research on teacher cognition, it is necessary to define a few terms. One key term is teacher cognition, defined as "the complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs that language teachers draw on in their work" (Borg, 2006, p.272). The concept of teacher cognition has an underlying assumption that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices" based on those networks (Borg, 2003, p.81). This concept is highly relevant when

trying to examine the individual characteristics that each teacher possesses and their impact on teaching practices and decision-making processes.

Broad and Evans (2006) argue that a “solely behavioural approach... cannot account for predictable variations in teachers’ behaviour arising from differences in their goals, judgments, and decisions, [but] research linking teachers’ intentions to their behaviour can provide a sound basis for educating teachers and implementing educational innovations”. Teachers’ beliefs are an important component of teacher cognition. Borg (2011, p.370) observes that “beliefs are propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change. In the context of language teacher education, beliefs are seen as a key element in teacher learning and have become an important focus for research”. Borg (2006) also suggests that shifts in the practices of individual teachers that move away from their core beliefs may be unlikely though not impossible. However, it may be difficult to identify exactly what drives such shifts. Phipps and Borg (2009, p.381) also assert that beliefs may have a strong impact on practices, or pedagogical decisions.

Another important component of teacher cognition is each teacher’s knowledge base, defined by Mullock (2006, p.48) as “accumulated knowledge about the act of teaching, including the goals, procedures, and strategies that form the basis for what teachers do in the classroom”. Johnston and Goettsch (2000) in their qualitative study of four experienced ESL teachers’ knowledge base, examined Shulman’s seven categories of teacher knowledge: content knowledge, general pedagogic knowledge, curricular knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of the educational context, and knowledge of educational goals, purposes and values. Of these seven, Shulman (1987, p.8) viewed pedagogical content knowledge as especially interesting because “it represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners”.

In a partial replication of Gatbonton's study (intact classes were used instead of specially prepared laboratory classes), Mullock (2006, p.63) found similar results but also noted that

“Learning to teach has an affective aspect... [and] becoming a teacher involves having or developing certain attitudes towards learners, towards the tasks of teaching and learning, and towards oneself and one's relationship to the teaching role”.

This inclusion of affective issues with teacher cognition was also raised by Zembylas (2005, p.481), who completed a three-year study of one elementary school teacher and concluded that “it seems that a teacher's emotional development is profoundly influenced by his or her participation in particular forms of social and discursive practices at school”. These suggestions that affect may play a larger role in the area of teacher cognition and practice may eventually become very important aspects of the present study, especially in the area of collaboration and self-identified expertise.

2.6.1.1 Teachers' behaviours

According to Andrews and McNeil (2005), L2 teachers with high degrees of teacher language awareness (TLA) typically demonstrate the following behaviours with regard to their attitudes:

- A willingness to engage with language;
- Self-awareness, particularly with regard to their awareness of the limitations of their own subject matter knowledge but without interfering with the willingness to engage mentioned above;
- Self-awareness linked to a quest for self-improvement; and
- A willingness to engage in reflection about the content of learning (i.e., reflection on action and reflection in action).

2.6.1.2 Teacher knowledge

Johnston and Goettsch (2000) address three areas of teacher knowledge in particular: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and knowledge of learners. The nature of teacher knowledge is complex and it can be difficult to tease out different categories of knowledge. For example, the researchers stated that

knowledge of English as a content area, while obviously vital, takes on a new dimension when combined with other kinds of knowledge, such as knowledge that of the learner. They further assert that “while the ‘categories’ of teacher knowledge are a useful analytic concept, in reality these categories are melded together in complex and indeed inextricable ways to produce multifaceted, holistic accounts of, and actions in, language teaching” (Johnston and Goettsch, 2000, p.461).

2.6.2 Observational Learning

A method that is process-oriented is called observational learning (Bhagwan-Snetselaar, 2008). Observational learning has been successfully applied to several subjects in education including writing. The most striking feature of observational learning concerning writing is that learners are not only occupied with the writing task but they have an opportunity to focus on the learning task (Braaksma, 2002). The working memory is not overloaded since observing is a less complex task than producing a written text. Learners can devote their working memory capacity to learn how to write and retrieve this knowledge to produce a written text (Bhagwan-Snetselaar, 2008).

To get more insight into the underlying processes of observational learning, Braaksma (2002) focuses on three issues concerning the underlying processes of observational learning:

- Learners evaluate and elaborate when they observe writing activities;
- Stimulates the use of metacognitive activities. This shows that learners are able to concentrate on both the writing task as the learning how to write task.
- It gives weak learners the opportunity to learn from the writing task when they observe weak models.

Overall, observational learning yields better results. Thus, observational learning in second language writing can be effective (Bhagwan-Snetselaar, 2008). Slabakova’s (2009) argument is that young children need to develop cognitive maturation in order to generalize meanings from observational learning, or they simply need more time to complete the generalization.

2.6.3 Pair and group work

Ellis (2000, p.209) described this process as “scaffolding” wherein learners assist one another to achieve tasks and complete functions in the target language (TL).

While practice producing with the TL is one aspect that can spur the acquisition process, another essential component of language acquisition that group work provides is the “negotiation of meaning,” which Pica (2002, p.4) defines as “when one interlocutor’s message appears to another interlocutor to be unclear, incomprehensible, or incomplete in its meaning”. Therefore the use of pair work and group work in the communicative classroom has a dual purpose; it serves to increase the amount of talk time for learners; thereby improving their chances to acquire language; and it shifts the focus in the classroom from the teacher to the learner.

2.6.4 Providing rich and varied language experience

Learners need many opportunities to listen and verbalize in the second language. The teacher's role is to organize the environment and mediate the instruction. If learners are to make sense of their instruction, every aspect of classroom design, including the physical environment, the content covered, and strategies used for grouping and instructional delivery must be considered. Moreover language is primarily acquired incidentally, through listening, talking, and reading. Thus, teachers need to immerse learners in language-rich environments that provide them with many opportunities to acquire language. Learners can be exposed to rich language through having text read aloud to them, their own reading of texts, and media such as television (Silverman, 2007). Research with native English speakers indicates that this method has an impact on oral language outcomes, including vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension (Roberts, 2008; Silverman, 2007).

In a study with young ELLs, Roberts and Neal (2004) compared small-group comprehension-oriented instruction, which consisted of shared book reading, vocabulary instruction, and comprehension activities, with emergent literacy instruction, which consisted of naming and writing letters and recognizing and generating rhymes. The findings indicated that learners in the comprehension-oriented instruction outperformed learners in the emergent literacy instruction in

vocabulary and print concepts, while emergent literacy instruction resulted in better letter-naming and writing. Additionally, English oral proficiency was more correlated with the comprehension-related skills than with the decoding-related skills and incidental acquisition appears to include only content words and function words that were generally not attended to.

It seems likely that similar material presented digitally on the web and on the various pad devices now available might produce similar results. For example, recent findings from research conducted by August and Shanahan (2006) found that Spanish-speaking ELLs learned vocabulary from exposure to the vocabulary with comprehensible definitions embedded in text, but did not learn vocabulary that they merely heard in the context of a shared book reading lesson. In the study, the vocabulary words taught in various conditions were matched for difficulty level, so findings are attributable to method rather than word types.

2.6.5 Effective Feedback Approach

Feedback is generally regarded as essential for writing development at all levels, and has been considered essential for both first language (L1) and second language (L2) writing development. Despite this widespread perception, much less agreement exists on the kinds of feedback that actually make a difference, or even on the kinds of gains in proficiency that can be expected from feedback. Numerous papers advocate one or another approach, and many other studies describe a writing course where a particular approach was used. Many other papers adopt an (quasi) experimental approach, measuring gains in writing proficiency that result from feedback (Ferris, 2006). L2 learner needs an effective feedback on their written work along with the appropriate remedial process to correct and monitor as a conscious process to minimize errors (Sarfraz, 2011). To demonstrate the effectiveness of feedback, researchers have used measures of writing proficiency (Min, 2006; Chandler, 2003). Following the idea that not all feedback focus on student errors, it is also the case that feedback can vary in the degree to which it praises areas of strength or criticizes areas of weakness (Hyland and Hyland, 2001).

In research on traditional teacher-generated feedback, the distinction between direct and indirect feedback has been one focus of studies in the areas of writing and second language acquisition (SLA) (Ferris, 2006; Ferris and Roberts, 2001). The term direct feedback is used to denote instances where the writing instructor makes an explicit correction to the student's text e.g. by writing in the correct grammatical form. On the other hand, indirect feedback denotes instances where the instructor indicates that something about the student's writing is problematic. For example, by underlining an ungrammatical construction and/or marking the problematic section of text with a special code but does not provide an immediate correction (Ferris and Roberts, 2001).

2.6.6 The role of vocabulary in English Second Language

Vocabulary plays a critical role in successful academic writing of L2 learners (Hinkel, 2004; Coxhead, 2008; Folse, 2008). Empirical evidence suggests that vocabulary utilized in L2 students' writing may influence the overall quality of an essay (Barkaoui, 2010) and that effective lexical choices are contributing factors in the quality of an ESL student's text (Engber, 1995). The literature on the amount of vocabulary instruction in classrooms consists of a handful of studies. In studies of vocabulary instruction, Foorman *et al.* (2004); Harding (2014) found that less time spent on vocabulary instruction does not provide more effective outcomes in this area. Considering studies of the vocabulary instruction observed in actual classrooms, it appears that there remains a great deal of room for improvement, both in terms of time spent on instruction and in methods. The sorts of powerful vocabulary instruction needs to become more common and more frequent (Torres and Zeidler, 2002), and something needs to be done to help learners with relatively small vocabularies to catch up with their classmates. McLean (2000) supports this by saying that many of the learning problems of students originate from an inadequate knowledge of the basic vocabulary. Any deficiencies in vocabulary knowledge can prevent ESL learners from completing the writing tasks and thereby hindering their academic progress. The lack of vocabulary can present a major barrier in written communication. It can cause learners to make poor lexical choices and also lexical errors in their writing. Moreover, these errors are considered the most serious errors in L2 students' writing (Santos, 1988).

Calderón (2007) suggest other helpful instructional approaches for teaching ELLs vocabulary. One of the methods has teachers pre-teach the vocabulary that is critical to comprehension of the text in a seven-step process that involves:

...explicit teaching of vocabulary, including contextualization of newly introduced vocabulary as used in the text, providing dictionary definitions, re-contextualizing the vocabulary in ways familiar to the students, and incorporating oral activities in which students talk about or use the new vocabulary (p. 34).

Further, Dreher and Gray (2010) think that familiarizing ELLs with text structures like compare-contrast can help the teachers to expand and enrich ELLs' academic vocabulary knowledge. Most especially with terms such as unlike, similar to, compared to, and resembles. While it is important to develop ELLs' academic vocabulary, teachers should not sacrifice development of ELLs' reading comprehension through a too-narrow focus on academic vocabulary instruction. One method that has been used frequently and successfully to develop vocabulary in learners is shared book reading in which adults read aloud to children, periodically stopping to highlight and discuss individual words as well as other aspects of what they are reading (Roberts, 2008).

Moreso, researchers who have worked with ELLs (Mancilla-Martinez and Kieffer, 2010; Snow *et al.*, 2009; Silverman, 2007; Francis *et al.*, 2006) have also developed, refined, and tested forms of rich vocabulary instruction that generally have consisted of:

- Introducing words through the rich context of authentic student's literature or grade-appropriate expository text;
- Clear, student-friendly definitions and explanations of target words;
- Questions and prompts to help students think critically about the meaning of words;
- Examples of how words are used in other contexts;
- Opportunities for younger children to act out the meaning of words when applicable;
- Visual aids illustrating the meaning of words in authentic contexts other than the book in which the word was introduced;

- Encouragement for students to pronounce, spell, and write about words;
- Opportunities for students to compare and contrast words;
- Repetition and reinforcement of the target words;
- And activities that develop word consciousness such as listening for word meanings as text is read aloud.

Another consideration in the teaching of vocabulary concerns genres. Certain genres of texts are particularly conducive to contextualizing ELLs' learning of academic vocabulary. Hadaway *et al.* (2002) have shown that teachers' integration of nonfiction literature into instruction provides ELLs the opportunity to encounter concept-related vocabulary terms in more authentic contexts that can aid in understanding vocabulary at a deeper level. Two recent studies with ELLs have shown the advantages of including both definitions and context. In one of them August and Shanahan (2006) found that ELLs learned vocabulary from exposure to the vocabulary with comprehensible definitions embedded in the text during shared book reading, but learned the words less well than they did with instruction that included both definitions and context. In another study, Francis *et al.*, (2006) indicated that instruction that included both definitions and context was much more effective than instruction in which students were only provided with child-friendly definitions of the target academic vocabulary.

Additionally, Porter (2009) suggests that teachers:

- Must provide explicit instruction in difficult vocabulary and structures, that is, teaching students how to use word analysis, context clues, cognates, and dictionaries to access the meanings;
- Incorporate instructional conversations, having students participate in discussions during the course of all these activities;
- Use adapted texts or abridged versions of texts; activate students' schemas and background knowledge by asking them to read summaries of scenes before reading the full text and
- Chunk texts by breaking scenes down into smaller sections based on a shift in focus, action, or emotion.

2.6.7 The communicate approach

Language, as a means of communication plays a significant role in all teaching and learning. Language (English) is used in this context as a meditational tool that can promote thinking in the participants and possibly can encourage meaning construction cooperatively and collaboratively, instead of transmitting a fixed message to the others (Sivasubramaniam, 2011). Language forms an integral part of this communication. Language should facilitate effective communication in a variety of situations. Thus, it is important to ensure that learners do not only learn to communicate but should also learn while they communicate (Ho, 2006). They therefore need to receive sufficient input or examples of how these language structures are used in everyday communication and be afforded adequate opportunities to exercise communication (Kannan, 2009). All languages can be presented in the communicative way (Van den Berg, 2003, p.54).

The communicate approach further emphasises a move from language teaching towards communication (Van den Berg, 2003, p.53). For communication to be effective learners need to have a high level of proficiency. In this regard, Kannan (2009) states that teacher' responsibility lies not only with the average and above average students, but should also depend on learners' needs. Slow learners, for example, should be given extra coaching and counselling. Such counselling can be in private in order not to embarrass them. For instance, it is not good to criticize or repeatedly correct a learner's errors in front of his or her classmates.

What binds all of these studies together is a basic understanding that language use between instructors and students in a classroom context is fundamentally different when compared to talk that occurs outside the classroom. That is, language is at the centre of all interactions in the classroom. Meaning is born out of social interactions between all participants in this context and talk is essential to the way in which learners build knowledge about the subject being studied (Zuengler and Cole, 2005). Language use in the classroom is not a simple tool for the communication of information. Rather, it "involves complex social, cultural, political, cognitive, and linguistic processes and contexts; all of which are part of the meaning and significance of... using language" (Bloome *et al.*, 2005). It is through oral interactions

that instructors and students establish their roles and relationships within the classroom (Hall and Walsh, 2002). This ongoing development of each speaker's role in the classroom is created out of the frequency and quality of learner opportunities to participate in classroom discussions with their teachers.

Researchers have investigated how teachers' decisions and the activities they implement in their classrooms affect the ways in which oral interactions in the L2 classroom are created, maintained and discouraged. Hall (2004) found that the way in which the teacher allowed students to practice speaking resulted in the way students interact with fellow students in the L2 in meaningful ways. In other words, the teacher's pedagogical decisions about how to engage learners in oral interaction constrained the way in which the students participated in the ongoing development of classroom talk (Hall, 2004). In another study investigating L2 classroom talk, Ho (2006) found that classroom oral interactions between instructor and students in these contexts often reflect the educational values espoused by the larger socio-cultural structure in which the class or particular academic institution exists.

2.6.8 Parental involvement

Lemmer, *et al.* (2006, p.132) define parental involvement as a dynamic process whereby educators and parents work together for the ultimate benefit of the learner. It is a process that involves collaboration in terms of setting common goals, finding solutions, implementing and evaluating the set goals. In other words, it is a partnership that aims at mutual planning and reflecting on school activities for effective teaching and learning to take place (Lemmer *et al.*, 2006). Pianta *et al.* (2001) relate parental involvement to Epstein's Model for partnership. This model outlines six types or aspects of involvement between the school and the parents, namely,

- 1) Parenting,
- 2) Communicating,
- 3) Volunteering,
- 4) Extending learning at home,
- 5) Decision making and
- 6) Collaborating with the community.

2.7 Critical discourse analysis

As was noted in the introduction, the analytical framework for this study draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) since writing is discursively constructed through the use of language. A number of studies (Wodak 2001; Van Dijk 2001; Fairclough *et al.*, 2011) show that CDA is a useful tool in revealing the ideological loading of discourses, whether spoken or written. At the same time it also exposes the underlying prejudices and exercise of power in a text (van Dijk, 1998). "Discourse" in this context is a difficult and fuzzy concept as it is being used by social theorists (Foucault, 1981), Critical Linguists (Fowler *et al.*, 1979) and Critical Discourse Analysts (van Dijk, 1997), each of whom define discourse differently, being influenced by their various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints. The analysis of discourse is necessarily the analysis of language in use (Foncha, 2013). As such, it is not restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms might have been designed to serve in human affairs (Brown and Yule, 1983, p.1)

2.7.1 What is Critical Discourse Analysis?

Critical Discourse Analysis was born from Critical Linguistics (CL) which developed in the 1970s and was aimed at "isolating ideology in discourse" and showing "how ideology and ideological processes are manifested as systems of linguistic characteristics and processes" (Sheyholislami, 2001, p.1). Sheyholislami (2001, p.1) views language as a "social act" and the key to CDA research (Fairclough *et al.*, 2011) is that it is ideologically driven. Wodak (2001) acknowledges the intricacy of the relationship between language and society and this leads her to the conclusion that CDA is interdisciplinary in nature as can be seen both in theory and practice. To her, discourse as a social act creates discourse and non-discourse behaviours. She distinguishes between discourse and text where she sees discourse as "a complex set of synchronic and coherent linguistic acts that emanate in genre and text" (Wodak, 2001) while text is the production of these linguistic acts.

According to Fairclough *et al.*, (2011) CDA came in to fill the gaps left by Critical Linguistics (CL). CL did not account adequately for the ways in which people

interpreted texts, and focused more on the grammatical and lexical analysis of a text, paying little or no attention to the intertextual analysis of the text. Fairclough (2003) therefore defines CDA as “discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony”. This simply means that the aim of CDA is to expose the links between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures (Abongdia, 2013).

According to van Dijk (1993) “critical discourse analysts wish to understand, expose, and resist social inequalities”. Fairclough *et al.* (2011) believes that our language shapes our identities and interactions, knowledge systems, and beliefs. He therefore sees language as a form of social practice, where language is part of the society and not an external factor. Secondly, language is seen as a social process and finally it is a socially conditioned process (Fairclough, 2003). He further contends that all linguistic aspects are social but not all social aspects are linguistic in nature, which means that all norms, beliefs, values etc. are socially constructed and language in this case is merely the tool or instrument for the construction.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 271-80) see CDA as addressing social problems and being concerned with the detailed analysis of a text. CDA includes interdiscursive text analysis (which includes the different genres, discourses and style) as well as linguistic and semiotic analyses of texts (Abongdia, 2013). She further contends that CDA therefore helps bring out the hidden motive in a text, and shows how discourse is a form of social action. It is also a way of interpreting a text and is not aimed at offering a solution to a given problem but rather helping researchers to understand the problem better. Thus, according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), power relations in CDA are discursive and help to mediate the link between text and society.

Van Dijk (2001, p.352), echoing Fairclough *et al.* (2011), defines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose and ultimately to resist social inequality.” Accordingly, CDA is concerned with the “modes” or “perspectives” that theorize, analyse, and apply throughout the field. Critical discourse analysts are interested in their roles in society, and view scholarly discourses as part of social structure and interactions (Abongdia, 2013). According to van Dijk (2001) they mainly conduct research on groups that are dominated. He contends that critical research on discourse needs to be “better” than other research so as to be accepted; it should focus on “social problems and political issues”, instead of describing the structure of discourses, and it should explain the properties of social interaction and social structures as this study has attempted to do. Finally CDA should pay more attention to how discourse structures, “enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society” (van Dijk, 2001, p. 353).

Language is used in building power and knowledge, but can also be used for resistance and critique (van Dijk, 1998). At least three different approaches to power can be distinguished:

- Power as a result of specific resources of individual actors.
- Power as a specific attribute of social exchange in each interaction
- Power as a systemic and constitutive element/characteristic of society (van Dijk, 1998).

In CDA, power is mostly perceived in the third way. Power is central to understanding the dynamics and specifics of control (of action) in modern societies, but power remains mostly invisible – what Bourdieu (2001) terms “symbolic violence”. This relation between power and language is a permanent topic not only in CDA (Fairclough *et al.*, 2011; Wodak, 2004) but also in sociology (Bourdieu, 2001) and sociolinguistics (Talbot, 2003). Thus the characteristic features of CDA are its concerns with power as a central condition in social life, and its efforts to develop a

theory of language that incorporates this as a major premise (Muntigl and Wodak, 2000). Wodak and Meyer (2008) therefore see power as: relations of difference and particularly about the effects in differences in social structures. The constant unity of language and other social matters ensures that language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: language indexes and expresses power, and is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power (Abongdia, 2013). Power does not necessarily derive from language, but language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term. Language provides a finely articulated vehicle for differences in power hierarchical social structures (Wodak and Meyer, 2008, p.10).

This leads us to Wodak's and Meyer's (2008) contention that CDA is fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. According to van Dijk (2001, p.354), CDA attempts to bridge the 'micro' and 'macro' levels of discourse, e.g. how ordinary people 'talk back' to structures of power in their lives. The micro level deals with language use, discourse, verbal interactions and communication while the macro level deals with power, dominance and inequality between social groups (van Dijk, 2001, p. 354). This is further echoed by Kaplan and Baldauf (2005) who write that "the text, whether written or oral, is a multidimensional structure," and "any text is layered, like a sheet of thick plywood consisting of many thin sheets lying at different angles to each other." Although some scholars see the sheet to be referring to the grammar, syntax, semantics and lexicon (Henry and Tator, 2002), it could also refer to the manner in which the text is presented.

CDA emphasises the "interdisciplinary study of discourse, mediating between the linguistic and the social and regarding the social more than a mere contextual backdrop to the texts" (Mayr, 2008, p.9). She holds that as opposed to Critical Analysis (CA), CDA looks at bigger social issues such as ideologies, power and inequalities. It draws on social and philosophical theory to analyse and interpret written and spoken texts. It is interpretative and explanatory and therefore focuses on social problems, power relations as discursive, society and culture, ideological work, history as well as the links between text and society (Mayr, 2008).

Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000, p.448) focus on the relationship of power and inequality in language. To them, CDA should look at the social aspects of theories in discourse analysis. According to them, discourse is socially constructed and conditioned and can be made visible and transparent by CDA. They refer to Fairclough's (2003) three dimensions for analysing discourse: discourse-as-text, which focuses on the choice and patterns in vocabulary, grammar, coherence and how the text is structured; discourse-as-discursive-practice, where discourse is something that is produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society; and discourse-as-social-practice, the focal analytical approach for this study, which looks at the ideological effects and power obtained through different classes or groups.

Furthermore, Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000, p.449) think that the different ways of presenting discourse leads more insight into "new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power". To them, CDA looks at the ways social structures encroach on discourses, power relations and ideologies, as in the case of this study. The CDA researchers therefore use a critical dimension which should have positive effects on society, like giving power to the weak, voice to the voiceless and even highlighting aspects of power abuse (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). This argument therefore allows for interventions to take place after the investigation has been done in order to improve policies and practices.

The main focus of CDA is therefore to see how dominated or minority groups are influenced or affected by the dominant groups through communication (van Dijk, 2001, p.358). It also looks at how the structure of the discourse influences the mental representation of different groups and in particular of 'the other'. According to van Dijk (2001, p.36), CDA has "gone beyond the more traditional, content analytical analysis of 'images' of 'the other' and probed more deeply into the linguistic, semiotic, and other discursive properties of text and talk to and about minorities, immigrant, and Other people".

2.7.2 Relevance of CDA to this study

Wodak (2001) emphasizes CDA's study of the relationship between language and power. CDA analyses "critical social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized... by language use" (Wodak, 2001, p.2). It is important to note that CDA does not only focuses on social structures and process made up of groups and individuals resulting from power, history and ideology but focuses also on written text (Wodak, 2001) as in the case of this study.

Furthermore, the context structure of text (written) is considered as well as the personal and social cognition of the participants (van Dijk, 2001, p.54). The personal cognitions refer to their memories, knowledge and opinions while the social cognitions are views or opinions shared with their cultural or social groups (Abongdia, 2013). According to van Dijk (2001, p.354), "power is mostly the central issue in most worlds in critical discourse, which is always a social power of groups or institutions". This power often affects access to social resource like money, status, knowledge and even forms of public discourse and communication. Some groups may tend to control others, while the dominated group may either "resist, accept, condone, comply with or legitimate such power" (p. 355).

Considering the control of public discourse, it is realized that lay people are targeted less in texts or talks while the reverse is true of those in powerful social groups and institutions especially the leaders (van Dijk, 2001). The mind is involved in power and dominance in that recipients accept norms, knowledge and opinions through discourse based on what they consider authoritative, trustworthy, or credible (Abongdia, 2013).

2.7.3 The Analytic shortcomings of CDA in this study

Despite the advantages that CDA offers the researcher, there are some weaknesses that need to be emphasised. To begin with, there is no single method that is consistent in CDA (Blackledge 2005; Fairclough, 2003; Martin and Wodak 2003), perhaps because, as van Dijk (2003) argues, CDA does not have unitary theoretical framework. In support of this, Weiss and Wodak (2003, p.6) note that the whole theoretical framework of CDA is "eclectic and systematic". It fails to focus on

language but deals more with the social problems as well as the “linguistic characteristics of social and cultural processes and structures” (Blackledge, 2005, p.3). Blackledge further notes that while CDA focuses on the divide between linguistic and social sciences, linguistics traditionally deals with the micro analysis of language. It is probably because of such arguments that Van Dijk (2001, p.96) asserts that CDA is biased and proud of its subjectivity.

According to Foncha (2013) CDA as a school or paradigm is characterised by a number of principles; all approaches are problem-oriented, and are thus necessarily interdisciplinary and eclectic. He further states that CDA is characterised by the common interests in de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systematic investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual). CDA also attempts to make their own positions and interests explicit while they still struggle to retain their respective scientific methodologies while they still remain self-reflective of their own research process (Foncha, 2013).

The following quotation elucidates the above observation:

Instead of focusing on purely academic or theoretical problems, it starts from prevailing social problems and thereby chooses the perspective of those who suffer most, and critically analyses those in power, those who are responsible, and those who have the means and the opportunity to solve such problems (van Dijk, 1986, p.4).

Furthermore, Blackledge (2005, p.4) contends that there is a focus on the tension between understanding language as socially shaped and language as socially shaping. This suggests that despite the difference in salience in different situations, language is made up of social identities, social relations, system of knowledge and beliefs (Fairclough, 2003). In other words, societies shape languages through their practices, but at the same time languages also shape the societies through specific decisions taken about language as well as language policies which in turn influence language choices and practices in specific societies. For van Dijk (1998), another weakness of CDA lies in the fact that discourse structure and social context are not clearly explained and appear only in terms of knowledge and ideology (van Dijk,

1998). It also allows researchers to uncover or end with the findings that they expect to get and often colours their perceptions of the true meanings in their data.

According to Chilton (2005) CDA is limited to studies of culture, language and social practice, and he wonders if CDA has any realistic effectiveness on its own as an instrument of social justice. He however suggests that a cognitive approach should be combined with evolutionary psychology and cognitive linguistics, merging theories in analysing discourses. On evolutionary psychology, he elucidates the fact that language can trick, deceive and manipulate the human mind. Another criticism of CDA is how CDA researchers understand power and what moral standards allow them to differentiate between power use and abuse – a question which so far has had to remain unanswered (Billig, 2008).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of the study. It has given an introduction to experiences of learners' writing in English FAL. The theoretical roots contributing to learner's outcomes of home language in writing English Second Language, acquisition of writing in English Second Language, teaching language with limited English proficiency and the role of Vocabulary in English Second Language ESL learners have also been explored to conceptualise this study.

The chapter further focused on concepts like Language Learning as social practice, Writing and Multilingualism and Critical Discourse Analysis. The discussion focused particularly on special reference and conditions that relate to language context, preference and behaviours of English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners where writing is concerned. This information is believed would assist in understanding the factors contributing to outcomes of writing English FAL. Thus it paves way for methodological consideration like the tools for data collection as well as a theoretical base for the discussion of the findings where the literature would authenticate the results leading to the findings.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the research paradigm underlying the purpose and focus of this study is the interpretive because it seeks to 'capture the lived experiences of the participants in order to understand the meaning behind the conversations and interactions that the researcher had with the subjects' (Henning *et al.*, 2004, p.19). This chapter justifies the research methodology which is the qualitative approach. The essence of using this qualitative approach is due to its naturalistic character - studying of real people in natural settings rather than in artificial isolation (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Merriam, 2009). It is characterized by data collection strategies such as interviews, observation and documentary analysis. In this study, the researcher had to observe how the research participants (teachers and learners) interact in schools to investigate how they attach meanings to whatever they did or interpreting their ways of interaction.

The data collecting strategies appropriate for this qualitative research are explained as well as the research design, research sample, and the plan for the analysis of data. The Chapter further discusses the literature related to the adopted research paradigm, the sample size and sampling procedures. Additionally, the data analysis procedures and ethical issues are also discussed. Based on this signpost, the main focus of this chapter is to describe the methodology employed in collecting data from the participants involved in the research. The various instruments and methods used in the collection of data are described vividly in order to pave way for data presentation, analysis and discussion in the following chapters.

3.2 Research paradigm

The term paradigm is defined as a systematic set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher (Jonker and Pennink, 2010). According to Taylor *et al.* (2007, p.5), a paradigm is 'a broad view or perspective of something'. Additionally, Weaver and Olson's (2006, p.460) definition of paradigm reveals how

research could be affected and guided by a certain paradigm since “paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished”. It can thus be regarded as the fundamental model or frame of reference used by researchers to recognize their observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2005). Therefore a paradigm is a philosophical framework that provides the means through which research is carried out. It is a globally recognized scientific achievement that provides a time model of problems and solutions to the community of the population.

3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

The interpretive paradigm was seen to be the most relevant for this study because as Naicker (2000) and Voce (2004) argue, the interpretive theorist attempt to understand reality by making perspectives meaningful. Cohen *et al.* (2007) define the interpretive paradigm as an attempt to understand individual interpretations of the world around them. They further claim that the interpretive paradigm works directly with experiences and understanding of the theories that emerge as more information becomes generated during the research process. This research therefore fits into this paradigm as it investigates the experiences of teachers and learners in the writing of English First additional language (EFAL). Hence, Wahyuni (2012) states that interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and seeks to understand social members' definition of a situation. In other words, it relies on the perspectives of the research participants the way that the researcher understands these perspectives. Wahyuni (2012) also says that this approach provides a deep insight into the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of those who live it.

From another angle, Cole (2006) points out that the interpretive paradigm is associated more with methodological approaches that provide an opportunity for the voice, concerns and practices of research participants to be heard. It is also characterized by a concern for the individual as it seeks to understand the subjective world of the human experience and therefore enables researchers to understand the world of human experiences (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). It is ‘more concerned with uncovering knowledge about how people feel and think in the circumstances in which they find themselves than making judgements about whether those thoughts

and feelings are valid' (Cole 2006, p.26). Therefore, interpretive research assumes that knowledge of reality is gained through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artefacts (Rowlands, 2005).

Moreover, an interpretive researcher's ontological assumption is that reality is socially constructed by humans through their action and interaction and the researcher becomes the vehicle through which this reality is revealed (Andrade, 2009; Cavana *et al.* 2001; Mingers, 2001). It is for this reason that this approach is also referred to as the Social Constructivist or Post Positivist approach to research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). On the basis of the above, an interpretive researcher only explores the realities of individuals as they experience the world they draw their texts (data) from as well as the lives of human beings (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). They therefore tend to rely upon the participants' views of the phenomenon being studied and recognize the impact of their own background and experiences on the research (Creswell, 2002).

According to Mertens (2005), the interpretive paradigm grew out of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Wilhelm Dilthey's and other German philosophers' study of interpretive understanding called hermeneutics. The interpretivist researcher tends to rely on the 'participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2003, p.8) and recognises the impact on the research of their own background and experiences. Constructivists do not generally begin with a theory rather they "generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings" (Cresswell, 2003, p.9) throughout the research process. With this discussion the nature of interpretive research was beneficial to achieving the objective of this study as it enabled the researcher to discover what can be learned about the area of interest namely learners' writing.

Through this paradigm the researcher was able to understand the learners' mental phenomena and endeavoured to understand the way they write in English first additional language. According to Adam (2010), the interpretive approach allows the researcher to focus on the understanding of happenings in a given context. Hence, Mertens (2005) observes that the researcher and the participants are interlocked in an interactive process prescribing a more personal and interactive

mode of data collection. The researcher shared the feelings and the interpretations of the people she studied and saw things through their eyes. Through the interpretive paradigm, the researcher was able to discover the natural flow of events and processes as they happened, and how the participants interpreted them. Moreover, the researcher interacted closely with the participants in gaining insights and formed a clear understanding as to how learners made meaning when they were writing. In light of the above, the researcher regarded herself as an interpretivist who interpreted and gave meaning to the data that was collected concerning teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 isiXhosa and Afrikaans background learners' writing in EFAL.

This study is situated in the interpretivist paradigm. Table 3.2.1.1 displays the characteristics of interpretivism, categorised into the purpose of the research, the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the inquirer and the inquired (epistemology) in relation to the methodology used (Cantrell, 2001).

Table 3.2.1.1: Characteristics of interpretivism

Feature	Description
Purpose of research	To compare perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in EFAL
Ontology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are multiple realities. • Reality can be explored, and constructed through human interactions, and meaningful actions. • Discover how people make sense of their social worlds in the natural setting by means of daily routines, conversations and writings while interacting with others around them. These writings could be text and visual pictures. • Many social realities exist due to varying human experience, including people's knowledge, views, interpretations and experiences.
Epistemology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events are understood through the mental processes

	<p>of interpretation that is influenced by interaction with social contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those active in the research process socially construct knowledge by experiencing the real life or natural settings. • Inquirer and the inquired-into are interlocked in an interactive process of talking and listening, reading and writing. • More personal, interactive mode of data collection.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes of data collected by text messages, interviews, and reflective sessions; • Research is a product of the values of the researcher.

3.3 Research Approach: Qualitative research

With the interpretivist stance taken by this researcher, this study adopted the qualitative research method/approach because such an approach gives the researcher the opportunity to dig deeper. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), the qualitative research method is a research process whereby researchers build up a complex, holistic framework by analysing narratives and observations, conducting the research work in the natural habitat. In view of this, Parkinson and Drislane (2011) explain that the qualitative research approach in its broadest sense, refers to research that elicits participant's accounts of meaning, experiences or perceptions. Said differently by Creswell (2002), qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding that explores a social human problem where the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting and builds a complex holistic picture by analysing the words and giving a detailed and rich description of the views of the participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. In this study, the researcher studied things in their natural settings, attempted to make sense of or interpreted the phenomena in terms of the meanings the participants brought to him/her.

From another point of view, Leedy and Omrod (2001) broadly define qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. In line with the above definition, Mack *et al.* (2005); De Vos *et al.* (2002) state that qualitative research provides illumination and understanding of complex psycho-social issues and are most useful for answering humanistic 'why?' and 'how?' questions. In this regard, this researcher attempted to understand people, their social and cultural contexts within which they live (Myers, 2009). This signals that the qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Furthermore, the qualitative research approach according to Schwandt (2001) is a diverse term covering an array of techniques seeking to describe, decode, translate and somehow come to terms with the meaning, rather than the measurement or frequency of phenomena in the social world. In other words, qualitative research method tends to work with text rather than numbers. It refers to "...the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Berg, 2007, p.3). Given the high degree of subjectivity involved, the quality of the finding from qualitative research is therefore directly dependent upon the skills, experience and sensitivity of the interviewer or group moderators (Patton, 2002). It also tries to present the data from the perspective of the subjects or observed groups so that the cultural and intellectual biases of the researcher do not distort the collection, interpretation or analysis of the data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). It is to this effect that the researcher used teachers and learners to get their interpersonal relations, values and beliefs. One cannot understand human behaviour without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions (Abongdia, 2013).

There are various reasons why this study followed a qualitative research approach. The interpretivist paradigm within which this study is located, generally operates using predominantly qualitative methods (Silverman, 2000). Therefore, this study incorporates some of the basic characteristics of the qualitative research approach such as fieldwork where the researcher physically visited the selected sites and the research participants in order to conduct the interviews and observations in their natural settings (Johnson and Christensen, 2000). Significantly, this type of research

also provided a means through which the researcher observed the participant, interviewed them and interacted with them directly through different means. A qualitative enquiry was therefore suitable for exploring and understanding a social phenomenon such as learners' EFAL writing. This as Bochner (2001) says, allowed the researcher to enter the participants' lived-world to study their lived-experiences

Based on this and in order to get answers to answer the research questions, the researcher could not skim across the surface but rather had to dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). The researcher under such situation asked broad but specific semi-structured interview questions in order to collect detailed information on the research topic (Creswell, 2002). The qualitative data was recorded in the form of spoken language, thereby facilitating a true reflection of the participants' experiences and of their attitudes and beliefs (Makubalo, 2007). This means that dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of the teachers' experiences were captured. These experiences enabled the researcher to discover the main ideas and relationships related to the research topic.

As Denzin and Lincoln (2005) rightly say, one of the advantages for applying this approach was that its discovery role enabled the researcher to capture the richness of the data. Since qualitative research involves an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the motives that govern this behaviour, the researcher therefore attempted to make meaning out of the information provided by the research participants. By interacting with the participants, the researcher gained valuable data that was useful in understanding their circumstances and experiences regarding teaching and learning of EFAL by isiXhosa and Afrikaans background learners. This enabled the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon and discover the strategies teachers use in teaching writing in EFAL.

Additionally, the data collected for this study was presented in detail with direct quotations from the participants' personal experiences (Johnson and Christensen, 2000). This further enhanced the credibility of the study because the participants shared their personal experiences on the strategies teachers used in teaching writing in EFAL classrooms as well as the experiences of the isiXhosa and Afrikaans background learners in writing.

However, it is necessary to say that the qualitative research has a good number of limitations. One of the major challenges of using a qualitative approach is its ambiguity and lack of structure (Maxwell, 2013). This flexibility of qualitative methodologies is an advantage for experienced researchers but often a disadvantage for novices, who may not have sufficient background or training to make wise decisions about how to proceed (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Another challenge that researchers have to pay careful attention to is the matter of subjectivity in the analysis and interpretation of the data (Shenton, 2004). Thirdly, the qualitative research method is disadvantaged in that the subjectivity of the inquiry leads to difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of the approaches and information (Adam, 2010). To overcome these shortcomings however, a case study research design was selected where the researcher made sure that she lived through the experiences of his/her participants. In order to ensure validity and avoid subjectivity, the researcher remained non-judgemental throughout the study process and the report was constructed in a balanced way (Stenbacka, 2001).

3.4 Research design

A number of research designs fall within the interpretive paradigm. Mouton (2001, p.55) defines research design as a blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct the study. In line with this, Henning *et al.* (2004, p.36) refer to research design as a reflection of the methodological requirements of the research question that determines the type of data that will be collected and how the data is being processed. Based on this, Bogdan *et al* (2003) assert that design in research refers to the plan on how to proceed. In other words, a research design is a plan or structure that guides the researcher to obtain information or the evidence to answer his/her research question(s). A research design, according to Mouton (2001, p.55), focuses on the end product, the problem or research question and evidence to address the research question appropriately. Bickman and Rog (2009) opine that it serves as a link between research questions and the implementation of the research. Most importantly, it shapes the ethical protocols within which the study is done (Kasenga, 2007). Given that the aim of this study was to produce and describe empirical knowledge on the experiences of teachers and learners in writing, a case study research design was seen to be the most appropriate design for this study

because a case would afford the researcher the opportunity to live with the participants and witness their lived experiences instead of getting them through another channel.

3.4.1 Case study

The researcher was interested in gaining an in-depth understanding of teachers and learners' experiences in writing. In view of this, a case study was considered necessary to allow the researcher to explore this understanding. It allowed the researcher to determine in advance what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use with the data to answer the research questions (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Cohen *et al.* (2007) contend that a case study is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. It facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context (Baxter and Jack, 2008).

As mentioned above, a case study is an in-depth exploration of “a program, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals [which are] bounded by time and activity [and include gathering] detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Creswell, 2003, p.15). Willis (2007) argues that a case study allows the researcher to “gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting, it is holistic and thus supports the idea that much of what we can know about human behaviour is best understood as lived experience in the social context, [and] unlike experimental research, it can be done without predetermined hypotheses and goals” (p. 240). In favour of the above, a case study provides tools for the researcher to study complex phenomena within the context. In addition, it allows the researcher to explore individuals both in simple and through complex interventions, relationships, or programs to support the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena (Yin, 2003).

It is worth mentioning that a case study is one of several ways of doing research whether it is social science related or even socially related because its aim is to understand human beings in a social context by interpreting their actions as a single group, community or a single event: a case. Hence Gillham (2000, p.1) defines a case study as an investigation to answer specific research questions which seek a range of different evidences from the case settings. Additionally, Yin (2003) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon

within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. The case study design is especially useful in situations where contextual conditions of the event being studied are critical and where the researcher has no control over the events as they unfold. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) see the primary defining features of a case study as being “multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context.

In view of the above a case may also be a program, an event, or an activity bounded in time and place. 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 evidences 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.

Following the above argument and protocol of case study design, the researcher collected data on teachers’ and learners’ experiences of Grade 6 learners’ writing in EFAL through the use of the following methods:

- Semi structured interviews,
- Classroom observation, and
- Document analysis.

These instruments ensured that the issue was not only explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allowed for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter and Jack, 2008). The researcher also believes that the findings of this study would play a role in helping teachers to reflect on their practices on developing learners’ writing in the classroom, as well as understanding writing difficulties that learners encounter when writing. The schools and participants were carefully chosen to reflect the general writing experiences of all the teachers and learners. Since the researcher used the qualitative research design, the researcher decided to use teachers and learners from the different linguistic backgrounds: isiXhosa and Afrikaans with the same socio-economic backgrounds to find out if their writing experiences are the same.

Davies (2005) enumerates the following disadvantages of a case study design:

- It does not ensure reliability of findings or generality of findings
- Intense exposure to the study of the case biases the findings.

However, it should be noted that these disadvantages do not affect this study because the researcher stayed for a relatively longer period of time in the setting with the participants. As a result, the participants became less self-conscious and gradually started behaving naturally that gave room for reliability of the data collected (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011).

3.5 Sampling and sample size

Latham (2007) defines sampling as the method of taking a representative selection of the population and using the data collected as research information. De Vos *et al.* (2002) and Johnson and Christensen (2000) explain sampling as the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample. It is clear that sampling usually involves people, settings, events and processes (Latham, 2007). The sample size is directly related to the purpose of the study, the research problem, the major data collection technique and the availability of information-rich participants (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). This is supported by Hill (2010) who contends that the researcher should attempt to select people who have experienced the phenomena related to the study and who are willing to open up about their experiences. Thus, the participants in this study were carefully selected individuals who were experiencing the phenomenon of writing in grade 6 (Creswell, 2003). The researcher selected two primary schools with isiXhosa and Afrikaans background learners with the motive to find out the learners' writing experiences.

Given the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher had to be intentionally non-random in the selection of data sources but rather, selected participants that yielded the most information about the topic under investigation. This is supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2005) who argue that. This was because the researcher's major concern was not to generalize the findings of the study to a broad population, but to maximize discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems that occurred in the particular context under study (Gray, 2004). Hence, a representative number of participants who could best interpret the phenomenon under investigation were purposively selected (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Patton (2002); Trochim and Donnelly (2006) define purposeful sampling as the process of selecting samples that are rich with information needed for the research and are fit for the study. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). This process of purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher is able to select elements which represent a 'typical sample' from the appropriate target population (Macmillan and Schumacher, 2001).

This type of sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight, which he/she therefore selected a sample from which the most could be learned (Merriam, 2001). Another reason for selecting this method was the fact that purposive sampling through human instrumentation increased the range of data exposed and therefore maximized the researcher's ability to identify emerging themes that took adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms (Gray, 2004). In purposive sampling as the name indicates, the research participants were selected for a specific purpose. The logic and power of the sampling rested in selecting information-rich cases for this in-depth study (Kasenga, 2007). Information-rich cases are therefore those from which one could learn a lot about issues of central importance for the purpose of research. Hence the participants were selected in a way that the questions of the study were answered (Patton, 2002).

Saunders *et al.* (2003); De Vos *et al.* (2005) opine that a purposive sample is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher. However it is critical to be certain of the knowledge and skill of the informant when doing purposive sampling, as inappropriate informants may render the data meaningless and invalid (Kasenga, 2007). In line with this, Patton (2002) states that when obtaining a purposeful sample, the researcher should select participants according to the needs of the study. The researcher need to ensure the success of the purposive sampling by reviewing and analysing the data in conjunction with data collection (Mack *et al.*, 2005). The study used purposive sampling to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth (Patton, 2002). The sample was thus selected based on the researcher's judgement and the purpose of the research, looking for those who

have experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched (Babbie, 2005; Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007) however argue that a sample size is not important in qualitative research. Hence, the researcher looked for quality rather than quantity as it was more about information richness. In support of this, Van Rensburg (2001) states that interpretive researchers reflect an interest in contextual meaning-making rather than generalized rules. Therefore, instead of surveying large groups, the researcher preferred individuals and small groups in their natural settings to give the rich, detailed information of a qualitative nature through in-depth interviews, observations or other sources. Therefore, purposive sampling was relevant for this study as it allowed the researcher to select participants who provided rich information. In this case grade six isiXhosa and Afrikaans background learners in ESL were information rich participants. A small sample of four teachers and twenty four learners were selected to gather the data for this study. The schools and participants were carefully chosen to reflect the general writing experiences of all the teachers and learners. Since the researcher used the qualitative research method, he/she decided to use teachers and learners from the different linguistic backgrounds to find out their writing experiences.

3.5.2 Sampling of the research site for this study

After developing the research question, the researcher had to identify the sources relevant to the phenomenon being studied and from these, sought individuals who were willing to describe their experiences relating to the phenomenon in question. Since this is a qualitative study that is positioned in the interpretive paradigm, the types of participants needed were the isiXhosa and Afrikaans home language background EFAL learners and teachers. Therefore, the sample for this study was drawn from two primary schools. Both schools have relevant learners suitable for this study. This is supported by Hill (2010) who contends that the researcher should attempt to select people who have experienced phenomena related to the study and who may be willing to open up about their experiences.

Creswell (2002) cautions that participants in a phenomenological study need to be carefully selected and should be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon.

This is important because Groenewald (2004) argues that the phenomenon usually dictates the method (not vice-versa), including even the type of participants. This is true because the primary focus of this study was to get the perspectives of EFAL teachers' and learners' on writing in.

These primary schools were an isiXhosa medium school in a rural areas and Afrikaans medium school in a Coloured Township, in the East London District in the Buffalo City Municipality in the Eastern Cape Province. Despite isiXhosa and Afrikaans being their mother tongues, English was the LoLT in Grade 6. The researcher chose the isiXhosa and Afrikaans medium primary school because the literature in chapter two revealed writing difficulties of German-English and Spanish-English learners. The gap for this study is based on the fact that there seems to be no literature that sought both the perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in EFAL.

3.5.3 Sampling of participants

An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). De Paulo (2000) states that in a qualitative research, the sample must be big enough to ensure that we are likely to hear most if not all of the perceptions that might be important. Perhaps an N (the number in the sample) of 30 participants is a reasonable starting point for deciding the qualitative sample size that can reveal full range (or nearly the full range) of potentially important perceptions (ibid). In addition to this, Mack *et al.* (2005) state that sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed prior to data collection, depend on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. In other words, the size does not really matter in terms of numbers or percentage but rather on its representativeness.

Moreover, in this study the case was twenty four Grade 6 learners selected in terms of their performance and categorised as strong, average and weak writers. Four teachers teaching the selected learners English first additional language also participated. Selecting these teachers and learners to be interviewed was done purposefully because the researcher wanted to get an in-depth understanding of teachers' and learners' experiences in writing. This diverse composition resulted in an in-depth description of the experiences of the participants which facilitated

comprehensive answers to the research questions. Based on the fact that this is a qualitative, the researcher had to be intentionally non-random in the selection of data sources but he/she rather selected those individuals that yielded the most information about the topic under investigation (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Random or representative sampling was therefore not preferred because the researcher's major concern was not to generalize the findings of the study to a broad population or universe, but to maximize discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems that occur in the particular context under study which was writing in EFAL classroom (Gray, 2004).

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) argue that qualitative researchers tend to select only a few participants who can shed light on the phenomenon under investigation rather than sample a large number of people with the intent of making generalizations. Purposive sampling, considered by Groenewald (2004) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling was therefore employed to identify the school as well as the primary participants of this study. In purposive sampling, as the name indicates, research participants are selected for a specific purpose. The logic and power of purposive sampling therefore rests in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study (Kasenga, 2007). Information-rich cases are those from which one could learn a great deal about issues of central importance for the purpose of research. This implies that participants have to be selected whose study will illuminate the question under research Patton (2002).

3.5.4 Access to participants and the research site

Gaining access to the participants and the research site was through the Department of Education and the principals of the schools. The researcher used the provincial District Education Officer and principal of the school as gatekeepers. A letter requesting to conduct research in the school was written and given to the principal. (Appendix B)

3.6 Data collection

Interpretive researchers attempt to derive their data through direct interaction with the phenomenon being studied. An important aspect of data analysis in qualitative case study is the search for meaning through direct interpretation of

what is observed by themselves as well as what is experienced and reported by them. In view of this, Bogdan and Biklen (2003) define qualitative data analysis as working with the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesising them, and searching for patterns. The aim of analysis of qualitative data is to discover patterns, concepts, themes and meanings. In case study research, Yin (2003) discusses the need for searching the data for “patterns” which may explain or identify causal links in the data base. In the process, the researcher concentrates on the whole data first, then attempts to take it apart and re-constructs it again more meaningfully. Categorisation helps the researcher to make comparisons and contrasts between patterns, to reflect on certain patterns and complex threads of the data deeply in order to make sense of them.

Data collection refers to the process of gathering information related to research which involves identifying sources of data and selecting methods. The researcher needed a method of data collection and approach which would allow him/her to explore all the questions. In this regard, Leedy and Ormrod (2005) assert that qualitative researchers ask general questions about the phenomenon that they are studying. Furthermore, Cohen *et al.* (2000) argue that people’s words and actions represent the data of qualitative inquiry and this requires a method that can allow the researcher to capture language and behaviour. Creswell (2002) supports this thinking by stating that phenomenological researchers depend almost exclusively on lengthy in-depth interviews, perhaps one or two hours in length, with a carefully selected sample of participants, all of whom have had direct experiences with the phenomenon being studied.

Cohen *et al.* (2000); Mouton (2001) describe data collection as the steps that involve setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials and establishing the protocol for recording information. The researcher collected data in the form of words rather than numbers through recorded interviews, observations and document analysis. The data was collected through several media and channels.

3.6.1 Classroom observation

Observation is a way of gathering data through watching behaviour and events, or by noting physical characteristics in their natural setting (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). By this method, the researcher immersed herself into the research setting, and observed the different dimensions of that setting. Observation was very important in this research as it allowed the researcher to study the phenomenon at a close range with many of the contextual variables present. In observation, the data was gathered through a combination of field notes and audio/ visual recordings. This helped the researcher to later analyse the language used in greater depth and to involve outside researchers in the consideration of the data (Creswell, 2003).

Estacion *et al.* (2004) classify classroom observations as a resource-intensive method for obtaining data that provides valuable information that cannot be obtained in other ways. In their study, Estacion *et al.* (2004) investigated whether or not teachers were modelling or implementing certain cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies in the classroom. Observation further allowed the researcher to study the interpersonal behaviour of the participants and to gain an understanding of the context at hand (Abongdia, 2013). Therefore classroom observations offered more direct insight into the teaching and learning practices. Given that teachers are often unaware of some of their teaching behaviours, this study made recourse to observations in order to get at an accurate depiction of the perspectives teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in EFAL in isiXhosa and Coloured primary schools of East London.

Accordingly, the distinctive characteristics of observation as a research process is that it offers a researcher the opportunity to gather "live" data from the naturally occurring social situation (Cohen *et al.* 2007, p.396). In view of this, observation therefore enabled the researcher to see what was taking place in classrooms directly rather than relying on second hand information like the interviews. To respond to the research question(s), the researcher through observation, gathered information from the classroom in order to understand the realities of the strategies used in the teaching and learning of EFAL in the two schools. The main focus of the researcher's observations was to note any similarities and/or differences in the

manner through which the teachers and the learners interacted, together with the influence of home languages on EFAL writing competency.

On the other hand, observation was not to report on the individuals' performance, but rather to find out teachers' and learners' experiences on writing in EFAL. In this regard, Henning *et al.* (2004, p.87) point out that there are many researchers who observe in a site without real participation. These kinds of researchers go to the scene of everyday life to explore issues that can reveal more about data that they acquired through interviews or in documents or in artefacts without being witnesses themselves. Cohen *et al.* (2007, p.397) offer a classification of a researcher's role in observation as complete participant, participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant. The researchers' role therefore was that of the participant-as-observer. This means that the researcher role in the classroom was non-intrusive by merely noting the incidents of the factors being studied. The researcher in this case, observed six lessons per school where the learners were involved in writing and discussing the lesson (during the main study from August 2014- October 2014). This enabled the researcher to gather necessary in-depth information for the study. Based on the above, Handwerker (2001) points out that, if the observer stays for relatively longer periods, people become less self-conscious and gradually start behaving naturally. This justifies why the researcher had to stay for a period of three months in the schools where she participated actively in the classes.

Moreover, the researcher compiled an observation record form in which he/she listed the items observed and provided spaces to record observations (Handwerker, 2001). These forms were similar to survey questionnaires, but the researcher recorded the observed scenarios and participants' answers (Cohen *et al.* 2007). They helped the researcher to standardise the observation process by ensuring that all important items were covered. McClure (2002) states that direct observation facilitates better aggregation of data gathered. (Appendix D, a copy of classroom observation form). However, direct it should be noted that observation maybe susceptible to the observer's bias (Handwerker, 2001). This was dealt with in this study because the researcher was guided by the written observation form which captured only what was actually observed. The researcher used the written observation sheet that

limited personal perceptions and bias because the event was experienced first-hand (McClure, 2002).

3.6.2 Document analysis

LeCompte and Preissle (1993) define documents as artefacts, symbolic materials such as writing and signs, which tell the researchers about the inner meaning of everyday events and they may yield descriptions of rare and extraordinary events in human life. In other words, documents are pre-produced text that has not been generated by the researcher (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). They are easily accessible, free and contain information that would take an investigator enormous time and effort to gather (Merriam, 2001). In this regard, the researcher interpreted and analysed Grade 6 learners' books to gather data on the learners' perceptions of writing EFAL. From these documents, the researcher was able to pick up features of words which were difficult or easier to write. These documentary data were a particularly good source for qualitative case studies because as (Merriam, 2001) puts it they grounded an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated.

Although documents were a good source of data for numerous reasons, one of the disadvantages was the difficulty in determining their authenticity and accuracy, as they contained some built-in biases that the researcher was not aware of (Merriam, 2009). To counter this, the researcher followed Merriam's (2001) strategy by asking different questions based on the documents related to the research problem in her to determine their origin and the reasons behind them. This means that the researcher used genres of writing in looking at words before the study and the words that were written during the study. The documents that were analysed were second language isiXhosa and Afrikaans learners' EFAL workbooks. It is needful to signal that these documents validated the study as they were based on reality and were guided by research goals and questions as supported by Cohen *et al.*, (2007).

3.6.2.1 Analysis of learners' writing portfolios

In order to collect data for the investigation of the effectiveness of writing, different writing processes and stages were adopted for this study: pre-writing (free writing), drafting, sharing, editing, publishing and assessing (Unger and Fleischman, (2004); Atkinson, (2003); Peha, (2002); McDonald and William, (2000). Below is the

explanation of how the researcher went about with each stage as the learners were engaged in writing and the reason why.

Free writing

At this stage the learners were allowed to first think of words that come to their minds and then write them down. They continued with this task until they could not think of anything else to write. When they were through, they looked at what they have written and decided if there was one particular topic they could address. As a form of motivation, they were encouraged not to jump to any quick conclusions about their topic. This allowed learners to generate thoughts that helped them to formulate ideas to write about them. Once they felt that they have generated enough ideas during prewriting to serve as a point of departure, they were asked to make their first attempt at getting those ideas written down.

Drafting

After the prewriting phase, the learners were left to think on a specific topic from the written work. They were asked to write as fast as they could without stopping until they got to the end. They were encouraged to use the notes that they created during pre-writing for inspiration and at the same time, they were allowed to change things here and there if they wanted to do so. It was specified that they did not need to worry about spelling or grammar at this stage, but to focus on making sure that each paragraph has one main point, and that each paragraph progresses smoothly from the previous paragraph unto the next paragraph.

In this process, the learners jotted few quick ideas and took a little time gathering their thoughts in order to choose a direction before they started drafting. The learners were told to keep in mind: that they were only drafting. They still have a long way to go—many opportunities to change what they have written, to review and revise, to add and subtract, to modify and to make corrections. They were encouraged to do their best, but not to get distressed.

Typically, the first draft was very rough, it provided raw material that would be shaped and refined in the next stages of the writing process. An important component of the writing process was its recursive nature, which allowed the

learners to revise their work continually (Peha, 2002). Experience showed that the learners did not only revise what they have written, but also revisited their goals and plans for writing (McDonald and William, 2000). This process allowed the learners to take into account new ideas and thoughts and to have the opportunity to incorporate it into their writing (Atkinson, 2003).

Sharing

At this stage, the learners shared their work with peers and got some feedback in return on their writing. At this point, they had a chance to make changes based on the comments they received from peers. It is important to note that this is a balancing act that takes time to perfect and a great deal of maturity from the peers (Atkinson, 2003).

Editing

During the editing process, learners read instructions for editing to help themselves and their peers. Editing and proofreading of the written work helps to eliminate errors and improve the coherence and readability of the written work (Peha, 2002). This reworking required learners to refine the content so that it was clear. In addition, so that points are adequately supported, and that ideas are expressed in the best way and in the best order possible. After completing their first drafts, the first step in revising was to walk away and let the paper sit. Walking away and coming back later allowed the learners to read their papers with a fresh perspective.

They were asked to:

- Read their drafts out loud to themselves. This is because our ears can catch problem areas that our eyes cannot.
- After fully examining their drafts, they have to identify and make corrections that will make their draft better.
- Write a second draft, this was an effective way of revising because the learners are allowed to added new ideas. Therefore, they had a responsibility to find and eliminate mistakes so that they did not distract or annoy their readers.

- After they have completely edited their paper, they walked away and return some time later to re-edit. Sometimes we make careless errors because we think we write it correctly and have actually made an obvious mistake (Peha, 2002).

They were allowed to use the following editing checklist:

- Have you read your work aloud to listen for problems?
- Did you check every possible misspelling in a dictionary?
- Make sure every comma is being used correctly.
- Do you have any sentence fragments?
- Are you using verbs correctly?
- Did you check your use of pronouns?
- Did you check your use of modifiers?
- Are you confident your punctuation is used correctly?
- Are your capital letters correct?

At this stage of the writing process, learners have to read their paper carefully. When the writer begins to evaluate and edit their papers, they have to change from the role of writer to the role of a critic (Peha, 2002). After they have made improvements, they are allowed to have the peers to read their paper and make comments.

Publishing

Authors go through the writing process with the end goal of publication. Publication is the first step toward creating a student with automaticity, self-determination and confidence in their own abilities (Deci *et al.*, 2000). Publishing in some way is the sharing of work with a wider audience (Peha, 2002). This may involve the rest of the class, students' family or friends, the wider community, or even an internet audience (Atkinson, 2003). In this study, publication was set up to give learners some freedom of choice with colours and pictures. To this effect, learners published their work in the form of displays on classroom walls. During the publishing stage, learners are asked to do whatever they want, in order to make their writing appealing to the eye.

Assessing

The idea here is to pull up a chair right alongside yourself and peak over your own shoulder to see what you have done. After the learners publish a piece of their

writing, they have to leave it there for a while, took it off again and re-read it. They are then asked to jot down a few thoughts about what they did. They have to check if:

- They liked some parts more than others
- They learned something new
- What the piece of writing said about them as writers?

Comparing current work with old work is the better way to see how far one has developed. Hence, the students were asked to compare the first draft and the final one to see what they have learned and thus the development they have gone through as writers.

3.6.3 Interviews

Interviews are very useful research tools as they gave the researcher a degree of flexibility and privileged access to other people's lives. They are often associated with survey-based research used by many qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2003, p.186). The participants in this study had the opportunity to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regarded situations from their own points of view. Furthermore, the interviews encouraged open-ended dialogue between the researcher and the participants and helped the researcher to see things in a new light.

In line with the thought above, Leedy and Ormrod (2005) state that interviews allow for in depth exploration of experiences and as a result, can yield a great deal of useful information. The interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to probe and ask follow-up questions where vague or unclear statements were made. According to Cohen *et al.* (2000), interviews are a means of pure information transfer and collection. It is a transaction which inevitably has a bias that can be recognized and controlled. This was applicable in this study because the researcher was also a teacher who made sure that throughout the data collection process, any preconceived notions or personal experiences were suspended. Such suspension is referred to by Leedy and Ormrod (2005) as "bracketing or epoche".

Given the qualitative nature of the study, it made use of semi-structured interviews. Patton (2002) defines semi structured interviews as a flexible process that allows

depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand interviewee's responses. In the study, the semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to lead the conversation and to identify what they saw as significant as they told their stories in ways that they wanted to tell them (Frankham, 2005). The interviewing process involved conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme or situation (Boyce and Neal, 2006). The researcher used a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule (De Vos *et al.*, 2002). In view of this, the semi-structured interviews were relevant in this study because it allowed the researcher to use probes with a view to clear up vague responses or asking for incomplete answers to be elaborated on (Frankham, 2005). The interviews were later transcribed and analysed according to emerging themes (Govender, 2009).

Cohen, *et al.* (2007) and Adam (2010) recommend open-ended interviews to expand the depth of data gathering. With reference to semi-structured interviews, Bless and Smith (2000); Cohen *et al.* (2007); Boyce and Neal (2006) classify the advantages of semi structured interviews as follows:

- a) People are more easily engaged in an interview than in completing a questionnaire. Thus there are fewer problems in failing to respond (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).
- b) They help to clarify concepts and problems and they allow for the establishment of a list of possible answers or solutions which, in turn, facilitates the construction of multiple-choice questions (Bless and Smith, 2000; Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Boyce and Neal, 2006).
- c) The interviewer will be able to pick up non-verbal cues, including facial expressions, tones of voice and cues from the surroundings and context (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).
- d) They are very helpful in exploratory research, as well as when considering a pilot survey (Bless and Smith, 2000).
- e) They provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods, such as surveys (Boyce and Neal, 2006).

- f) They may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information (Boyce and Neal, 2006).

As much as the semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to narrate their stories, they also have some disadvantages like the ones below:

- a) It is difficult to record responses, particularly if the interviewer is also responsible for writing them down (Adam, 2010).
- b) The quality of responses, that is, their reliability and validity is dependent on the interviewer (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).
- c) If the interviewers are not competent, they may introduce many biases and interviews are time consuming and thus expensive (Bless and Smith, 2000).

To minimise these above disadvantages, the researcher maintained the field notes taken during the interviews that contained the essentials of the interviewees' answers and the information about the proceeding interview. The researcher refrained from inserting her own biases by paraphrasing what participants were saying or by making evaluative comments like "good" or "that's interesting". The researcher sat down immediately after an interview and jotted down an impression of the interview in maintaining the quality of the response. Needless to say that there were often times when the researcher would read the notes afterwards and might not make sense of some of its parts. To cater for this, he/she made sure that she went over the notes immediately after the interview session to make sure that everything was meaningful since his/her memory was still fresh.

Moreover, the researcher made use of a tape recorder in capturing more data than relying on memory only. Tshotsho (2006) states that recording has an advantage of capturing information more faithfully than hurriedly written notes, and this can allow the interviewer to focus on the interview. Another reason for recording the interviews was to capture exactly what the person said, instead of trying to paraphrase (Hill, 2010). Frankham (2005) asserts that it is a good idea to transcribe every word of a taped interview because the researcher might not know what is relevant until he/she is analysing the data and writing the account. Soon after each interview was concluded the researcher listened to the recordings thereof and transcribed it verbatim in order to allow the voices of the research participants to speak

(Groenewald *et al.* 2004). This also helped with ensuring credibility of the interpretation of the data.

Additionally, an interview schedule (Appendix C) containing a few guiding questions related to the research question and overall research problem was compiled beforehand in order to stay within the topic surrounding the questions. The line of questioning was also more open-ended which enabled the researcher to get more in-depth information related to the research topic. Open ended questions are thought to allow an individual time and scope to discuss their experiences and knowledge (Morse and Richards, 2002). The schedule was designed to allow the participants to express their experiences in writing with principal focus on the following:

- Getting insight into teachers' experiences of learners writing in EFAL
- What were the learners' experiences in writing EFAL?
- What are the possible causes of EFAL writing difficulties?
- What strategies can be put in place to minimize/curb the problem?

3.7 Phenomenology

The focus of this study is to produce empirical knowledge on the perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences on writing; therefore a particular research design that would yield the best answers to the research questions had to be selected. It also had to be non-prescriptive; motivating the choice of a qualitative research method for this study (Dahlberg, 2006). As the aim was to describe as the experiences of teachers and learners in teaching and learning of writing in the two primary school classrooms, phenomenological research, was deemed the most appropriate design for this study. It is in view that the design offers ways of understanding not offered by other research methodologies which is in contrast to the scientific method that relies only on numbers. Thus this study is both qualitative and interpretive in nature (Groenewald, 2004). Another significance of this methodology is the fact that phenomenologists believe that knowledge and understanding are embedded in our everyday world; therefore knowledge cannot be quantified or reduced to numbers or statistics (Byrne, 2001). Byrne (2001) further state that phenomenology is also a type of qualitative research that examines and explores the essence of the lived experiences of humans, the rationale for this study.

In this regard, phenomenology as a design is powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom (Dahlberg, 2006). Campbell *et al.* (2003) assert that phenomenological research makes it possible to research almost any phenomenon and any lived experience as a human response. What makes phenomenological research significant is the fact that it emphasizes on the personal characteristics and "meaning-making" of each member, as the assumption is that everyone's reality is different depending on how they perceive situations (Hill, 2010).

Based on the above debate, this study attempts to understand the research participants' perceptions, perspectives, and understandings of social realities. With the development of post positivist approaches, phenomenology has been adopted by different disciplines, including education, as an appropriate way of exploring research questions, which led to a many different (qualitative) ways of knowledge construction (Campbell, 2000).

Since phenomenology attempts to understand an experience from the participant's point of view (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005); it often attempt to answer the question, "What is it like to experience such-and-such?" In this study the major research question was, "What are the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in EFAL?" The researcher sought to understand the experiences of teachers and learners during their writing practices. This translated into gathering deep information through inductive qualitative methods, in this case phenomenological interviews, and representing it from the perspective of the research participants. The multiple realities of the participants gave the researcher diverse perspectives into the experiences of teachers and learners when Grade 6 learners practice writing.

On the other hand Creswell (2003) lists three reasons why a phenomenological approach may be challenging to novice researchers.

- The researcher requires a solid grounding in the philosophical precepts of phenomenology. Before deciding to embark on a phenomenological study the researcher made an in depth study of the available literature in order to educate herself on the basic tenets of phenomenology as research methodology.
- The participants in the study were carefully chosen to be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. All the participants in this study have been teaching at the school for more than ten years, therefore it was assumed that they would provide rich experiences of teaching second language learners.
- Bracketing personal experiences by the researcher may be difficult. The researcher allowed the participants to share their experiences freely and tape recorded the interviews that were later transcribed. They were given their voice in the study by presenting their interpretations verbatim in chapter four, thus minimizing the possibility of subjectivity.

Since this is a phenomenological study, the above-mentioned challenges did not have an impact on the researcher's study because he/she has an experience in conducting research. However, it was very important for the researcher to be cognisant of these challenges before embarking on this type of study.

3.8 Data Analysis

De Vos *et al.* (2002) define data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) maintain that qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing and interpreting to provide an explanation of the single phenomenon of interest. Qualitative data analysis is also about telling other people the story of the research and what have been established (Frankham, 2005).

In addition, Bogdan and Bilken (2003) assert that data analysis involves working with the data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units or descriptive themes, coding it for insights into the participants' experience on their world, synthesizing the data and searching patterns. These patterns are called 'themes'. Themes are recurring patterns of meaning (ideas, thoughts, and feelings) throughout the text.

They are likely to identify both something that matters to the participants (an object of concern or topic of some importance). Moreover, it should also convey something about the meaning of that thing to the participants. Some of these themes were eventually grouped under much broader themes called superordinate themes (Hancock *et al.*, 2009).

In view of the above, Creswell (2003) postulates some steps to be followed in the data analysis process, which he refers to as the data analysis spiral. After transcribing, the researcher applied the following steps of Creswell (2003) to the coding of the data:

- She made a thorough study of the data by reading it over and over.
- Organized the data and identified statements that related to the topic / research questions. The researcher separated relevant from irrelevant information in the interviews. The relevant information was broken into small segments such as paragraphs, sentences and individual words.
- Sheperused the entire data set several times to get a sense of what it contained as a whole. Possible categories were identified and underlined.
- She sought divergent perspectives and considered the various ways in which different participants responded to the questions. This gave more depth to the description of the experiences.
- She further identified general categories or themes and sub-themes and the data was n classified accordingly.
- The findings were then related to an existing body of theory and research.
- Finally, he/she discussed the practical implications of the findings and made valuable recommendations.

The central task during data analysis was to identify common themes in the participants' descriptions of their experiences in writing. Definite superordinate and sub-themes clearly emerged from this study. As the researcher worked through each interview, he/she identified the superordinate and sub-themes and classified the data accordingly. It captured a variety of patterns in participants' embodied experiences on writing in EFAL (Hancock *et al.*, 2009) which was further explicated by sub-themes.

Additionally, Yin (2003) describes five techniques for analysis:

- Pattern matching
- Linking data to propositions
- Explanation building
- Time-series analysis

This means that the data analysis is the process of making sense from the data by consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people said and what the researcher saw and read (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 2001). In view of this, Merriam (2009) opines that data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, and between description and interpretation. It is clear that data analysis involves “breaking up” the texts into manageable themes, patterns, trends, and relationships (Patton, 2002; Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

Tshotsho’s (2006) themes that were constructed were those that the researcher identified before, during and after data collection that came from reviewing literature. Themes were identified by sorting the samples into piles of similar meaning according to the speaker and context (Patton, 2002). Then the researcher analysed the collected data on the perspective of teachers’ and learners’ experiences of Grade 6 learners’ writing so that it could be understandable.

3.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness

Assessing the accuracy of qualitative findings is not easy. However, there are several possible strategies and criteria that can be used to enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings. *Trustworthiness* is the corresponding term used in qualitative research as a measure of the quality of research. It is the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy. Smith and Ragan (2005); Maxwell (2013); Creswell (2003) suggest that the trustworthiness of qualitative research can be established by using four strategies: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. These are constructed parallel to the analogous quantitative criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and neutrality. The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is how an inquirer can persuade his or her audience (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are of value (Maponya, 2010).

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is defined as the extent to which the data and data analysis are believable and trustworthy. Qualitative research is valid to the researcher and not necessarily to others due to the possibility of multiple realities. It is contingent upon the reader to judge the extent of its credibility based on his/her own understanding of the study. Most rationalists propose that there is not a single reality to be discovered, but that each individual constructs a personal reality (Smith and Ragan, 2005). Thus, from an interpretive perspective, understanding is co-created and there is no objective truth or reality to which the results of a study can be compared.

3.8.2 Transferability

Research findings are transferable or generalizable only if they fit into new contexts outside the actual study context. Transferability is analogous to external validity. That is the extent to which the findings can be generalized. Generalizability refers to the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times or setting than those directly studied (Maxwell, 2013). Since this study adopts a single case study approach, the process of generalisation that aptly matches it is “inferential generalisation” which is best explained as generalising from the context of the research study itself to other settings or contexts (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Therefore, the generalizability issue has to be resolved by the reader of the research report based on how close the researcher’s and the reader’s contexts are. It is a matter of judgement of the context and phenomena found which allows others to assess the transferability of the findings to another setting (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p.268).

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability is analogous to reliability; the consistency of observing the same finding under similar circumstances.

3.8.4 Triangulation

In social research, the term triangulation is used in a less literal sense—it involves the use of multiple methods and measures of an empirical phenomenon in order to ‘overcome problems of bias and validity’ (Blaikie, 2000; Scandura and Williams,

2000). Triangulation arose from an ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes and, in case studies; it can be achieved by using multiple sources for data collection (Yin, 2003). It is an approach that utilizes multiple data sources, multiple informants, and multiple methods (e.g., participant observation, focus groups, member checking, and so on) in order to gather multiple perspectives on the same issue so as to gain a more complete understanding of the phenomena. Triangulation is used to compare data, to decide if it corroborates (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002) and to validate research findings. It is one of the most important ways to improve the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings.

Moreover triangulation being a way of mutual validation of results uncovers biases when there is only one researcher investigating a phenomenon. Triangulation may incorporate multiple data sources, investigators, and theoretical perspectives in order to increase confidence in research findings (Painter and Rigsby, 2005). The use of results from one set of data to corroborate those from another type of data is also known as triangulation (Brannen, 2005).

In view of this, triangulation is viewed as one of the ways of 'validating' qualitative research evidence. Yet much debate exists as to whether triangulation offers qualitative researchers a satisfactory method of verifying their findings. Many viewpoints have been expressed, resulting to the argument that the worth of triangulation is the provision of broader insights. Thus, Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p.44) state that "the 'security' that triangulation provides is through giving a fuller picture of phenomena, not necessarily a more certain one".

3.10 Ethical issues

Research ethics deals primarily with the interaction between researchers and the people they study (Mack *et al.* 2005). They are essential concerns in the process of knowledge production. Doing research today without consent being sought from all participants may result in the questioning of the validity of the results and knowledge claims that might emanate from the research (Abongdia, 2013). According to Leedy and Omrod (2001), the social sciences and human subjects are often used in research; and therefore ethical implications need to be considered. In terms of ethics, Adam (2010) observes that the researcher should make sure that no

individual suffers any adverse consequences as a result of the study. Therefore researcher need to treat participants with respect by informing the participants in advance about the day and time when the interview would be conducted including the duration of the interview.

3.10.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is a mechanism for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research so that they can decide in a conscious and deliberate way whether or not they want to participate (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001). It is one of the most important tools for ensuring respect for persons during research (Mack *et al.* 2005). Anyone involved in research should be aware of the general agreements about what is ethical or unethical (Babbie, 2005).

More importantly, the first ethical concern in any research involving humans is informing the participants of the advantages and risks involved in the study and therefore obtaining their consent to participate in the study (Thyer, 2001). For the present study, the participants were briefed about the general nature of the study as well as its goal, procedures and possible advantages and disadvantages. They were assured of confidentiality. In addition, they were offered the opportunity to receive a report about the results and conclusions of the project should they wish so. Consent forms were issued which briefly described the expectations from them as participants (see Appendix A: consent form).

Secondly, whenever humans are the focus of social research, ensuring that the study conforms to ethical standards is of paramount importance (Leedy and Ormrod 2005; Mac Naughton 2001; Cohen *et al.* 2000). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) argue that most ethical issues in educational research fall into one of four categories: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues. It was therefore very important for the researcher of this study to honour all these issues and also focus strongly on ethical issues because the participants were his/her colleagues and learners (although not in the same school).

Based on this, Cohen *et al.* (2000) opines that the researcher should be faithful to the participants, and to be aware of biases being brought to the inevitable editing of the data. They further argue that there is an ethical issue about misrepresenting,

distorting or deleting findings which have been provided in good faith by participants and refers to it as “treachery”. Groenewald (2004); Hancock *et al.* (2009) warn that deception may be counter-productive in research because it might prevent deep insights, whereas honesty coupled with confidentiality reduces suspicion and promotes sincere responses.

The researcher was guided by Saunders *et al.* (2003) gatekeepers. First of all, a letter was drafted asking permission from the Education Department to conduct the research (Appendix A). Upon reception of a positive feedback, permission was sought from the principal (Appendix B) and SGB of the schools to carry out the research at the site (Appendix B). The teachers were then approached to be participants in the study. The principal as well as the teachers were assured that the day to day functioning of the school would not be disrupted because all activities related to the research would be conducted after hours at a convenient time for all involved.

The researcher developed a specific informed consent ‘agreement’ (Appendix A) in order to gain informed consent from the participants. De Vos *et al* (2005) postulate that informed consent relates to the accurate communication of all possible information to the research participants. This is therefore a necessary condition rather than a luxury or an impediment.

3.10.2 Voluntary participation

The participants were not coerced into participating in the research. They were assured that participation was absolutely voluntary and that they were free to discontinue participation at any time. The ‘informed consent agreement’ form was discussed with the participants at the beginning of each interview. It was explained to them that they were participating in research which was only intended to be submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the faculty of Education at the University of Fort Hare. The voluntary nature of the research participation was explained which means that no participant was pressured to participate in the study. They were also informed of their rights to withdraw from the project at any time.

Moreover, the researcher explained to the participants that he/she was going to interview them using an interview schedule (Appendix C) and that they were free not to answer questions that they felt uncomfortable with. The participants were allowed to share their experiences freely without any influence in order not to expose them to any physical or psychological harm. They were therefore not subjected to undue stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem. The researcher also promised to make a summary of the research findings available to them once the study was completed.

3.10.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

This study by no means identified information about individual subjects (e.g., name, address, Email address, etc.), and did not link individual responses with participants' identities. The participants and the schools were coded rather than being referred to by names.

3.11 Conclusion

The chapter outlined the research paradigm, research methodologies, strategies and design used in the study, including procedures, participants, data collection tools, data collection and analysis methods as well as data credibility issues. The research design for this study was an interpretive case study that was analysed largely through qualitative methods using descriptive statistics. Furthermore, it also described the different stages involved in the design and development processes of the study. The next chapter provides the analyses of the data and findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the rationale for adopting a qualitative research method in this study. The aim of this chapter is to present and analyse the data generated through semi-structured interviews, direct observation and document analysis. The primary data were used in order to address the main aim of the study which is to get the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in EFAL.

In order to give the reader some insight into the participants on this study, some biographical information regarding age, gender, grade/s taught, qualifications and teaching experience is given. The researcher begins by introducing the four teachers who participated in the study as well as the twenty four learners. The researcher used pseudonyms for the schools, teachers and learners to ensure adherence to ethical issues such as confidentiality, privacy and anonymity as mentioned in the previous chapter. The four teachers are referred to as Dave, Nancy, (from the Coloured school) Anele and Bantu (from the school in the rural area). This is followed by a detailed presentation of their experiences in English classrooms writing, where their challenges and need for support structures are described. The researcher used direct quotations from the transcripts of interview and lesson observation to serve as evidence for the readers to judge if the conclusions made are justified or not. Finally, a description of each school and classroom where the study took place is presented through thick description.

Since this is a qualitative study, the researcher sought themes or categories during analysis and interpretation of the data in chapters 4 and 5. The process of data analysis in this chapter is followed by Creswell (2003) suggestion and consists of preparing and organising the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through the process of coding, and finally the discussion that follows in chapter 5. The main categories or themes were clearly identified and each piece of data was therefore classified accordingly. Various sub – themes emerged from these categories and which explicated the main themes. These themes were generated

from the different categories that emanated from the theoretical framework, the constructivist theory, sociocultural theory and CDA as well as other theoretical perspectives outlined in chapter two. Therefore, as Froncha (2013) puts it, the themes are not separate and detached but interlinked in complex ways such that none can be ignored or be prioritized over others. They are of significance to this study because these main themes are related to the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences on learners' writing in EFAL by isiXhosa and Afrikaans first language speakers. The rationale behind the study was to see whether common problems arose and also how they could be managed.

4.2 Synopsis of the schools

This section presents a detailed picture of the physical contexts of the two schools. One school is located in the Coloured Township and the other in the rural area of the East London Education District. The school in the coloured area is referred to as School A and the school in the rural area is referred as School B. As noted in Chapter 3, these schools have different cultures and some similar and different characteristics. In terms of similarities, they both cater for learners from Grade R to Grade 7. All the classrooms in both schools have electricity, chalkboards, and pin board displays of different posters and charts. The language of learning and teaching in the Intermediate Phase in these schools is English which is a first additional language/foreign to these learners. The school buildings have different structures and designs. However, the details are presented in the sections below and the classroom layout for each teacher is described separately in different subsection.

4.2.1 School A

This school is located in a multilingual setting, with learners and teachers from different language backgrounds. A majority of the learners as well as the staff are Afrikaans speakers with isiXhosa-speaking learners. Currently, a number of historically Afrikaans medium schools use parallel medium in teaching their classes. In most cases, learners are divided into English and Afrikaans medium of instruction classes in the same subject. The school is a parallel-medium with Afrikaans and English as the two LOLT. In other words, there is a class where learners are taught

all subjects in Afrikaans and the other class is taught in English. The school also caters for learners from the middle class.

Additionally, the school is built with concrete walls and has an administrative area, four foundation phase blocks, three intermediate phase blocks and one block for the senior phase. Each block in the foundation phase and intermediate phase has four classes. Grade R's block with two classes is parallel to Grade 1, 2 and 3. The Grade 7 block with four classes is also parallel to the intermediate phase blocks. There is a big classroom used as the media centre. The school has a flower garden surrounding a lawn. It is also fenced through at the back of the school, the fence is broken and the gate is not in a good condition. Although the school looks attractive from the outside, the inside tells another story since the classroom walls need to be painted and the windows are broken. Inside the classroom, the walls are covered with clad it ceiling boards. Apart from the classroom walls, the floor tiles are old and some of the electric plugs are not functional. There is also a netball court and a soccer field. Other sport codes like rugby and cricket are also practiced on the soccer field.

There is a high crime rate in this area where armed robbery and break-ins occur severally at the school. In some instances teachers have been robbed of their purses and cell phones within the school premises by thugs who jumped over the fence. As a result, teachers are always on the alert and anxious, looking out for any unfamiliar face around the school. Apart from that, this area is faced with lots of other challenges such as overcrowded living conditions, violence, crime and burglary. Although the school was experiencing problems with robberies and break-ins, there was stability in terms of school management and the atmosphere was welcoming. The school participated in many extra-mural and cultural activities such as sport, music, dance, etc. Through informal conversations with some teachers, the researcher learnt that the school has a good reputation in music.

4.2.2 School B

In this school, isiXhosa is the dominant language. The school caters for learners from low socio economic backgrounds. The community comprise largely of lower income earners like domestic workers, farm workers and hawkers. However, it might just be needful to comment that there is now a gradual small influx of relative middle

income earners including some professionals. The school has one concrete block with four classrooms and two bungalow blocks. The walls in the bungalows have holes and it is difficult to paste charts on them because they do not stick for a long time. One of the classes was converted into the office of the principal and the clerk. The teachers also use it as a staff room as well as a store room. The assembly ground is full of cracks and some of the classrooms have leaking roofs. The researcher learned that flushing toilets were recently built and there is no proper playground for the learners. When they have soccer matches with other schools, they use the community playground which takes learners approximately 30 minutes to reach there walking on foot and for netball matches, they use the assembly area. In this school, there are no cleaners and the learners have to clean their own classrooms and normally this is done on Fridays.

From the ongoing description of school B, it is apparent that some learners that form part of the participants in this study come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Their parents have low levels of education and they are unemployed. As such they cannot afford to buy books and school uniforms for their children. Consequently, some learners do not wear complete school uniforms. Some come to school without stationery such as pens, pencils, erasers and have to borrow from other

4.3 Classroom layout

In the first week of observation, the researcher arrived at School A at 8h00 A.M. Dave took her to his classroom and introduced her to his Grade 6B EFAL learners. The Grade 6 classroom was neat. There were 45 learners in the class. The following items were on the walls of that classroom: The Lord's Prayer, classroom rules, poster of Natural Sciences and Technology, Life skills, Maths and Social Sciences. Below are the images that were taken by the researcher during classroom observations as well as the drawn diagram.



Image 1: Inside the classroom walls

The above photograph indicates some of the charts that were on the classroom walls which are the Lord's Prayer chart, poster of Natural Sciences and Technology and Life skills poster mentioned above in the description.

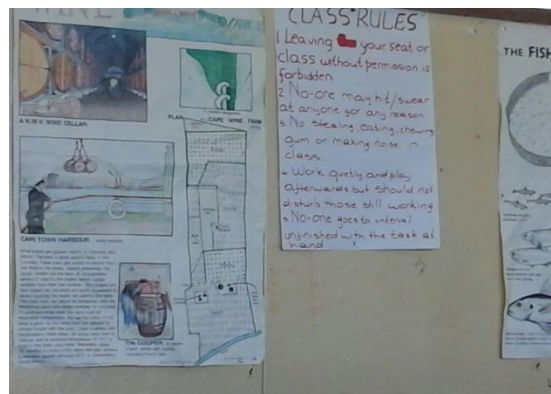


Image 2: Inside the classroom walls

Image 2 portrays some of the charts that were on the classroom walls which are the classroom rules and Natural Sciences and Technology poster.



Image 3: Classroom layout of the desks

Image 3 shows how learners are arranged when they are sitting down.

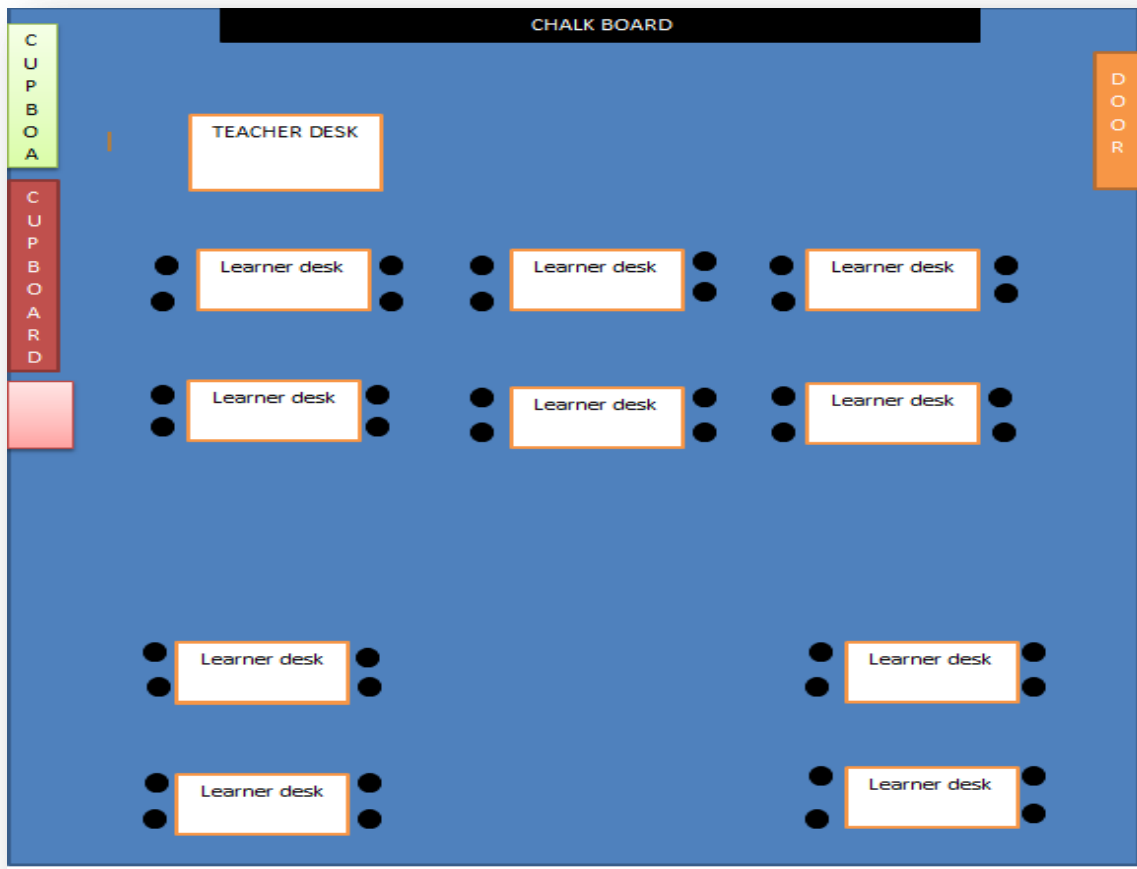


Image 4: The front of the classroom

Image 4 captures how learners are arranged when they are sitting down as well as the teacher's desk with the chalkboard and cupboards.

In favour of the above, figure 1 below illustrates the sitting arrangement and classroom layout in connection with the pictures inserted above.

4.3.1 School A



In this class, learners sit in groups of four with their desks directed towards each other and the teacher's table is located at the front of the class.

4.3.2 School B

The Grade 6 classroom was neat. There were 24 learners in the classroom. The following items were found on the walls: cleaning routine, class list, timetable and posters of Life skills, Maths, Social Sciences and learners' drawings. Below are the pictures that were taken by the researcher during classroom observations together with another picture of sitting arrangement that were taken during classroom observation.



Images 5 & 6: Inside the classroom walls

The above two images portray some of the charts that were on the walls based on Natural Sciences and Technology poster, mathematics chart, Life Skills poster and the Time Table.



Images 7 & 8: Inside the classroom walls

The above images show learners' drawings. Based on the images, the classroom is print rich and learners' work is hung on the walls.

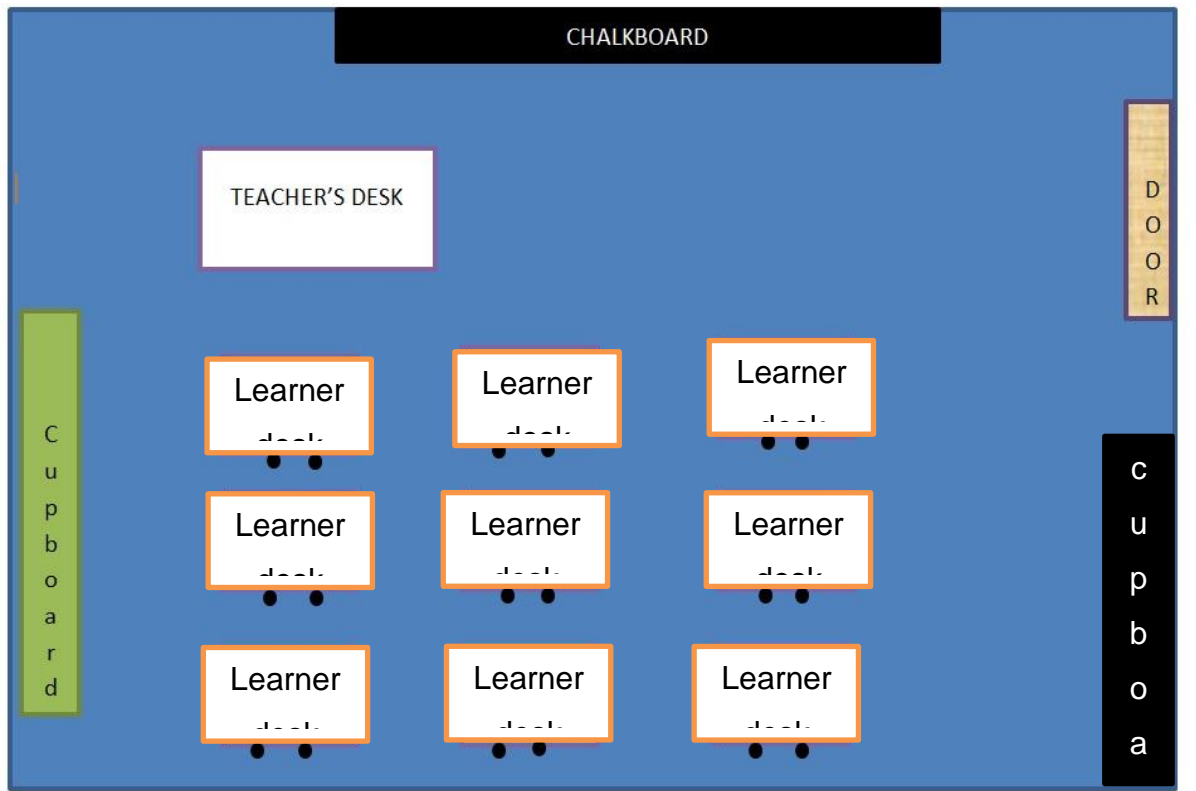


Images 9, 10 and 11: Classroom arrangements

These images portray learner's seats in the classroom. The classroom is spacious. With regard to the sitting arrangement, learners sit in pairs facing the chalkboard.

In view of the above, figure 2 below illustrates the sitting arrangements and classroom layout in connection with the pictures inserted above.

Figure 2



In the classroom, learners sit in pairs with their desks directed towards the teacher's table which is located at the front of the class.

4.4 Biographical information of the participants

4.4.1 Grade 6 teacher profile

As mentioned earlier this study focuses on the perspectives of teachers and learners on learner's writing in EFAL, it also considers other subjects that are taught through the use of English as LoLT. Selecting these teachers and learners to be interviewed was done purposefully because the researcher wanted to get an in-depth understanding of teachers' and learners' experiences. This diverse composition resulted in an in-depth description of the experiences of the participants which facilitated comprehensive answers to the research questions. Hence, the researcher included the profiles of other Grade 6 teachers who taught content subjects. The reason for choosing the content subject teachers were to show that academic writing is not only the duty of EFAL teachers. When content subjects are presented, English is also interlinked and it is a common core subject for all the intermediate subjects.

This means that learners have to understand the language in order to grasp the content. In other words learners learn English and subject matter content at the same time. This study was therefore not only interested in the performance of learners in English as the subject, but also on other content subjects that were taught through the medium of English. The four tables (table 1 for School A and table 2 for School B) for teachers who took part in the study from both schools and (table 3 for School A and table 4 for School B) for learners follow below. The profiles for the educators indicate their gender, home languages; language(s) used mostly, subjects taught, overall years of teaching experience and their qualifications. The tables for learners indicate their home language, languages they were able to speak, read and write.

4.4.2 School A: Biographical information for teachers

Table 1

Race	Gender	Home language	Language(s) mostly used	Pseudonym	Subject taught	Overall years of teaching experience	Qualifications
Black	M	Afrikaans	Afrikaans & English	Dave	Afrikaans, English, Maths	10 years	B.Ed degree
Coloured	F	Afrikaans	Afrikaans and English	Nancy	S. S, L.S, NS & Tech	24 years	SPTD, ACE

The table reveals that Dave is a male with ten years of teaching experience in the Intermediate Phase. His home language is Afrikaans which was also the language he used during the interview. Dave was asked to disclose his academic qualifications with the purpose of identifying whether he had the necessary qualifications and expertise to teach. He is a qualified teacher who is also experienced both in the career as well as the subject he is teaching. In terms of the Norms and Standards for Educators (ELRC, 2003), a teacher needs a minimum Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) of 13, which is a Matriculation Certificate (Grade 12) plus three years of training as an educator or South African Qualifications Authority

(SAQA) credits to be registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE) as a professionally qualified teacher.

Based on Nancy’s teaching experience, there is a possibility that she might be in a good position to provide data that can elicit the research questions. Her experience shows that she has been in the system for a long period of 24 years and she is familiar with the syllabus and content of Grade 4 and 6. She obtained a Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD) in education, which certified her to be a qualified teacher in the Intermediate Phase. She furthered her studies on part-time bases and obtained an Advance Certificate in Education (ACE). This suggests that she might have an understanding of the dynamics of teaching EFAL.

4.4.3 School B: Biographical information for teachers

The second table (table 2) for the teachers from school B

Table 2: Teachers in school B

Race	Gender	Home language	Language mostly used	Pseudo-nym	Subject taught	Overall years of teaching experience	Qualifications
Black	F	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	Anele	English, L.S,	20	JPTD, FDE, B.Ed
Black	F	IsiXhosa	IsiXhosa	Bantu	isiXhosa English, S.S, NS & Tech	22	SPDE, ACE, B.Ed – Hons.

The participants were asked questions related to their academic and professional qualifications as reflected in Table 2. This was to ascertain whether they complied with the requirements for appointment as teachers as provided by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC 2003) which states that an approved qualification denotes a degree, diploma, certificate or another qualification recognized by the Minister of Education as a qualification for the appointment of an educator.

The first participant was Anele who teaches EFAL in Grades 6. After matriculating, she enrolled at a college of education and obtained a Junior Primary Teachers Diploma (JPTD) in education, which qualified her as a teacher in the Foundation Phase. After completing her 3 year JPTD in education, she took up her first teaching post as a Grade 1 teacher. She furthered her studies on part-time bases and obtained Further Diploma in Education (FDE) and Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) degree. From 1994-2002, she was a Grade 3 teacher for eight of her twenty years of teaching experience. She then moved to the Intermediate Phase and became a Grade 6 EFAL teacher. In addition to being an EFAL teacher, she also teaches Life Skills to Grade 6. She is a member of the school management team and is the acting Principal of the school.

Like Anele, after matriculating, Bantu went to a college of education and completed her three years Senior Primary Diploma in Education (SPDE). Besides teaching, she has also been studying further. She completed her Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE with a specialisation in Information Communication Technology (ICT). She is currently studying for her Bachelor of Education – Honours (B. Ed – Hons) (specializing in Teaching and Learning) with the aim of strengthening her general pedagogical knowledge. In our discussion, she mentioned that her B. Ed – Honours has impacted on the way she teaches EFAL. Although the course does not directly address the teaching of English, she believes some of the modules have shaped her practices in an EFAL classroom. She has been teaching in the Intermediate Phase throughout her entire teaching career (22 years) but only started teaching EFAL in 2005. In addition to being a Grade 6 EFAL teacher, she also teaches Natural Science, Technology, isiXhosa and Social Sciences.

The participants were asked to divulge their academic qualifications with the purpose of identifying whether they had the necessary qualifications and expertise to teach these learners. Table 1 and 2 indicate that the participants are highly qualified and hold more than the required qualifications for employment as educators. All the participants hold professional qualifications.

4.4.4 Learners' profile

School A

Table 3 is for the learners from School A. As mentioned earlier, the table is also used to indicate the learners' home language, writing development in EFAL, languages they are able to speak, read and write.

Table 3: Learners from School A

Race	Gender	Age	Pseudonyms	Home language	Writing development in EFAL	Languages able to write / read properly
1. Coloured	Female	12 years	Ln A1	Afrikaans	Good	Afrikaans, English & isiXhosa
2. Coloured	Female	13 years	Ln A2	Afrikaans	Good	Afrikaans, English & isiXhosa
3. Coloured	Female	12 years	Ln A3	Afrikaans	Good	Afrikaans, English & isiXhosa
4. Coloured	Female	14 years	Ln A4	Afrikaans	Good	Afrikaans, English & isiXhosa
5. Coloured	Male	12 years	Ln A5	Afrikaans	Average	Afrikaans & English
6. Coloured	Male	11 years	Ln A6	Afrikaans	Average	Afrikaans & English
7. Coloured	Male	12 years	Ln A7	Afrikaans	Average	Afrikaans & English
8. Coloured	Male	12 years	Ln A8	Afrikaans	Average	Afrikaans & English

9. Coloured	Female	13 years	Ln A9	Afrikaans	Struggling	Afrikaans
10. Coloured	Female	11 years	Ln A10	Afrikaans	Struggling	Afrikaans
11. Coloured	Male	12 years	Ln A11	Afrikaans	Struggling	Afrikaans
12. Coloured	Male	12 years	Ln A12	Afrikaans	Struggling	Afrikaans

It is apparent from the above table that all learners are Afrikaans speakers. In the presentation and analysis of the data learners from School A are coded as Ln A1 to Ln A12 which refers to twelve participants that participated in this study: 6 males and 6 females. This was also done because it was very important to protect the learner's identity. The actual words of the learners are typed in italics. . They are all between the ages of eleven and thirteen which means that some are not appropriate age for the grade. The learners are categorized as follows: four good writers; four average writers and four struggling writers. Based on this categorisation, the groupings are in line with what other researchers have suggested. The researcher worked with these learners to facilitate the collection of information rich data.

School B

Table 4 represents learners from School B. Like in the previous table, the table is used to indicate their home language, writing development in EFAL, languages they are able to speak, read and write.

Table 4: Learners from School B

Race	Gender	Age	Pseudonyms	Home language	Writing development in EFAL	Languages able to write / read properly
1. Black	Male	11 years	Ln B1	IsiXhosa	Good	English & isiXhosa
2. Black	Female	11 years	Ln B2	IsiXhosa	Good	English & isiXhosa

3. Black	Male	13 years	Ln B3	IsiXhosa	Good	English & IsiXhosa
4. Black	Female	13 years	Ln B4	IsiXhosa	Good	English & IsiXhosa
5. Black	Male	14 years	Ln B5	IsiXhosa	Average	English & IsiXhosa
6. Black	Male	11 years	Ln B6	IsiXhosa	Average	English & IsiXhosa
7. Black	Female	12 years	Ln B7	IsiXhosa	Average	English & IsiXhosa
8. Black	Female	12 years	Ln B8	IsiXhosa	Average	English & IsiXhosa
9. Black	Female	12 years	Ln B9	IsiXhosa	Struggling	English & IsiXhosa
10. Black	Female	12 years	Ln B10	IsiXhosa	Struggling	IsiXhosa
11. Black	Male	13 years	Ln B11	IsiXhosa	Struggling	IsiXhosa
12. Black	Male	13 years	Ln B12	IsiXhosa	Struggling	IsiXhosa

The table above reveals that all learners are isiXhosa speakers. In the presentation and analysis of the data, the learners from School B are coded as Ln B1 to Ln B12; indicating the twelve participants involved from this school: 6 males and 6 females. This was also done because it was very important to protect the learner's identity. The actual words of the learners are typed in italics just like that of all the other participants in the study. In South Africa, the primary schooling spans from Grade 1 to 7 where learners are expected to enrol in Grade 1 at six years only if he or she turns seven in the course of that calendar year in order to complete Grade 7 at 13 years of age. This means that the appropriate age for primary education is 7 to 13 years. In this study, the Grade 6 learners range between the ages of 11 and 13 years which mean that some are not appropriate age for the grade. In other words, some are younger and others are older for the grade. Moreover the learners are also

categorized in terms of good average and struggling writers like was the case with learners from school A.

4.5 Presentation and analysis of data

The researcher presented the data from the participants (teachers and learners) verbatim and in italics. When most of the data was collected, the researcher started the process of analytic coding. The researcher read the transcribed recordings of the taped-transcribed interviews, teaching sessions, field notes, and the written samples. That was followed by reading across all data sources and within data sources and then coded the data by looking for recurring patterns and underlying themes. The coding process enabled the researcher to identify concepts and central ideas significant for the study. The researcher used different colours and key phrases to identify the different themes that emerged from the data. The themes which emerged from the data were listed and three data strands from teacher's interviews and learner's interviews were used as representations to elicit the perceptions of the participants on EFAL speaker's writing. It was not possible for the researcher to present all the enormous data in the limited space of this study. Hence, the researcher had to sift and categorize representative strands appropriate for the themes. The quotations from the interviews are italicized.

The participant's responses are grouped into segments where segment 1 is made up of teachers' interviews, segment 2 comprises learners' interviews, segment 3 is observations and segment 4 is data from document analysis (learners' books). In some cases the researcher quoted strands of data from the interviews and where observations and document analysis did not fall with the particular theme. These strands were quoted with the help of the theoretical underpinning from the literature review. The analysis of the data is based on Critical Discourse Analysis because as van Dijk (2001) and Fairclough *et al.* (2004) state, it entails some form of detailed textual analysis. It specifically includes a combination of inter-discursive analysis of texts (how different genres, discourses and styles are articulated together) and linguistic and other forms of semiotic analysis.

Each classroom was observed four times. The first observation for each class was not taken into consideration to avoid what researchers call the researcher's paradox – i.e. the teacher's language and the learners' responses may be affected when they know they are being observed (Sidhu and Fook, 2010). Only data from the second, third and fourth observations were used for this study. All the classroom observations were audio recorded and field notes were taken to provide additional information on the classroom context. In an attempt to make the field notes to become data, the researcher captured word-picture of the setting, actions and conversations that took place. This original data was coded and fleshed out soon after the observation. During observation, the researcher carried a little notepad, jotted down some basic reminders using some key word in order to jot the researcher's memory later. Moreover the researcher applied the codes and reapplied to this qualitative data, he/she was codifying in order to permit data to be "segregated, grouped, regrouped and relinked in order to consolidate meaning and explanation" following the classification of Grbich (2007, p.21). In other words the researcher organized and group similarly coded data into categories because they shared some characteristic. At the end, a total of 12 classroom observations were used for the data analysis. As an observer, the researcher interacted casually with learners (sometimes sitting at the back of the room, and sometimes informally chatting with learners while they were writing) to minimize the effect of the researcher's presence in the classroom and enhance observations in the natural setting as recommended by Foncha 2013).

In addition, the analyses of learners' writing were conducted per school. While in Schools A and B, the researcher collected writing samples from 12 learners mentioned earlier as: four strong writers; four average and four struggling writers from each class. The data collection was done with assistance from the teachers. Apart from tests and examinations, most of the writing tasks began in class and ended up as homework because the learners were slow in writing and also because of time constraints.

4.5.1 Writing in English Second Language

Writing in English Second Language is seen as an issue of primary importance in language teaching, and at the same time it is an issue that seems to pose problems to learners. The researcher is going to retell and relive what the participants said of their experiences with teaching writing in EFAL. The researcher asked teachers to share their experiences and the above theme was intentionally selected because it was led by the data. Below are some responses from the interview question that focused on the perceptions of teacher when learners are taught writing in EFAL.

4.5.1.1 Data segment 1- teacher interviews

In response to the question below the teachers had the following to say:

Researcher: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Dave: *They are quite challenging and yet fruitful. Challenging in the sense that hierdie kinders [these kids] have a tendency of using moedertaal [mother tongue]. They struggle in writing essay type question.*

Researcher: What do you mean when you say they struggle in writing essay type question?

Dave: *Some of them struggle to construct full sentences that are grammatically correct and some struggle to write a paragraph in essay type question. Sometimes they have a tendency of writing something that does not make sense. For example, you can see that their style of writing is not appropriate to the purpose of the essay type question. Or the series of events written are not in a meaning full order.*

Anele: *I have noticed that learners struggle to express themselves in English, ngamanye amaxesha [sometimes] they choose to keep quiet in class because they can't express themselves. Nasezincwadini zabo [even in their books] they write in their mother tongue xa into bengayazi kwi English [when they do not know it in English]. Enye into [another thing] kids are lazy to read instructions. Babhala nje [they just sit] without understanding as a result babhale into engeyiyo [they write something else]. Hayi ke andithethi ngokubhali [more especially] in story or a letter they struggle kakhulu [a lot].*

Nancy: *In my experience in teaching English to grade 6 is that it dawned in my minded that when learners understands the language or familiarise themselves with the language they learn to know it and understand what is expected from them to do. You will see them reading with understanding and becoming fluent. It also becomes easy for them to understand content subjects. But we cannot run away from the fact that children are different. There will always be those who will struggle in understanding, sometimes as a teacher you can think you have explained everything to them but let's come to what is written you will be surprised. Otherwise all in all teaching English is a good experience at the same time a challenge.*

The responses above show some form of agreement and point to the use of mother tongue when learners are engaged in discussion. The participants indicated that learners struggle to write in English. Anele also mentioned that learners do not read instructions but they simply write for the sake of writing. Whereas Nancy observes that in her experience it is important for the learners to understand the language. Dave on the other hand highlighted that code switching sometimes hinders the learner's progress in learning the language of instruction as they tend to rely on their home language even though it is not the language of instruction code switched.

4.5.1.2 Data segment 2– learner interviews

The following data came from the semi structures interview with the learners:

Researcher: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Ln A3: *I like to learn English because I understand it.*

The researcher: What makes you understand it?

Ln A3: *Teacher Dave teaches us to read instructions and I understand it easily. I become happy because there are things that I know and when I read English I find words that are difficult but teacher explains.*

Ln A12: *English is confusing me maar [but] our teacher hulp [helps]. I become confused and I think in Afrikaans and I think English. But I do not finish because ek verstaan nie [I do not know].*

Ln B5: *Sometimes I become bored because I learn something confusing. My teacher explains but I don't understand. I end up not finishing writing. When I arrive at home I try to finish up and expect the teacher to do the corrections, but she does not always do the corrections. [Ngamanye amaxesha ikhe indibhore ndidibane nento exakayo. Umiss andicacisele ndingamva tu. Ngoku ndiphele ndingagqibi ukubhala. Ndifike nasekhaya ndizame ukuyenza ndilindele umiss enze corrections qha yena asuke angazenzi ngamanye amxesha].*

The responses above show some form of agreement and point towards limited proficiency in English as they acknowledge and admit to having a challenge to express themselves and comprehend through the language of instruction. They also mentioned that they become confused when learning English and that result in unfinished work and activities.

4.5.1.3 Data segment 3 – classroom observation

This is the presentation of what was observed which revealed experiences with teaching and learning in EFAL lessons.

4.5.1.3.1 The lessons observed- School A

The teacher introduced his lesson and it was about a story titled 'Joe plays soccer after all', adapted from the EFAL learners workbook. The teacher first asked the learners the following questions:

Dave: *Look at the title of this story and pictures and tell me what this story might be about?*

Ln A7: *Boys are playing soccer and they don't want to play with him. [Seuns speel sokker en hulle wil nie speel met hom]*

Dave: *[You need to speak English]. Learners are making noise [ok quiet! Tell me what this story might be about]?*

Ln A10: *I think they don't want to play with him and he is sitting alone.*

Dave: *What is the first thing you will read on the story?*

Ln A11: *Introduction [Inleiding]*

Dave: *Excuse me, English! I asked you when read you what is the first thing you read?*

Ln A8: *'Introduction'*

Then they all read the story as a class. As they read, the teacher asked questions and some learners responded in Afrikaans but he discouraged the use of any language other than English in his class. After reading, the teacher explained what the story was all about. The teacher explained the unfamiliar words to the learners, writing them on the chalkboard. They all read the instructions which required them to write the story in their own words. The researcher noticed that when learners were engaged in English, they had the tendency of relying on their home language. The teacher on the other hand was motivating them to use English. It is needful to say that some of the learners were so quiet because they were afraid to make mistakes .

4.5.1.3.2 The lesson observed- School B

Through the observations the researcher was able to identify experiences in teaching and writing in EFAL lessons. The learners sat down and took out their books while the teacher calmed them down so that she could start the lesson. She introduced the lesson on the writing of invitations by drawing on learners' prior knowledge of having been invited to a family function– either a formal or an informal invitation. The teacher asked if the learners have ever been invited to a function. What are the important things that must be on the invitation? There was noise as all the learners tried to answer the question. It seems as if everyone had an idea of what the answer should be. Here is a transcript from the lesson.

Anele: *Okay, we've all seen an invitation. Now if people have a birthday party, okay they send out invitation letter to you. Okay, for their birthday or a wedding. So they give out an invitation. What do they put on the invitation, what is normally on the invitation?*

Ln B1: [um] *Date, time*

Anele: *Date, time [she repeated what the learners were saying]*

Ln B3: *Miss..miss. indawo [venue]*

Anele: *Sorry?* [Wants the learner to repeat himself]

Ln B6: *Place*

Anele: *Good, the venue* [she ask the class to repeat after her]

Ln B4: *Numbers teacher [Inamba miss]*

Anele: *Yes, yes, the contact number. In the invitation we say, RSVP and it is always at the bottom of the invitation. It say whether you are going or not, okay* [she asks them to repeat after her]. *What does invitation normally start with?* [No response]. *Okay what does it start off with at the beginning of the invitation?* [No response]. *What is at the beginning when you open the invitation, what do you see what is the first thing you will read?*

Ln B2: *Uyamenywa [you are invited]*

Anele: *Good*

In the above transcript, Anele taught the learners how to write an invitation for any occasion. In the process she tried to draw on the learners' prior knowledge about the topic. The learners were interested because it was something they were familiar with. The questions posed required only one word answers and therefore did not allow for critical thinking. There was a lot of code – switching although the teacher tried to encourage the learners to speak in English. After they have exhausted all their brainstorming, Anele told them to write an invitation to a friend for the opening event of their school. Based on the observation, it seems as if learners had no background of the language as they struggled to answer the questions in English. Most learners were not familiar with the language of instruction which contributed to the exposure of the language to learners as they only used it in classrooms. This problem also resulted to the teacher code-switching sometimes to accommodate the learners.

In both presentations, learners struggled to use the language of instruction (English).

4.5.1.4 Data segment 4 - document analysis

The teacher instructed the learners to write news article entitled 'Planning your own new title'. This text could be interpreted to mean a transactional writing. The learners wrote the article according to the teacher's instructions, the mind map first and the article. They drew the mind map to show at a glance what they intended to write about. They situated the title of the writing at the centre of the mind map, and the branches were what constituted the main ideas in each paragraph of the essay. But some did not write the essay according to the mind map. This could imply that the learners did not understand how to make the link between mind map and topic (see Appendix E).

4.5.2 Difficulties of writing

Writing is not only used to evaluate English proficiency, but also to assess understanding of other subjects and it is an interactive process by nature, since it results from the symbolic interplay between the writer, text, and reader (Massi, 2001). Thus, for effective writing, learners have to use a large number of formal features in order to help them understand the intended meaning. From the Interview with the teachers concerning difficulties they encounter when learners are writing it seems that there is a consensus among educators that writing, either in L1 or L2, is the most difficult skill to master.

4.5.2.1 Data segment 1- teacher interviews

The following are some responses from the interview focused on difficulties learners have when writing EFAL:

Researcher: What are some of the difficulties that learners face in their writing?

Dave: *Ja [yes] there are [long pause]. They write words as they sound because they are unfamiliar with the sound system of English. In my teaching experience I came to know that in understanding the correspondence between a vowel and sound is the most difficult part learners struggle with in acquiring writing skills in English. [Pause] Some of them write words as they hear them and*

write words as they sound. Sometimes they drop the final consonant or create more than what is needed in a word to facilitate their pronunciation.

Anele: *mh... they carry over isiXhosa letter pronunciation habits into English. Umzekelo [for an example]: they pronounce letter g in word giant as letter g as in word gate. Bayabethakala [they struggle] to know the rule – when g is followed by i or e is soft. Enye ke phofu ingxaki [another problem] they don't have the word giant in their vocab. Injalo ke naku (they do the same thing in diagraph) 'th' they pronounce it as t-h. Lento keye [this thing of] mispronunciation ibenza babhale into engeyiyo [lead learners in writing words totally different from what was intended]. In fact, aba bam ngoku [my learners now] banalongxaki [had that problem]. Banento yokulahla [they tend to drop] the consonant or add the vowel bazenzela lula bona [making easier for them] to pronounce a word. Ungabeva bebiza u 'road' as 'rodd'.*

Bantu: *Yes, there is no doubt about that. You see students are not the same and their understanding is not the same. There are those who grasp a lesson quicker than the others and there are also those who are having learning disabilities or let me say they are 'struggling' [using her fingers] with English. Coming to your question, it's a struggle when they deal with comprehension task because you will come to notice that once they see one word from the question, when answering they will copy the whole sentence even when it doesn't apply to the question.*

Researcher: What does it mean when they do that?

Bantu: *To me that simply means they did not understand the question, they are just writing to finish.*

Researcher: I am listening

Bantu: *Okay, let me give you another example: when you give them a factual recount type of activity. It is sometimes difficult for them to retell facts in the order they happened, or they have a tendency of struggling to sequence words in explaining the order in which things happened. They will mix and if they do not know a word in English they will write it in their mother tongue.*

The responses point to limited English proficiency hence they write words as they sound and carry over isiXhosa letter pronunciation habits into English.

4.5.2.2 Data segment 2– learner interviews

The learners contributed towards difficulties they face when writing in the following excerpts:

Researcher: What are some of the difficulties that learners face in their writing?

Ln A9: *It is when I don't understand the topic.*

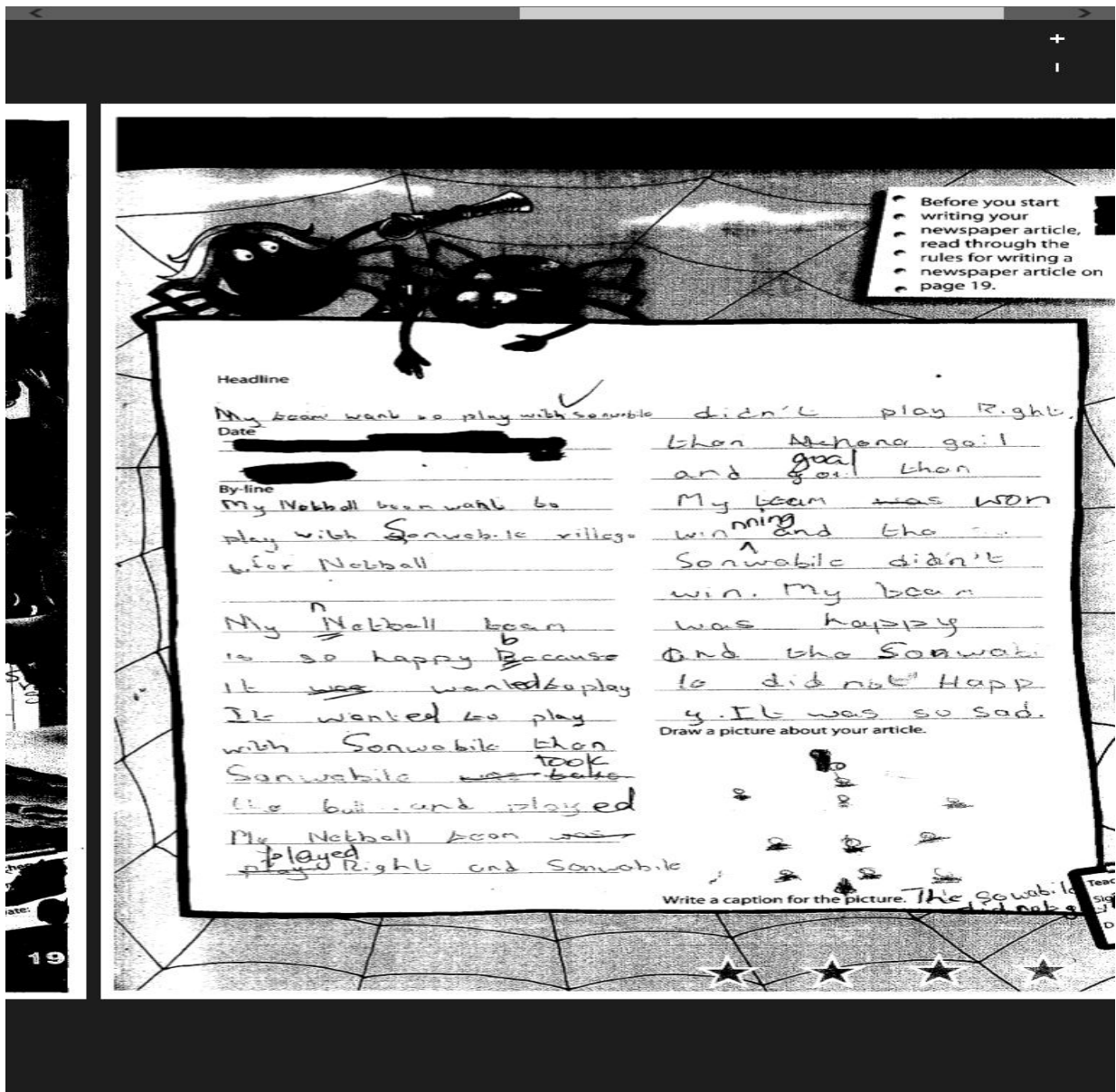
Ln A6: *Ja [yes] when I don't know what I write I am not interested.*

Ln B7: *isiXhosa is disturbing because when I don't know a word I write it in isiXhosa (isiXhosa siyandiphazamisa kuba igama xa ndingalazi ndiye ndilibhale ngesiXhosa).*

Learners use their mother tongue when they are struggling to write.

4.5.2.3 Data segment 4 – document analysis

Learners writing errors revealing that learners write words the way they hear them and transfer the word in their mother tongue. Below is the example of learners work followed by a table indicating target words and words with errors?



Sample 1: Essay type activity

In the above sample, learners were instructed to write a newspaper article about any sport code they like. The researcher noticed that there were so many grammatical and spelling errors in the learner's work. Below are the words which the learner struggled to spell.

Table 6

Target word	Word with errors
Watch	Watsh
Cry	Criy

Listen	Leasten
Goal	Goll
Thank	Thenk
Year	Here
Sadly	Sedly
World	Werld
Powerful	Paweful

The learners wrote non-existing words like goll, criy, they have misspelt the words.

Some of these errors include vowel omissions and insertion, letter transposition, language transfer errors, and consonant blending. Below is the table indicating target words and words with errors.

Table 7

Target word	Word with errors
Year	Here
Please	Plese
Sad	Said
Goal	Goil
Healthy	Helthy
Beautiful	Butiful

4.5.3 Writing Challenges

Writing is so important because it is the primary basis upon which intellect is assessed. It also expresses learners' personality and helps them move easily among facts, inferences and opinions without getting confused. It equips learners with the communication and thinking skill they need to participate in social and academic events. Writing in one's native language is necessary but writing in a foreign language like English which has an international and global status is an essential skill nowadays. It needs an understanding of the requirements it has. However, this seems to pose challenges to learners because it was noted that it is not an easy

matter, especially when the learners' English competence is not very well developed. With this, the researcher has interviewed learners regarding the challenges they encounter when they write in English.

4.5.3.1 Data segment 1 – teacher interviews

Below are some responses from the interview that focused on learners' experiences when writing EFAL:

Researcher: What are learners' experiences when they are writing?

Dave: *Studente is verskillende [Students are different]. Some of them are good and most of them are not good. Not all of them are good when it comes to writing as you know. The only thing I am positive about is that they all can write. Well their writing may not be that meaningful at times but as a teacher I can understand, oh, this one wants to write about this and that. Like I said their level of writing is not the same so as their ability to learn is not the same.*

Nancy: *Some of them are slow but some write with ease. There are those who will never finish a task.*

Researcher: What do you do with those who do not complete their work?

Nancy: *The first thing I do is to let them write on their pace, but then sometimes I am forced to give them a little than I intended to give. Because what is the use of loading them with a lot of work which they won't finish anyways? So I give them just enough for the lesson and I don't rush them. Or maybe let them write it groups. Then they are a bit faster when they work in groups, but I don't really like group work because it is not easy to tell if all learners have learned anything or sometimes I allow them to finish the task as homework. That also is a problem on its own, because they will have more work to do at home, as I have sometimes homework prepared for them already. What I can say is that learners are challenged when it comes to writing.*

Researcher: How do you deal with formal task?

Nancy: *When they are writing a formal task and are taking a longer time to finish it. Sometimes I extend the time; sometimes I don't have a choice but to take the*

books while they are writing. That how it is [mos] with the common papers, there is a time that is stipulated and they have to write within that period of time.[mhhhh] Another important thing I almost forgot is that some of them also have a problem with what is called cell-phone language. Learners write letters instead of words. I don't know now if they have cellphones or they see it at home from their siblings. For example instead of the word you, the learner will write letter u, be, will write b, etc.

Anele: *There are some learners who will be good when we are doing oral, but when you say to them write what you are saying. Nothing will come out. They will have lots of spelling mistakes, some have bad handwriting, most of them did not have good foundation from the lower grades, so that gives us who are teaching at the Intermediate Phase tough time because we are teaching them how to write and we should also teach them writing for learning. You see all their other subjects are taught in English, except isiXhosa, so they have to really have knowledge of writing to pass all the other subjects. Now they are already struggling to form words yet we have to make them writing sentences and paragraphs. Sometimes I blame it on the language.*

The responses above indicate that learners' experiences differ when they are writing in EFAL. All of the teachers mentioned that the learners' level of writing is not the same. Some write with ease and some are unable to finish the task on time. There are also those who use cell-phone language when they are writing. It has been also mentioned that some learners struggle because they did not have a good foundation from lower grades.

4.5.3.2 Data segment 2 – learner interviews

The following are some responses from the interview focused on learners' experiences when writing EFAL

Researcher: What are your experiences with writing?

Ln A1: *I sometimes forgot how to write a word or I forgot the meaning of the word. I sometimes mix words when I write. Maybe there is something that is disturbing me from home. Because I don't know English that is why I have mistakes.*

Ln A2: *When I first learn the word or I hear it I don't know how to write. When I am not listening to the teacher or I write wrong answer. Maybe I did not hear the teacher or maybe she is quick to do other work.*

Ln B8: *When I am unable to read English words and when I don't know their meaning I just guess. I sometimes write what I think but what I think is wrong I just write what I guess with my mind though I know it's wrong but I write. [Xa ndingakwazi ukuwafunda amagama e English naxa ungawazi ukuba athini na ndiveske ndithekelele nje. Ndibhale nje lento ndiyicingayo kodwa lento ndiyicingayo irongo. Ndibhale nje lento ndiyithekelelayo ngengqondo kodwa ndiyayazi ukuba irongo qha ndiyabhala].*

The responses above, point to a limited exposure of the participants to the English language and in most cases negatively affected their progress in learning through the language.

4.5.3.3 Data segment 3 – classroom observation

During observations in School A indicated that learners have a challenge of writing words, sentences, paragraphs and essays in English as they are expected to write creative and narrative writing. It was also noted that learners struggle to use English appropriately in different situations but do not demonstrate knowledge of the language structure. The researcher also noticed that they were battling to construct meaningful texts because of their low proficiency in English.

Observations from school B indicated that learners have difficulties in writing English language. They could not pronounce some words correctly which made it difficult for them to be able to write these words. As a result they write words as they hear them especially phonemes that sound the same as isiXhosa. They struggled to interpret and understand questions that required higher level of thinking which negatively affected their performance. They depended entirely on the educator and as a result, the educator has to present it in their home language before putting it in English including questions because if that strategy was not used, the learners got lost and confused. During oral tasks the researcher noted that learners were quick to answer short and simple questions like, what and where but were either hesitant when they

were asked explanatory or questions that required higher level of thinking such as how and why.

4.5.3.4 Data segment – document analysis

Concerning learners' written work the researcher noted that there are so many grammatical errors. These grammatical errors were categories into four most occurring errors as follows: tenses, articles, prepositions and spelling errors. The researcher has also noted that there was no evidence of writing process in learners' books. Moreover they also struggle in understanding of the rules of English language. When it was time for writing, most learners simply copied the passage and showed no understanding of the question and some could not put their ideas and thoughts clearly which led to a negative impact on their learning. Some of their work showed no understanding on questions and instructions. This issue was indicated from the data collected through educator's interviews after the observation lesson. Most of the learner's books that the researcher analysed indicated a sense of negligence and poor standard of work from the learners as most learners had incomplete tasks, poor spellings and lack of understanding high degree questions.

4.5.4 Strategies that can be used to monitor learners writing in EFAL

In this section, the researcher presents the effective strategies that are used by teachers to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL. Here, the participants mentioned that reading books is essential and to engage learners in reading is important. First, the researcher interviews teachers and then learners.

4.5.4.1 Data segment 1 – teacher interviews

The following question elaborate more on the issue of teaching methods that can be administered to encourage and promote quality writing:

Researcher: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Dave: *I think it is beneficial to the learners when we take them to the library to have access to reading books because before you write you must be able to read, so exposure to English books is so helpful. Our library is functioning so*

sometimes I engage learners in reading story books which could improve their performance in English writing. Sometimes I provide them with opportunities to acquire language in a context that is interesting and relevant so to assist the teaching and learning of writing skills.

Anele: *uummm, (pause) it depends on your experience as a teacher on your approach you understand. Mna ndiye ndijonge ukuba unjani lomntwana [I look at the type of learner] and decide on the approach that may be suitable kulo meko [in that situation]. It depends on the type of learners that you are teaching, if you understand them to be slow, you would go with their pace and what is important is not to leave them behind make sure that they understand. I sometimes scaffold them, or give them extra time.*

Nancy: *I think the first and for most it's for teachers to understand the kind of children they are dealing with. Then they will be able to teach them according to their needs (pause). Another important thing is to engage them in reading activities. (Mmmmhh) Another thing that I do when I'm teaching English is this, when we are reading a story and we come across with difficult or unfamiliar words I explain that word in a simple, straightforward word that we use every day. I do not like to code-switch, rather I look for a word that can explain that difficult word in a simple way so as to develop their language. Lastly, I think it is also equally important to have the goal of getting your children to participate in classroom discussions.*

The participants indicated that they use library to improve teaching and learning writing. They also mentioned that scaffolding is one of the methods they use to help struggling learners. Bantu mentioned that it is also equally important to allow discussion in the classroom.

4.5.4.2 Data segment 2 – learner interviews

The learners also had their own say in the following strands of data:

Researcher: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Ln A5: *If he can write words on the chalkboard. We look at our books when we don't know the word. Teacher writes the meaning in Afrikaans and we write them in our books.*

Ln B9: *When we read isiXhosa it would be better if our teacher explains it in English then we will know and we will continue to read on our own. I think maybe the teacher can give us words and we take them home and we read them. Then our teacher tests us from those words. [Ukuba umiss angathi xa sifunda isiXhosa asicacisele nange English thina sizoyazi sikwazi ke ngoku ukuzifundela siqhubekeke nayo. Mna ndicinga mhlawumbi umiss asinike amagama sigoduke nawo siwafunde umiss asibizele siwabhale].*

Ln B11: *if the teacher can write difficult words and we write those words at the back of our books. [Ingathi umiss angabhala amagama anzima thina siwabhale lamagama ngaemva ezincwadini].*

Most of the learners mentioned that there is a need for teachers to write difficult words so that they can copy and memorise. They also mentioned that their teachers can translate the word in English.

4.5.4.3 Data segment 3 – classroom observation

Classroom observations indicated that there were a number of instances where there were opportunities for teachers to challenge their learners to think and demand them to use their skills in analysing, synthesizing or evaluating. There was a lesson where the teacher was going to teach a folk tale to learners. She first asked the learners to look at the pictures and then talk about them. Given below is an excerpt taken from Anele's classroom that displayed such a moment:

Anele: *What do you see?*

Learners: *Two rabbits and an elephant.*

Anele: *Where are they?*

Learners: *At the beach.*

Anele: *What else do you see?*

Ln B12: *lingcongolo.*

Ln B5: *Reeds, reeds.*

Anele: *What else?*

Ln B7: *The elephant is looking at the rabbit.*

Anele: *Okay, let's read the story?*

The above excerpt illustrates that there was a potential moment where the teacher could further probe into learners' interpretation of the situation. The teacher could pose a question such as 'look at the picture and discuss what you see/what you think the story may be about?' Such situations prevailed in some classrooms but some of the teachers chose to focus only on questions converging on the learners' workbook. Observations indicated that the teachers also did not encourage critical thinking. The sessions revealed that teachers did not encourage learners to carry out activities such as cross-referencing. There were also limited instances where the teachers encouraged students to sit and discuss issues or related events and experiences that had connections to students' personal experiences. As indicated above, classroom observations revealed a number of viable situations but teachers did not exploit those moments.

4.5.5 Teaching Approaches

Providing a warm and welcoming environment for the learners will facilitate a smooth and positive impact on their confidence, desire to learn, and even their health and attendance. Teaching approaches that teachers can use to help learners through are discussed by teachers below. With respect to language of instruction, there were great views expressed by the teachers and learners during the interview.

4.5.5.1 Data segment 1 – teacher interviews

The following are some responses from the interview focused on the intervention to promote effective writing:

Researcher: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Dave: *For me, I use a lot of (my former primary school teachers') methods because my teachers inspired me a lot and I feel they work. I feel they use a bit of 'old school' and I like bringing new things. I won't take activities that have been done already in doing my own work, so I implement or combine their method with my skills and I feel it works.*

Anele: *Each of us have our own way of bringing explanation across to the learners, you know in my own class I choose to try and use interactive approach where the text is there and we discuss together you know I try and engage them a little bit more with the text.*

Nancy: *I think to encourage and promote quality writing in English it's so important to not only develop their language skills, but also developing their critical abilities, the critical thinking. Because the process of speaking publicly, with a group, engaging with one another's comments forces them to think and to speak in ways that they wouldn't if it was a more writing-focused only class. So to me I think once they master this, quality writing will develop. Another important thing that I do is to seat the learner where she or he can see and hear all classroom activities or near their peers that will provide support and language models. This does not end there, when they write a descriptive task I like to use a process approach.*

Researcher: *Can you please dwell more and explain what do you mean when you say, you use a process approach.*

Nancy: *Okay, well. Process approach involves steps of writing process.*

Researcher: *May you please explain in details*

Nancy: *That is pre-writing, drafting, revision, editing and presenting.*

During the interviews all the participants were opinionated of not using only one method in the teaching of EFAL.

4.5.5.2 Data segment 2 – learner interviews

The learner's contributions were as follows:

Researcher: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Ln A4: *The teacher can write the words we read and if we know and the teacher can add more. Or (uummm) the teacher gives us words in Afrikaans change in English. If we don't know the meaning of the word, the teacher must ask in Afrikaans the word and then in English. Or the teacher can write the words on chalkboard for us to practise them every day.*

Ln B2: *Umiss makabadibanise aba bastruglishayo ukuqonda English enze nabo kakhulu bodwa. Abhale amagama ephepheni asinike siyowafunda emakhaya [The teacher must group those who struggle to understand English and work with them more. the teacher must write the list of words in the paper and give the learner to practise the words].*

Ln B12: *Angabhala amagama we English then thina siwakhuphele. Xa lisixakile igama thina silijonge ngasemva silikhumbule. Miss makabanike dictionaries. [Umiss makabacacisele ngesiXhosa]. [She can write English words then we copy them. If we are stuck we can refer at the back to remind ourselves. I think the teacher must give the learners dictionaries. The teacher must translate the words in isiXhosa]*

Participants indicated that scaffolding would help those who struggle. They also mentioned the use of dictionaries which might help as well as the list of words to read for better understanding.

4.5.5.3 Data segment 3 – classroom observation

The researcher noticed that both participants do not want to deviate from the principle of teaching English exclusively in English. Against their better judgement they nevertheless feel compelled to translate into the learners' home language so that the lesson can progress. There were incidents of code-switching in both teachers' EFAL lessons (during teacher-learner, and learner-learner interaction).

Moreover, classroom observations indicated that the instructional practices of teachers entail them spending a lot of classroom time addressing the whole class. Teachers also paid little emphasis on both co-operative and collaborative learning.

4.5.6 English errors in writing EFAL

4.5.6.1 Data segment 1 – teacher interviews

Teachers commented as follows regarding the issue of English errors:

Researcher: What kind of English errors do learners commit?

Dave: *They translate English words in Afrikaans. They like to reverse words with double vowels. They omit vowels and consonants.*

Anele: *They use borrowed English words which accommodate their language isiXhosa when writing. This occurred especially when the sound of the English word is pronounced similarly to their mother tongue. They struggle to understand the letters that form words, hence they write what they hear. Ngamanye amaxesha (sometimes) some learners use isiXhosa words in their English writing. Some learners write in what is termed ‘cellphone language’*

Bantu: *They are so many like reversals of consonants, omitting vowels and last but not least they write words as they hear or sound.*

Each of the participants interviewed had a different perception of the challenges English language learners brought to their classrooms, and mentioned that they reverse double syllable words or sometimes omit.

4.5.6.2 Data segment 2 – learner interviews

The learners responded as follows:

Researcher: What kind of English errors do learners commit?

Ln A7: *When I do not know words I write them wrong*

Researcher; Can you give me example?

Ln A7: *Ja, soos, [yes like] beautiful or laugh*

Researcher: How do you spell them?

Ln A7: *I mix the words or start with the wrong one*

Researcher: Do you mean the vowels or the consonants?

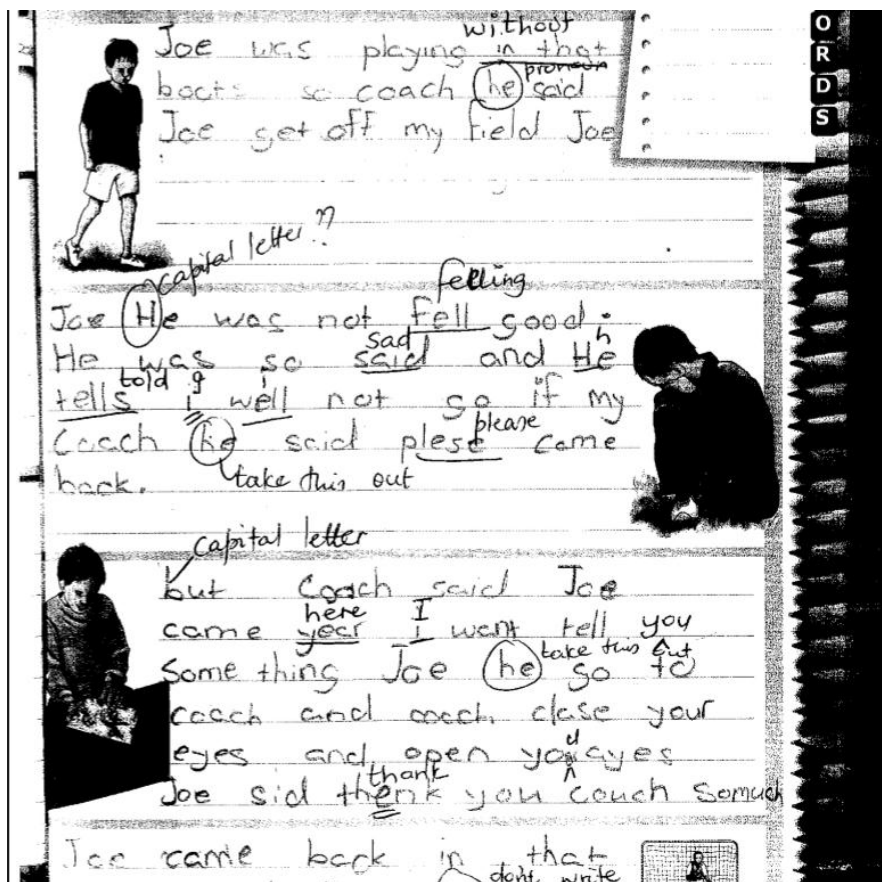
Ln A7: Nee, die [no the] vowels

Ln A6: There are so many errors I make like when I do not know how to write a word I just write what I think. And when I do not know that word I will write it wrong.

Ln B1: I struggle to write words as a result I make many mistakes because I cannot spell. I end up being marked wrong because I just write words the way I think and then I become wrong. [Mna ndiyasokola ukubhala amagama ndenze imistakes ezininzi kuba I cannot spell. Ngoku ndiba rongo into ezininzi, kuba mna ndiveske ndiwabhale nje amanye amagama ngoluhlobo ndiwacingayo, ndibe rongo ke ngoku].

Participants indicated that they often make errors because they do not know how to write the words. They also mentioned that the errors they make is because they do not know the word or unfamiliar with the word.

4.5.6.2 Data segment 4 – document analysis





The boy he didn't have soccer boots and the referee shouted at him across the field if he didn't watch his watch time.



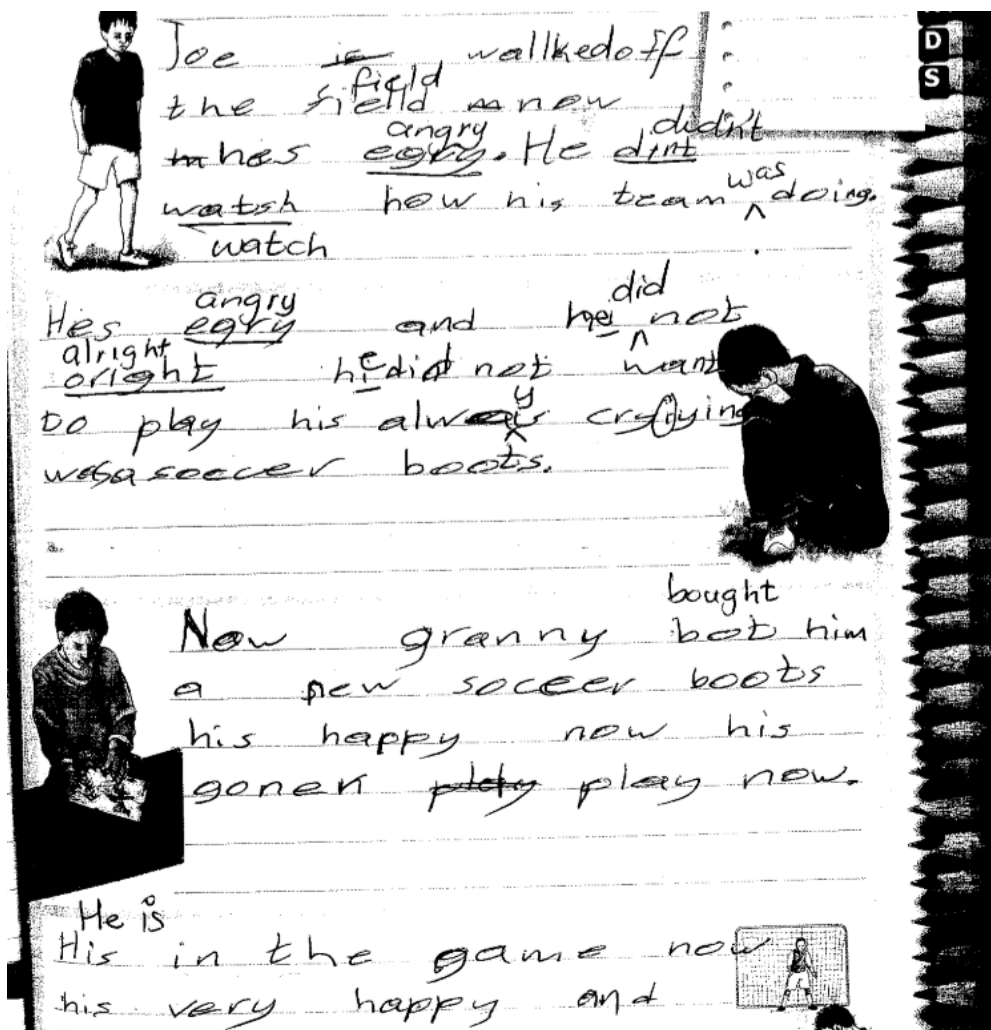
He sits out on the field and he ^{was} angry and he ^{was} sad he wanted to cry. He ^{went} to his home and put the blanket ^{back} on his head and his ^g granny ask him and he said I didn't have soccer boots and the referee ^{listen} shout and he ^{listen} the door open.



The granny come ^{from} to the town and granny took the box and he hold up his hands and he opened the box and he saw the shiny soccer boots.

No punctuation.

the injured how the boots when you kick the ball



Sample 3: Factual recount activity

The above sample indicates a range of writing errors learners commit and these are some of the errors that were picked on their books. These include vowel omissions and insertion, letter transposition, language transfer errors, and consonant blending. The substitution of letters often produces words quite different from the ones intended. When learners are writing vowel diagraphs, they write what they hear. Sometimes they substitute the vowels or write one letter in vowel diagraphs thus omitting the silent letters.

4.5.7 The place of home language in writing EFAL

Acquisition of home language can pose challenges for language learners, both with regards to the sheer number of words that must be acquired. However, it seems as if using home language is viewed as the right technique used by learners to facilitate their understanding, thinking, discussion and a resource for teaching and learning. In

the light of the above, teachers and learners from both schools mentioned that they are code-switching.

4.5.7.1 Data segment 1 – teacher interviews

The following are some responses from the interview focused on outcomes of home language in English.

Researcher: What is your view about code-switching during the English lesson?

Bantu: *I have a clear understanding of Afrikaans as language, I have to at times translate words in Afrikaans which I feel is wrong in an English class. Because in an English class, they should be forced to speak only English.*

Anele: *If it means I have to explain in their mother tongue what I am trying to explain in English that I need to do. But as much as I do not encourage that, but for progress sake and also for understanding, I do that. I combine the languages, their home language with what I am doing in English. ... I do switch over to Afrikaans to make them understand this is what they would say and in English.*

Nancy: *I do not like to code-switch as I have said earlier on that I like to use rather simple concepts to explain the difficult part that is not understood by learners. To me I like learners to understand the language and not to use their home language when they are stuck. I think rather let them use their Afrikaans-English dictionary if they got stuck so that they may develop in the language.*

Nancy does not want to deviate from the principle of teaching English exclusively in English. Against her better judgement she nevertheless feels compelled to translate into the learners' mother tongue to ensure understanding and so that the lesson can progress, although she too is of the opinion that it should not be encouraged. The two teachers were of the opinion that the use of any other language in an English lesson should not be encouraged, but according to them, they are forced to code-switch for the sake of progress.

4.5.7.2 Data segment 2 – learner interviews

In the responses, learners learn from their own experiences, and make informed logical choices.

Researcher: What is your view about code-switching during the English lesson?

Ln A1: *It does not happen I focus in the English, I think of words in Afrikaans I write it down, I take a dictionary if I do not know the word I ask teacher because I don't know the word in English, I write Afrikaans in Afrikaans.*

Ln B6: *When I want to write a word in English if I don't know I write in isiXhosa and leave it like that. When we read there are words that I don't understand clearly, I decide to write them in isiXhosa. [Xa ndifuna ukulibhala igama le English if andilazi ndilibhale ngesixhosa ndiliyeke. Naxa sifunda akhona amagama endingaweve kakuhle ndiqonde mandiwenze ngesixhosa].*

Ln B10: *I want to translate but I am unable, then I write it in isiXhosa, I put it in brackets so that the teacher may translate it for me to know the word. [Ndiye ndifune ukuyiguqula qha ndingakwazi, ngoku ndiye ndiqale ndiyibale ngesiXhosa ndiyifake kwi brackets ukwenzela ba no miss andiguqulele nditsho ndilazi elagama].*

The participants indicated that they sometimes write in their mother tongues if they do not know the words in English.

4.5.7.3 Data segment 3 – classroom observation

One interesting aspect observed during classroom observations was the rather extensive use of code switching between English and isiXhosa and English and Afrikaans by both EFAL teachers in this study. Both teachers' reasons for code-switching were attributed to learners' inability to communicate in English fluently. It was evident that teachers code-switched to explain concepts, activities and drills on the chalkboard as well as for classroom management. During the observation the researcher noted that in some instances the learners were allowed to use their home language when discussing or explaining during English period. In fact, during the lesson some of the group learners were discussing the meaning of the words in their

home languages with their peers before responding to the educator. It emerged that there were slightly more code-switching incidents in Dave's EFAL lesson than in other classes.

The presentation above shows that learners depended on their home language and no sufficient vocabulary of the language hence they shifted to their languages each time they got stuck.

4.5.7.4 Data segment 4 - document analysis

Data segmented from document analysis suggest that learners seem to rely on their home language. There was evidence of the use of home languages whenever there was a lack of English word (see Appendix F) me of the tasks made no sense as a result the teacher highlighted that some of the teachers struggled to follow the necessary assessment standards and learning outcomes since the learners were struggling to cope with the level of work expected to do.

The data presented above shows that learners depended on their home language as they used it each time they lacked vocabulary in the language used as English. There was also evidence from their books which indicated the use of their home language instead of the language of instruction. In both school home language interference was also noticed in learners' work, for example in School A words like 'Desember' for 'December', 'appel' for 'apple', 'oranje' for 'orange', 'assistent' for 'assistant', 'bakker' for 'baker', 'babier' for 'baber', 'hulp' for 'help', 'klerk' for 'clerk', 'kok' for 'cook' in School B 'cardport' for card board and 'notis bord' for notice board. The same interference was noted during the analysis of learners' portfolios. Some interference from English borrowed words was evident in portfolio activities in School B. For example, 'bucket' was spelled as 'baket / 'bhacket', 'brush' as 'brutsh' / 'bratsh' and 'clean' as / 'klin'.

4.6 Developmental writing process

This study compares the perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences in writing English (FAL) by isiXhosa and Afrikaans first language speakers so as to bridge the gap with the hope of improving their English FAL writing skills. Hence the researcher collected data from the interviews, classroom observations and document

analysis to find solutions to this problem but through the data collected it seems as if the problem still exists. Empirically, most learners of both schools have problems with the writing skills, especially in writing essays, paragraphs and in implementing tenses in sentences as this have been mentioned by the teachers and have been observed in the classroom. On the basis of the above, the researcher decided to engage in participatory oriented approach. This classroom participatory research approach was carried out for three months and it included doing writing process, collecting data, and analysing the data collected. The researcher's role was not only to observe lessons, but to participate, to give support and guidance with the hope of solving learners 'writing problem.

Carrying out participatory research among the participants one works with can be an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time. In this case it was an advantage because the researcher had already established good rapport with the teachers and learners. It was a disadvantage because teachers were likely to hold back, and be less cooperative sometimes. To overcome the disadvantage the researcher explained that the findings of the research would help her do her work better and would help other educators responsible for EFAL. Moreover, as we continued with planning together, sometimes co-teaching and reflecting on lessons together, they started to become more open and involved, causing our relationship to begin shifting and growing. The establishment of equal relationships among participants is a principle that undergirds participatory research. It ensures cooperation, as well as open and sincere communication amongst the participants (Arhar *et al.*, 2001).

Phase 1

As might be anticipated, some differences of writing activities were written in this part of the research. In conducting this research, the researcher planned for unstructured journal writing to be the focus of writing for several reasons. It replaced the introductory part of the English lesson that began lessons with aural drills of language segments. It was interesting because learners wrote what they wanted and their feelings. It was non-threatening because it was not graded. It is a low-stakes writing task that helped learners to start learning from simple writing before getting involved with high-stakes writing. It also provided a continuous writing activity in

every lesson. Further, the researcher proposed that learners should be allowed to mark their own work with the help of the teacher.

The researcher gave the learners 60 minutes to write in their journals. While they were writing, the researcher and the teacher encouraged the learners to keep on writing until there was nothing to write. Then we moved amongst the learners while they were writing. After they were finished, the researcher asked the learners to put their notebooks away. Below are some of the learners' first journal entries.

My Journal

Today was the worst day to me. My teacher was busy working at the office. Me and my friend Orap we did not do the homework. My friend was so afraid and my teacher was standing at the door of the office. She called me "Onwabe come here". I was so afraid when I was going to her. She said I must go to empty the dust bin. I came to the class and I said "Lyema may you please go to empty the dust bin and she agreed". I asked my teacher that can we do (Isixhosa) she agreed. And then I told my friend then we wrote the homework. Every one in the class was not writing because my teacher was not there. But everyone knew that when my teacher arrived. We will want our work.

Me and my classmates were playing other s were very naughty and Thina was singing. Then my teacher came. She took her stick she said lets open our books then started beating at the front. I thought she was going to beat Orap and I but she did not. I was so scared.

~~At my so~~ In my school I think we must have the computers so we can do our work so quickly.

Sample 4: Journal writing

The above sample indicates some grammatical errors and spelling errors.

My Journal entry

Yesterday I was writing maths and the maths that I wrote ^{is} so lovely. When I was here I ^{had} ^{learned} everything that I will learn in the class that I will ^{go} ^{with} the words that I do not know it and ^{it} was so different and my teacher was telling me everything that I don't know. I loved my teacher and all my teachers. Yesterday I was writing ^{the} ^{story} that was so long and I was writing it home and it was a story of my life.

My ^{friends} will ^{help} me with words that I ^{don't} ^{know} but I will ^{know} words that ^{she} told me. Today I writing my journal entry it make me thinking and it made me to writing thing that a long. I was learn that when my teacher that giving us a task and you don't know or a question that I don't know I'm going to ask her and she will tell me the things that I don't know. If I don't ^{know} ^{the} teacher I will not ^{write} that things. I will ^{write} ^{it}. I loved my teacher so much because it was a person that makes people to understand everything in a class.

Sample 5: journal writing

In this learner there were many errors in her journal entry.

The following day the researcher gave the learners their journal entry to read and check whether there are errors that need to be corrected, edited and to rewrite. Below is the sample of work of the learners.

My Journal

Today was the worst day to me. My teacher was busy working at the office. Me and My friend Orayo we did not did the homework. My friend was so afraid and my teacher was standing at the door of the office. She called me "Onwabe come here". I was so afraid when I was going to her. She said I must go to empty the the dust bin. I came to the class and I said "Ayema may you please go to empty the dust bin" and she agreed. I asked my teacher that can we do (Isixhosa) she agreed. And then I told my friend then we wrote the homework. Everyone in the class was not writing because my teacher arrived will want our work that we wrote.

Me and my classmates were playing others were very naughty and Thina was singing while I was writing. Then my teacher came in she took stick she said "Open your books." Then she started beating and everyone was afraid. I thought she was going to beat me and Orayo but she did not. I was so scared. Actually I think in my school we must have the computers so we can do our work so quickly.

Sample 6: edited journal writing

It appears that some of the errors that appeared on the first journal entry were corrected.

Sample 6: edited journal

On day 3, the researcher asked learners to swap their journal entries for peer assessment. Then they were allowed to rewrite their journal entries if there were errors found. Below is the sample of the learners' work.

Journal entry

Today my teacher ^{she} stays in office. She came late in classroom and ask children if they did the work because she ^{gave} us a work books. She took her stick and page all books of children and all these children ^{that} did not do a work she bit all these children. ^{that} did not do a work.

Today she teach us a maths and she say if we are not done it will be the homework. But she give us a lot of work. Yesterday she gave us a work and it was done. In this term I want to pass and when I am old I want to be the Doctor.

Peer Assessment: [redacted]
Peer Assessment: [redacted]
peer assessment: [redacted]

Sample 7: journal edited by peers

My Journal entry

yesterday
Yesterday I was writing maths and the maths that I wrote was so lovely. When I was here I have learned everything that I will learn in the class that I will go to the words that I do not know and read them. It was so ^{different} ~~difference~~ and my teacher was telling me everythings that I don't know. I loved My teacher and all my teachers. Yesterday I was writing Xhosa that was so long and I was writing it home and it was a story of my People or animals.

My friends will help me with words that I don't know but I will know words that they told me. Today I ^{am} writing My Journal Entry it make me thinking and it made me to ^{write} ~~writing~~ things that a long. I was learn that when my teacher that giving us a Task and you don't know or a question that I don't know. I am going to ask her and she will tell me the things that I don't know. If I don't go to teacher I will not write to that things. I will write. I loved my teacher so much Because she was a person that makes people to understand everything in class.

Peer Assessment: [redacted]
Peer Assessment: [redacted]

Sample 8: journal entry edited by peers

Phase 2

The previous phase was the preparatory for the formal writing process. In this phase the researcher gave learners an activity which engages them in steps of writing

process. The activity asked the learners to describe the game they like and its rules using the steps of the writing process. Below is how the steps of writing process were followed:

Step 1: pre writing – the learners have to talk to their partners and thinking of the game they like and fill in the chart that is on this table below:

Table 8

Name of the game	
What you like about it	
What it teaches you	
What its rules are	
The purpose of the rules	
Other facts (e.g. competitions, tools, or equipment you need, how much time it takes	

Here are some of learners' responses from the pre-writing task

Table 9

Name of the game	Soccer
What you like about it	Because I think it's an easy sport for people that do not understand any sports.
What it teaches you	It teaches me to be perfect and to be strong as a player.
What its rules are	Don't fight in the field, don't touch the ball with your hands.
The purpose of the rules	To know what is right and what is wrong do not disrespect the referee.
Other facts (e.g. competitions, tools, or equipment you need, how much time it takes	When we are playing, expect win or lose and we always use tools when we are playing. It can take 20 minutes or 25 minutes.

Table 10

Name of the game	Soccer
What you like about it	Because it is very nice and it makes me very happy.
What it teaches you	It teaches me how to behave at the middle of the field.
What its rules are	Do not touch the ball in the middle of the field.
The purpose of the rules	Because you can make the team lose the game
Other facts (e.g. competitions, tools, or equipment you need, how much time it takes)	When we play the game we only need eleven players and when we play we wear shorts and T-shirts.

Table 11

Name of the game	I like a Soccer game.
What you like about it	Because it's makes you have energy and you can be strong if you are freezing it can be keep your body can be warm.
What it teaches you	It teach you that you can be have energy in your body and you have to run fast because when you play you must be run.
What its rules are	When the rules w you touch the ball it will be a hand ball, if you hit someone of other side it will be a free kick, and the off side.
The purpose of the rules	Because some it's give the team a goal or it can help other team to have a goal, when the person of the team are hit it can be a free kick.
Other facts (e.g. competitions, tools, or equipment you need, how much time it takes)	You are wearing skip, short trousers, long socks and the soccer boots so that the ball go far.

Step 2: drafting – the learners were to use their chart to write a draft description on a piece of rough paper. It should not be more than one paragraph. Here are some of the learners' samples.

Learners' sample

My favourite sport is soccer. I love it because it makes me so happy. When I am in the middle of the field I just feel in good mood. When you are in the middle of the field you must not touch ball because you can make the team lose game. When we play we wear our shorts and T-shirts. When we play we only need eleven players to play in the field.

Learners' sample

I think soccer it's an easy sport for people that do not understand anything. It teaches me to be fast and to be strong as a player. Don't fight in the field, don't touch the ball with your hands. And to know what is right and what is wrong do not disrespect the referee. When we are playing we expect win or lose and we always use tactics when we are playing. The match can take 20 minutes or 25 minutes.

Learners' sample

I love soccer it is not that hard you will feel happy when you playing it. It teach me that you have to be ~~str~~ strong in life. When you are playing you have to listen to your coach what he is saying and do what he tell you to do. The rules are made for you if there ~~were~~ was no rules you can be broken when you are playing that is why you need rules. When there is a game the time it takes 90 or 60 minutes. When you are ~~at~~ playing you need to wear a same uniform with your team so that you can see you own team.

Learners' sample

I like soccer game. Because it's makes you have energy and you can be strong if you are freezing it keeps your body can be warm. It's teach you that you can be have energy in your body and run fast because when you play you run fast you can run more. When you touch the ball it will be a hard ball, if you hit someone of other side it will be a free kick, and the offside. Because it's can give the team to have a goal, or it can help other team to have a goal when the person of the team are hit it can be free kick. You are wearing ~~short~~ trousers long socks ~~and~~ and the soccer boots so that the ball can go far away.

Some learners were able to construct a long complex sentence, while others came up with a similar familiar sentence.

Step 3: revision – the learners were to read through their draft and add anything they forgot to mention. They were to remove any repetitions. They were also allowed to ask their partners to read the draft and give the feedback. Learners sample follows:

Learners' sample

I think soccer it's an easy sport for people that do not understand any sports. It teaches me to be ~~port~~ ^{port} and to be strong as a player. ~~Don't~~ ^{Don't} fight in the field, ~~don't~~ ^{don't} touch the ball with your hands. And to know what is right and what is wrong do not disrespect the referee. When we are playing we expect win or lose and we always use tools when we are playing. The match can take 20 minutes or 25 minutes.

Learners' sample

I like to have many many goals and to be coach and ~~teaches~~ ^{teach} them ~~teach~~ ^{teach} ball. It's ~~teache~~ ^{teaching} me to be a professional player like the ones ~~that~~ ^{that} are in it. The rules are, don't fight on each ~~one~~ ^{one} other, don't kick someone, don't take ~~keeper~~ ^{keeper} ball with hand on goal keeper only. The purpose of the rules is to protect people for getting injuries. The equipment ~~we~~ ^{we} need is soccer boots, t-shirt, shorts, socks, shinguard the time: it take, 90:00 ~~same~~ ^{same} minutes.

Learner's sample

I love soccer it is not that hard you will fill happy when you playing it. It teach me that you have to be ~~str~~ ^{str} strong in life. When you are playing you have to listen to your coach what he is saying ~~and~~ ^{and} do what he tell you to do. The rules are ~~made~~ ^{made} for you if there ~~was~~ ^{was} no rules you can be broken when you are playing that is why you need rules. When the is a game the time it takes 90 or 60 minutes. When you ~~are~~ ^{are} playing you need to wear a same uniform with your team so that you can see you own team.

Step 4: editing – the learners went through their revised draft carefully, and correct all the errors they find. They were to check their spelling, punctuation and subject – verb agreement.

Learner's sample

I Love soccer because it is not that hard when you are playing it you will fill happy. It teach me that you have to be strong in life. When you are playing you have to listen to your coach what he is saying and do what he tell you to do. The rules are made for you if there was no rules you can be broken when you are playing that is why you need rules. When the is a game the time it takes 90 or 60 minutes. When you are playing you need to wear a same uniform with your team so that you can see your own team and be you can give your ball to a right person.

Learner's sample

The name of the game I like is soccer. Like to be skillful at field. Its teach me to be skillful experience. The rules are the cornerkicks and penalties. The purpose of the rules its because of player s must not play rough and fight on the field. you will need a red and yellow card also soccer boots, so that players must be comfortable. The time is 15:00 pm to 17:00 pm that you will get in and out of field.

4.7 Conclusion

The data was meticulously presented with the researcher analysing the hard data by way of signposting to the best of her ability. In addition, commentaries were also made to carry along the read from the subject view of the researcher. The data presentation that led to this analysis was through qualitative enquiry based on interpretivism either from the perspectives of the respondents or the researcher. The findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews, document analysis and direct observation would be outlined and presented in the next chapter in the form of a discussion in order to attempt to answer the research questions in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in English FAL. It presents the research findings derived from observations, document analysis and interviews conducted in two Grade 6 classes of two primary schools in the East London Education District with isiXhosa and Afrikaans background learners. In this chapter the researcher has the opportunity to retell, interpret and discuss the findings through the lived experiences of the participants. These findings correlate with the literature review in chapters 2 and the data analysis in chapter 4. In this regard, the discussion of the findings guided by the research questions identified the need to discuss the following factors in order to reinforce its research perspective:

- perception of teachers,
- teachers' attitudes towards teaching writing
- writing in English Second Language
- difficulties of writing
- importance of writing
- experiences of writing
- strategies to monitor learners' writing in EFAL,
- teaching approaches, English errors in writing EFAL
- language proficiency
- language preference in learning and teaching the place of home language in writing EFAL
- Developmental writing process and learners, effective involvement in writing.

The discussion of the findings is presented under categorised themes that were suggested by the review of literature and the data presentation and analysis in chapters 2 and 4 respectively. Hence, the researcher presented and analysed the data with the aim of responding to the following research questions:

- What strategies do teachers use in teaching writing in EFAL?
- What is the influence of home languages on EFAL writing competency?
- What are the teachers' perceptions of writing EFAL?

- What are the learners' perceptions of writing EFAL?
- What are the possible causes of EFAL writing difficulties?
- What strategies can be put in place to minimize/curb the problem?

5.2 Subjectivity and objectivity

This study sought the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in EFAL. The analysis and interpretation of data involves explaining and discussing the identified themes where the researcher looks at it as both an outsider and participant to share his/her experiences and insights with the readers as the study is located within the context of human experience. For this to be more effective, it is deemed necessary to look at objectivity and subjectivity in the study despite the fact that they are intricately connected. It is important to mention that the analysis involves the search for patterns or significances in data within the context of the research situation. On the other hand, the interpretation focuses on explaining these patterns or significances within a wider context by applying relevant theories to them as Postulated by Foncha (2013). Put differently, analysis questions what the data 'says' while interpretation questions what it 'means'. Considering both situations, the potential for objectivity depends on the subject-researcher interaction (Foncha, 2013). Irrespective of the fact that similar factors are involved at the two levels, the difference is serious. In view of the above, Sivasubramaniam (2004) posits that

The term 'objectivity' as it is understood, is a set of characteristics that represent experience or knowledge which is independent of any one individual. This independence is an outcome of stating a set of rules and the permissible operations that are needed to activate them. Knowledge that is derived as a result of such activation is not influenced by personal feelings or opinions, but only by facts. As this knowledge is seen to exist outside the mind, many researchers tend to think that it is objective and it can therefore be proved (2004, p.356).

This investigation contended in contradiction of objectivity right from the start and referred to the need for subjectivity and a constructivist approach as discussed in the literature review, methodology and data analysis chapters earlier. With this in mind, the study rubbishes knowledge generation in the schools as teacher-centred based

on prescribed textbooks, traditional teaching methods with little or no learner interaction in the classroom.

The previous chapter dealt with the data as a narrative of an emerging design and understanding through which socially constructed realities, local generalizations, interpretive resources, knowledge, inter-subjectivity and reasoning can assume substance and prominence (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This also appears to tie with a constructivist view of language learning, the core for this study. Moreover interpretation of data involves explaining this pattern or significance within a wider context by applying relevant theory. Therefore it is necessary to embark on researching the effects of writing English FAL in order to find solutions.

5.3 Narration as a way of experiencing their experience

The researcher used the narrative method to retell and to make sense of the world of the EFAL teachers and learners from the two primary schools on their perceptions and experiences on writing in English. Retelling or narrating the analysed data in chapter 4 provided links, connections, coherence, meaning, sense to propose clarity and knowledge through interpreting and explaining what the learners and educators said did in the context of this study. In view of this, Carreiro King (2003) notes that: [w]e imagine, therefore, that in the construction of narratives of experience there is a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story and reliving a life story. As researchers, we are always engaged in living, telling, reliving and retelling our own stories. We live our stories in our experiences and tell stories of those experiences and modify them through retelling and reliving them. The research participants, with whom we engage also live tell, relive and retell their stories (p.99)

In this regard, the current chapter can be seen as retelling the stories of the participants where the researcher has attempted to describe, explain and theorize in an attempt to qualify this study as a creative act of enquiry. Therefore, she intends through retelling their stories, to propose meaning and knowledge through an interpretative explanation of what the teachers and learners said or did in the context under study. This can be seen in light of Bothma *et al.* (2000, p.206-207) who argue that perspectives “if they are truly human, unfold and take shape all the time as we

move along, there is no need to define and name them in advance in exact terms.” This is meant to emphasize the constructivist approach against the rationalists view (Hagreaves, 1998). It is in this sense that the researcher deems it necessary to explore, describe and explain theoretical possibilities in this chapter that can relate to his/her knowledge of her experience.

5.4 Perceptions of teachers

Perception refers to the sorting out, interpretation, analysis and integration of stimuli involving our sensory organs and the brain. In view of this, our behaviour is essentially a reflection of how we react to and interpret stimuli from the world around us (Smith, 2000). That is to say, if teachers fail to consider writing important, their perceptions can influence their teaching of this skill. In light of this, Noe (2004) observes that perceptions have a relationship between actions and practices. Thus, if English language teachers give less attention to writing due to their perceptions that writing is less important and also that teaching writing is a difficult task, then this can adversely affect their teaching and their students’ performance in writing (Ferede, 2010). In relation to this, Alamrew (2005) indicates that students do not learn writing effectively because English language teachers do not give attention to writing lessons. As Ferede (2010) puts it, one of the reasons for the teachers’ lack of attention to writing lessons, could be their misguided perceptions.

Similarly, this study observes that learners have critical writing problems. As such, it is common to see many learners who cannot construct correct and meaningful sentences, let alone constructing acceptable paragraphs and essays. Learners’ poor experience of writing seems to be the main factor for their poor writing performance. This can partly be true because teachers seem not to show any interest in teaching writing at all or in situations where they do, they may give only little attention. Thus, their perceptions about writing and how it should be taught can have something to do with this situation. Based on this, many researchers think that very little time is given to writing activities which misguide teachers’ perception and willingness not to give more writing activities. It then seems crucial to understand teachers’ perception on learners writing and practice of teaching the skill.

Based on this, the findings in data segment 4.5.1.1 regarding teachers' perception of their experiences on learners' writing indicates that most of the teachers perceive writing as a skill that can be mastered through learning and regular practice. This belief is apparently consistent with the views of Hedge (2005) who notes that students can be good writers only if they write a lot. It is strongly believed that students can discover what they want to say and write more successfully through the process model as the process approach is viewed as writer-centred (Walsh, 2005, p.15). It allows students to manage their own writing by giving students a chance to think as they write (Brown, 2001, p.336). Thus, students are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process to help them to write freely and arrive at a product of good quality (Ho, 2006).

The teachers also hold that writing needs critical thinking, and as such, they believe that teaching writing does not require more effort than teaching other language skills and language forms. In other words, most of the teachers believe that teaching writing requires similar efforts to teaching grammar, vocabulary, speaking, reading and listening. With this in mind, they believe that they are teaching writing to their learners. However, 'to believe' does not mean 'to practice' in the context of this study since the teachers seem to have failed in putting their beliefs in practice. This condition may force one to critically consider Noe's (2004) claim that the individual's perception is realized through action because in this case, either the teachers' perception is only a claimed one or it can be argued that not all perceptions are shown in action. This was observed in classroom practices and also from the learners' books which clearly illustrated that the steps of a writing process were not practiced and there was no evidence of regular practice of the writing skills. It should be taken into account that the process approach, which is a step-by-step procedure that requires active invention, pre-writing, drafting, and careful revision (Harmer, 2007) is better and should be a yardstick for the teachers to follow.

Moreover, the findings also show that teachers perceive writing as a difficult skill to learn since it requires more than language skill to construct a good piece of writing. As Hamp-Lyons (2002) argues, writing is a very complex activity involving thinking, planning, organizing, and linking as well as several levels of language manipulation

(sentence and clause levels as well as word and phrase level, plus spelling, punctuation, etc.). This may lead to difficulty in assessing writing because some teachers view writing as 'an art' which requires 'the mixture of criteria, judgment and experience' as an assessment method. It seems that writing cannot be purely assessed objectively. In other words writing is a skill that not only requires linguistic ability but also some other abilities beyond the language itself. Therefore when teachers assess writing, there is a need to employ various kinds of criteria and their choice of the criteria may depend on the types of writing they have to mark. There are also some features such as creativity and originality that may need to be judged based on a teacher's personal point of view.

5.5 Teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of writing

Writing is one of the four main skills that teachers often neglect. Most of them feel that students are weaker in writing than in other skills. They also believe that more practice is crucially needed to make writing understandable than by simply following the required course book (Al-qomoul, 2007). This is to suggest that, teachers can also help learners to improve their literacy by instructing them in specific literacy-building activities while allowing them to try new things to make mistakes where they can learn (Lewis-Moreno, 2007). In light of this, Li (2007, p.45) states that "learning can be enhanced if students perceive teachers' intentions accurately when setting certain tasks and expectations".

On the other hand, some researchers support the use of modelling in teaching writing. Hence, Kim (2007) mentions that the genre approach encourages students to participate in the world around them. As such, learners have to comprehend writing as a tool that they can utilize to realize how writers manage content to promote logical organization. Kim also posits that the genre approach enables students to become more flexible in their thinking and eventually realize how authors organize their writings. She goes further to say that the genre framework supports students' writing with generalized, systematic guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages (Kim, 2007). For example, Hirst *et al.* (2004, p.74) used modelling as a teaching and learning strategy to which students responded well. In the same way, Granville and Dison (2009, p.56) recommend modelling as a teaching tool most especially through feedback. Furthermore, Kalikhoka *et al.* (2009,

p.45) also report that students suggested the use of examples or models of past essays, revision of essay mistakes in class, provision of hand-outs on essay writing and introduction to lecturers" required essay writing standards.

In view of this, it is noticeable from the data of the teacher interviewees in data segment 4.5.1.1 that the teachers strongly agreed that writing requires regular practice. They also believe that teaching writing is not as difficult as teaching speaking, listening and reading. They mentioned that teaching writing is time-consuming, and stressful due to the amount of oral and written feedback on learners' writings and classroom management. This finding is consistent with the statement that responding to student texts is a challenging and time-consuming job for writing instructors (Ferris, 2006). In other words, the teachers believe that teaching writing requires similar efforts to teaching grammar, vocabulary, speaking, reading and listening as such they claim that they teach writing to their learners. Certainly, there is an emphasis on surface level correctness. Two teachers out of the 4 interviewed mentioned that in teaching writing, they guide learners to some formal aspects: neat handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, more careful constructions, more precise and varied vocabulary, more correctness of expression in general as well as acceptable grammar. Generally, (in writing) learners are required to translate the home language sentences into English using some vocabulary or sentence patterns they have learned. Alternatively, they use some sentences to describe a subject/topic. The teachers also mentioned that they allow the learners to practice the language, get familiar with the expressions in English, consolidate the English words, promote their writing skills and support their listening, speaking and reading abilities. It is therefore important to use scaffolding with care and to always examine the match between the student's abilities and the demands from the tasks (Lewis-Moreno, 2007).

However, in the classroom observation in segment 4.5.1.3, the teachers rarely teach writing, especially in the third term of the academic year when they train their learners more in grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. These aspects commonly appear at the end-of-semester summative and national achievement exams which go a long way to prove this assertion right. This finding is consistent with the findings of Alamirew's research (2005) which opines that students do not

learn writing effectively because English language teachers do not give attention to the skill. Hence it is important to engage learners in the process approach as Brown (2001) states that it gives opportunities for students to manage their own writing by getting a chance to think as they write. That is, learners convey their messages to the readers in written form through the complex process writing by observing the following steps: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. The second point is related to what learners have internally. Brown (2001, p.335) claims that the process approach is advantageous to students in language learning because students are the creators of language. For this to be effected; they need to focus on content and message and their own intrinsic motives should also be valued. Summarily, the findings show that there appears to be a loose relationship between teachers' perception on learner's writing and their practices of teaching writing.

5.6 Writing in English Second Language

Writing is complex and tends to be difficult to teach. Based on this, it requires mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements (Salem, 2013). These conventions have variously been analysed and categorized under such rubrics as 'writing components' (Msanjila, 2005), 'writing criteria' (Salem, 2013) and 'writing skills' (Myles, 2002). Some eminent second language acquisition researchers (Pearson and Burns, 2008; Ellis, 2003) believe that language learning strategies are key factors in the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language. Thus, understanding them could help language teachers in providing their students with the best possible instruction. Learning a language is a complex process within which the development of grammar is only one part (Clark, 2003). In line with this, Fillmore and Snow (2000) summarize that the more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better students can learn. While this focus on knowledge about language may seem counterintuitive to communicative language teaching approaches that reduce the role of deliberate grammar teaching, Andrews (2007) argues that knowledge about language is necessary to effectively implement communicative methods.

The findings in 4.5.1.1 in response to interview question 10 of the semi-structured interviews reveal that writing in ESL is seen as an issue of primary importance in language teaching, and at the same time it is an issue that seems to pose problems

to learners. The major problems highlighted by the teachers were that learners have a tendency of translating their home language when they are writing in ESL. As a result they struggle to construct full sentences that are grammatically correct and to write a paragraph in essay type activities. Teachers also mentioned that learners even write something that does not make sense because they struggle to express themselves in English based on the structure of their first language. According to Dreher and Gray (2010), if English Language Learners (ELL) are not familiar with the sentence structures within a compare and contrast text, this might hinder their comprehension of the information or content in the text and hence hamper their construction of meaning. Moreover, if the learner cannot explain a concept clearly in writing, it is likely that the learner does not clearly understand that particular concept (Freire, 2002, p.100).

Furthermore, the findings in segment 4.5.1.2 gave the researcher an impression that English is a difficult language just by virtue of its pronunciation and accents. The researcher came to understand that there was some form of congruence that pointed towards limited proficiency in English as the learners acknowledged and admitted that they are encountering a challenge to express themselves through the use of English, the language of instruction. They also mentioned that they become confused when learning English and this often result to their work to be unfinished within the time frame. Honig *et al.* (2008) assert that learners may not comprehend or make meaning of what is said by the teacher if the teacher uses unfamiliar word or words with specialist meanings. In line with this, August *et al.* (2005) claim that teachers should take advantage of students' first language in teaching high- or low-frequency English words in content instruction because ELLs might greatly benefit from the knowledge of similarities and differences between their native language and English. The authors recommended the transfer of cognate knowledge as an instructional strategy to develop ELLs' vocabulary in English. In favour of this, they suggested that teachers should reinforce all newly acquired vocabulary through oral language activities, read-aloud, and systematic repetitions.

Furthermore, Herrera *et al.* (2010) posit that teachers can help ELLs identify the cognates that have common origins between the two languages by having the students refer to the context in which the words appear. Once ELLs can identify

cognates between their native language and English, they have the opportunity either to acquire in English the label or word for the concept that they know in their native language or to reinforce their knowledge of the word in their native language with its English counterpart (Freeman and Freeman, 2004; Freeman and Freeman, 2009). Similarly, August *et al.* (2005) state that the teachers should draw ELLs' attention to false cognates like rope / ropa; embarrassed / embarazada and provide accurate translations of false cognates (p. 55).

Some learners in their interviews mentioned that they become bored because they do not understand what the teachers are explaining. Therefore it is equally important for teachers to help English language learners (ELLs) to understand how a variety of sentence structures are used to convey meaning in different types of texts like compare–contrast, persuasive, or argumentative texts (Sarfraz, 2011). Dreher and Gray (2010) point out that familiarizing ELLs with text structures like 'compare-contrast' can help the teachers to expand and enrich ELLs' academic vocabulary knowledge and most especially of terms such as unlike, similar to, compared to, and resembles. While it is important to develop ELLs' academic vocabulary, teachers should not sacrifice the development of ELLs' reading comprehension through a too-narrow focus on academic vocabulary instruction. One method that has been used frequently and successfully to develop vocabulary in learners is shared book reading in which adults read aloud to children, periodically stopping to highlight and discuss individual words as well as other aspects of what they are reading (Roberts, 2008).

Another problem they posed is that teachers do not always do the corrections as they expected. An L2 learner needs an effective feedback about their written work along with the appropriate remedial process to correct and monitor as a conscious process to minimize errors (Sarfraz, 2011). Darayseh (2003) notes that teaching writing no longer means simply having students do grammar exercises in writing or getting writing which is free from grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes. Instead, we are after what students are interested in and what they really want to communicate to the reader as well as how they reach their final writing products. Thus, with this view in mind, the traditional methods of teaching writing are ineffective. The emphasis now is on the process (a series of steps) which students

follow to get the final product. Smith (2000) Wyse and Jones (2001) state the main features of the process approach as follows:

- It includes a variety of writing models, expressive as well as expository.
- It emphasizes writing conferences in which the teacher sits with the students as they are writing and offers advice on how to progress.
- Writing normally takes place through a series of multiple drafts.
- Writing should be a cooperative activity; students assist one another composing texts.
- Errors are considered natural and are corrected in the final stages.
- Teachers respond to students' drafts with fewer judgment and more questions and suggestions.
- Grammar is learned in the context of writing for communication
- It emphasizes revision as critical to the writing process as teachers give their students opportunities to review, clarify, and re-organize what they have written.

In light of the above, Noskin (2000) says that revising is considered the heart of the writing process because it is seen as the means through which ideas emerge and evolve and meanings are clarified. It needs to be understood that while writing, a learner is engaged in the cognitive process of formulating ideas in mother tongue (MT) and then translating them into the target language (TL) (Sarfraz, 2011). On these grounds, teachers need to teach students how to use word analysis, context clues, cognates, and dictionaries to access meanings. Feedback is generally regarded as essential for writing development at all levels. Moreover, it has been considered essential for L2 writing development. Thus, if there are no feedback and corrections the student cannot progress but would remain at the same level of knowledge (Hill and Flynn, 2006, p.31-34). This is supported by, Linnarud (2002) who claims that if there is no progress the language could be fossilized and to prevent the fossilization it is important for second language learners to be aware of their flaws and difficulties. Furthermore students must be exposed to tasks and situations that are outside their zone of proximal development in order to develop (Linnarud, 2002, p.128-130).

The findings reveal that learners have no background of the English language as they struggle to answer questions in English. This was revealed by segment 4.5.1.3 through classroom observations that learners were struggling to answer questions in English because of their low proficiency. They were struggling when they had to interpret and answer questions that required higher level of thinking in English. Considering studies of the vocabulary instruction observed in actual classrooms, it appears that there remains a great deal of room for improvement both in terms of time spent on instruction and in methods. The sorts of powerful vocabulary instruction need to become more common and more frequent (Torres and Zeidler, 2002). Based on this, something needs to be done to help learners with relatively small vocabularies to catch up with their classmates. McLean (2000) amplifies this by saying that many of the learning problems of students originate from an inadequate knowledge of the basic vocabulary.

Moreover, it seems as if most learners were not familiar with the language of instruction which contributed to the exposure of the language to learners as they only used it in classrooms. Andrews (2007) argues that knowledge about language is necessary to effectively implement communicative methods. This problem also resulted to the teachers code-switching sometimes to accommodate the learners. However, it is much easier to learn writing if it is made to be a social practice. According to Linnarud (2002), classroom environment, peer response, collaborative writing and speaking are the components that help students the most in improving their writing skills. In the same light, El Said (2006) reveals that interaction has significant effects on improving the subjects' knowledge of writing skills. This is because it upgrades the writing performance and minimizes the writing apprehension.

In both presentations above, learners struggle to use the language of instruction (English). Fillmore and Snow (2000) summarize the point in their statement; "the more aware a teacher is of language and how it works, the better students will learn." Hence they continue to say that many public school teachers do not even know what academic English is, let alone what approaches are effective to teaching it. Therefore this might be one of the problems that contributes to inadequate writing skills and learners not being fluent in EFAL.

5.7 Difficulties of writing

It seems that there is a consensus among educators that writing either in L1 or L2 is the most difficult skill to master. Crystal (2005) thinks that an ability to write well effectively evades many people either in L1 or L2. Richards and Renandya (2003) opine that writing is the most difficult task for L2 learners. This difficulty lies in both generating and organizing ideas, and translating these ideas into a readable text. Sharing the same view, Putra (2009) explains that even with the simplest exercises, learners often lose interest and do not complete them. Because of the difficulty of writing, learners lack the motivation needed for language learning. This difficulty also influence teacher's attitudes towards writing and is therefore accountable to the lack of interest in teaching writing.

The findings in segment 4.5.2.1 in response to interview question 11 revealed that learners write words as they sound because they are unfamiliar with the sound system in English. Some of the teachers highlighted that learners write words as they hear them and as they sound. Sometimes they drop the final consonant or create more than what is needed in a word to facilitate their pronunciation. Moreover they carry over isiXhosa letter pronunciation habits into English. For an example they pronounce orthography g in word giant as phoneme [g] as in word gate, they struggle to know the rule – when g is followed by i or e and is soft. Teachers further mentioned that some learners do the same thing in diagraph 'th' they pronounce it as t-h. The mispronunciation misleads learners into writing words totally different from what was intended. It has been mentioned that they tend to drop the consonant or add the vowel making it easier for them to pronounce a word just as is the case with their mother tongue.

In favour of the above, Putra (2009) attributes the difficulty of writing to the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and clear organized presentation of ideas. Sarfraz (2011) on his part further states that committing errors is a reflection of a cognitive activity of a learner and this tells us a great deal about the internalized process of language production. According to Isleem (2012), most teachers do not have enough writing activities that consider the needs or match learners' interests and motivate them to learn. She further pointed out that learners make many errors when they write, and consider composition the most difficult task for them. They are

also exposed to inconsistent teaching methods and have a poor attitude towards writing.

In view of this, segment 4.5.2.2 from interviews revealed that learners from both schools faced different challenges and difficulties in writing in English. Many learners highlighted that they face difficulties in writing when they do not understand the topic or when they do not know what they are writing. They mentioned that their home language is disturbing because when they do not know a word, they use their home language. Isleem (2012) states that these difficulties that affect the writing learning process are considered as psychological difficulties the learner usually works in isolation and has no immediate contact with the reader. Thus the learner creates a mental image of the audience and imagines the responses. Isleem (2012) further mentions that when the reader receives the piece of writing, the learner cannot modify it. The learner has to write carefully, concisely and coherently to convey the message to the reader. Learners have to carry out simultaneously many cognitive processes. They generate ideas, translate them into sentences, and take care of the correct form, mechanics and/or orthography, (thinking of the readers and social setting) (Isleem, 2012). Calderón (2007) suggests other helpful instructional approaches for teaching ELLs vocabulary. One method is for the teachers pre-teach the vocabulary that is critical to comprehension of the text in a seven-step process that involves;

...explicit teaching of vocabulary, including contextualization of newly introduced vocabulary as used in the text, providing dictionary definitions, re-contextualizing the vocabulary in ways familiar to the students, and incorporating oral activities in which students talk about or use the new vocabulary (p.34).

In congruency with these findings, the researcher noticed that learners write words the way they hear them and transfer the word in their mother tongue. It's a struggle when they deal with comprehension task because one would notice that once they see one word from the question, when answering they would copy the whole sentence even when it doesn't apply to the question. This is revealed by data segment 4.5.2.3 from learners' books. The researcher noticed that when learners are given a factual recount type of activity, it is difficult for them to retell facts in the order they happened. In most cases, they struggle to sequence words in an attempt to

explain the order in which things happened. They end up translating and using their mother tongue. For Johnstone *et al.* (2002) the difficulty of writing is due to the cognitive processes such as generating ideas and translating them into sentences. These processes are difficult to measure. Therefore, it is highly recommended to provide repeated practice in writing. In addition, Yan (2005) points out that the education system emphasizes writing for all summative assessments. Therefore, the main purpose of writing in such a situation is to pass examinations (Foncha, 2013). This reduces writing to producing a product and receiving a grade from the teacher rather than a process.

5.8 Importance of writing

Writing is an integrative skill which is an important, constructive and complex process. According to Banat (2007) the writing skill is invaluable for helping students to communicate and understand how the parts of language go together. In addition, writing is one of the four major language skills that needs to be mastered by language learners. It involves the creation of ideas as well as the ability to express them logically and coherently (Al Souqi, 2001). It is an essential skill in foreign language learning in order to give the learners the opportunity to develop the proficiency they need to write personal letters, essays, research papers and journals. Moreover, writing skills enhance cognitive and linguistic awareness (Abu-Jalil, 2001). McDonough (2003, p.41) also stipulates that “only if we adopt as our purpose and our students’ purpose that they will learn more if they write well we find ourselves with purpose that can truly encompass all our curriculum plans and all our students’ needs.”

In segment 4.5.3.4 on concerning learners’ written work, the researcher noted so many grammatical errors. These grammatical errors were in four categories which are the greatest number of errors that occurred in this study namely: tenses, articles, prepositions and spelling. According to Sarfraz (2011), students are weak in English, especially in their writing skills as they commit multiple errors simply because they have been inadequately exposed to learning of L2. The researcher also noted that there was no evidence of writing process in learners’ books. Moreover, they also struggle in understanding the rules of the English language. When it was time for writing, most learners simply copied the passage and showed no understanding of

the question and some could not put their ideas and thoughts clearly and this led to a negative impact on their learning. According to Isleem (2012) when learners do not have sufficient opportunities to practice writing they lack the skills related to spelling, handwriting and sentence structure.

In addition, some of their work showed no understanding of the questions and instructions. Most of the learners' books that the researcher analysed indicate a sense of negligence and poor standard. This was evidenced by the fact that most learners had incomplete tasks, poor spellings and lack of understanding of high degree questions. Learners cannot explore and explain concepts meaningfully if they are using a language in which they lack competence. Likewise, the language used in evaluating knowledge is very important. If learners are evaluated in a language which they do not understand well, the evaluation results may be distorted. In each case, the teacher has a significant role to play as a facilitator of knowledge construction. In the process of knowledge construction, the teacher should create learning circumstances which are meaningful to the learners (Martin *et al.*, 1994). Stanley (2007) explains that the learner is the centre of the process. He emphasizes that learner's previous knowledge, needs and interests should be taken into consideration in the process of writing.

With this transition, the Constructivist Teaching and Learning Model (or Learning Cycle) which suggests a learner-centred approach to language teaching and learning requires the learners to explore learning activities in order to discover new knowledge (Martin *et al.*, 1994, p.46). Exploratory activity such as cooperative learning should be encouraged to explain the ideas they discovered in their exploration in meaningful ways. They should be encouraged to expand their knowledge through interactions and communication with peers, teachers, parents and with other people in their communities. Having explored and extended their language understanding, the learners should evaluate their knowledge. At this stage the teacher should assess them in order to see whether there is any change in learners' understanding and their mastery of the science process skills (Martin *et al.*, 1994).

5.9 Experiences of writing

Abu- Jaleel (2001) observes that writing is a more recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising with stages of re- planning. This is in line with the process approach to writing which sees writing as a process and not a product. In this regard, Mwananchi (2009) points out that the lack of command of the English language negatively affects students' performance in their examinations. It involves the creation of ideas as well as the ability to express them logically and coherently (Al Souqi, 2001). Moreover, Abu- Jaleel (2001) argues that academic writing is a more recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of re- planning in between. Thus, Al-Mashour (2003) asserts that foreign language learners most often than not find writing as a difficult and exhausting process.

There is justifiable evidence from data segment 4.5.3.1 from the interviews that learners' experiences differ when they are writing in EFAL. Their levels of writing are not the same just as their ability to learn is not the same. The teachers highlighted that some of them are slow but some write with ease. There are also those who do not ever finish a task, but when they clustered in groups, they can then become a bit faster. A highlighted strategy for the teachers was to teach them with their pace and most importantly is not to leave them behind but to make sure that they understand. Or better still scaffold them, or give them extra time or find ways for remedial lessons. It also has been mentioned that there is a need to understand the kind of learners one is dealing with. In this regard, Kannan (2009) states that teacher's responsibility lies not only with the average and above average students, but this should depend on learners' needs. Ellis (2000, p.209) describes this process as "scaffolding" wherein learners assist one another to achieve tasks and complete functions in the target language (TL).

The findings further portray that there are also those who use cell-phone language during writing activities. To minimise cell-phone language Sarfraz (2011) says that L2 learners need an effective feedback on their written work along with appropriate remedial processes to correct and monitor as a conscious process in order to minimize errors. Some teachers also said that there are some learners who are good when doing oral activities, but when it comes to writing, they struggle to put it into

words. From the interviews, it was said that some of them struggle because they did not have a good foundation from lower grades. Khater (2002) recommends giving pupils the opportunity to write a lot, regardless of mistakes they make in grammar and mechanics of writing. Rinvoluceri (2005) advises teachers to allow pupils to write fluently and to give “a blind eye to their plethoric errors”. This is the more reason why this researcher was very keen on free write as a tool for data collection which in itself can be seen as language learning as a social practice.

The data in segment 4.5.3.3 from observations shows that most learners from both schools have a challenge of writing words, sentences, paragraphs and essays in English as they are expected to write creative and narrative writing. It was also noted that learners struggle to use English appropriately in different situations but do not demonstrate knowledge of the language structure. Richards and Renandya (2003) assure that writing is the most difficult task for L2 learners. The researcher also noticed that they were battling to construct meaningful texts because of their low proficiency in English. Command of good writing skills is an essential instrument for anybody to succeed in his/her career (Pornpan, 2005, p.76). In view of this, this study strives to condemn the traditional way of teaching language in a favour of a constructivist view where there is anxiety reduction. Thus, the choice of an interpretivist paradigm based on a qualitative methodology instead of numbers.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, some of the learners could not pronounce some words correctly which made it difficult for them to be able to write these words. As a result, they write words as they hear them especially phonemes that sound the same as their home language. They struggle to interpret and understand questions that require higher level of thinking which negatively affect their performance. They depend entirely on the educator as a result, to interpret the instructions in their home language before they can be able to think in their mother tongue and then they put it in English including. But in situations where that strategy is not used, the learners got lost and confused. It is important to ensure that learners do not only learn to communicate but also learn while they communicate (Ho, 2006). They therefore need to receive sufficient input or examples of how these language structures are used in everyday communication and be afforded adequate opportunities to exercise communication (Kannan, 2009). It is through oral interactions that instructors and

students establish their roles and relationships within the classroom (Hall and Walsh, 2002). Ho (2006) shows that classroom oral interactions between instructor and students in these contexts often reflect the educational values espoused by the larger socio-cultural structure in which the class or particular academic institution exists.

5.10 Strategies to monitor learners' writing in EFAL

Teachers' beliefs are an important component of teacher cognition. Borg (2011, p.370) states that "beliefs are propositions that individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit or have a strong evaluative and affective component or provide a basis for action and are resistant to change. In the context of language teacher education, beliefs are seen as a key element in teacher learning that have become an important focus for research". Borg (2006) also suggests that shifts in the practices of individual teachers that move away from their core beliefs may be unlikely though not impossible. However, it may be difficult to identify exactly what drives such shifts. Phipps and Borg (2009, p.381) also add that beliefs may have a strong impact on practices, or pedagogical decisions. Another important component of teacher cognition is that each teacher's knowledge base, defined by Mullock (2006, p.48) as "accumulated knowledge about the act of teaching, including the goals, procedures, and strategies that form the basis for what teachers do in the classroom".

The data in segment 4.5.4.1 in response to interview question 17 shows that it is beneficial for the learners when they go to the library to read books because that exposes them to English. This is in view of the fact that out of the classroom setting, the only other opportunity where the learners are exposed to English is through reading. The teachers also mentioned that by engaging learners in reading story books could improve their performance in English writing because these two literacy skills are just like the different sides of a coin with one complementing the other. Learners can be exposed to rich language through having text read aloud to them, their own reading of texts, and media such as television (Silverman, 2007). Moreover, the use of library by learners to improve teaching and learning writing is effective to writing. Dreher and Gray (2010) assert that familiarizing ELLs with text structures like compare-contrast might help the teachers to expand and enrich ELLs'

academic vocabulary knowledge, especially of terms such as unlike, similar to, compared to, and resembles. The teachers also said that scaffolding is one of the methods they use to help struggling learners. They noted that it is also equally important to have the goal of getting your learners to participate in classroom discussions. Porter (2009) suggests that teachers have to incorporate instructional conversations, having students participate in discussions during the course of all these activities.

Furthermore, the findings from 4.5.4.3 of classroom observation reveal a number of viable situations that teachers did not exploit while teaching. Some sessions reveal that teachers did not encourage learners to carry out activities such as cross-referencing and also teachers did not encourage critical thinking. There were also limited instances where teachers encouraged learners to sit and discuss issues or related events and experiences that had connections to learners' personal experiences. According to Sivsubramaniam (2004), teachers can only help students to acquire deep learning by:

- Listening to students' ideas and encouraging their questions.
- Encouraging students to actively participate in doing, discussing, and creating.
- Providing more than one source of information so that the students can see different perspectives and have many inputs.
- Encouraging students to compare and contrast ideas.
- Including writing so students can think through their ideas.

This is consistent with the constructivist perspective which makes language learning a social practice.

5.11 Teaching approaches

The deliberate teaching of English is problematic for many mainstream teachers who are limited to conceptualizing language development within the content areas in the simplistic form of vocabulary (Echevarria and Short, 2004). Research with native English speakers indicates that this method has an impact on oral language outcomes, including vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension (Roberts, 2008; Silverman, 2007). As evidenced from segment 4.5.5.1 of the interview with

teachers, question 9 reveals that the use of traditional teaching approach methods work more especially combined with new teaching approaches. It seems that all the teachers were in favour of not using only one method in the teaching of EFAL. In this regard, Cross (1992, p.268) maintains that “whatever our own teaching preferences, it is possible that many students can and do internalize vocabulary and structure through writing”. Moreover the researcher noticed that both groups of participants did not want to deviate from the principle of teaching English exclusively in English. Against their better judgement, they nevertheless feel compelled to translate into the learners’ home language so that the lesson can progress. That alone confuses the learners as they have to start forming a connection between the verbal statements in their mother tongue and the statements written in English (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004).

It is worth mentioning that there was little emphasis laid on both co-operative and collaborative learning. The instructional practices of teachers entail them spending a lot of classroom time addressing the whole class. Burns (2001) proposes “a wheel model of a teaching-learning cycle having three phases: modelling, joint negotiation of text by learners and teacher, and the independent construction of texts by learners” (p.202). Modelling as Hammond notes, is the time when the target genre that students should construct is introduced to them [the students]. At this stage, discussion focuses on the educational and social function of the genre, and analysis focuses on the text structure and language. Joint negotiation of text refers to the stage when learners carry out exercises which manipulate relevant language forms. It fosters a negotiating process between the teacher and the students involving reading, research, and disseminating information, and the text of the genre is dependent on those activities. The independent construction of texts is the final phase in which learners produce actual texts through activities such as choosing a topic, researching, and writing (p.202). Thus, the genre approach to writing strives to act as a model that acts as a product of the process approach. It is therefore through copying the format of a text that processes are followed.

All in all, there were incidents of code-switching in all the teachers’ lessons (during teacher-learner, and learner-learner interaction). The researcher noticed that learners depended on their home language and it seems as if they struggle to

understand the language. With the language as an obstacle to learning, the teachers shifted to the mother tongue each time they got stuck. No one would expect good results under such conditions; instead as Holmardottir (2005) puts it, “unofficial” code-switching and code-mixing in teaching and learning becomes the order of the day.

5.12 English errors in writing EFAL

Incorrect spelling, violation of well-established punctuation customs and misuse of capitalization do not generally prevent comprehension of a written message. Instead, they can adversely affect the reader's judgment and make the piece of writing look awkward (Harmer, 2007). Despite the availability of research conducted in this area, the question of how EFL teachers can effectively address the issue- of improving the correct use of the mechanics of writing, seems to be unanswered (Harmer, 2007). Richards and Schmidt (2002, p.184) define an error as the use of language in a way which a fluent or native speaker of that language regards as faulty or incomplete learning. It refers to a systematic error of competence which can either be covert or overt, that deviates from the norms of the target language (Eun-pyo, 2002, p.1). This way of thought deviates from language as social practice because sociocultural theory has a holistic approach towards learning.

According to Turuk (2008), this theory emphasizes meaning as the central aspect of any teaching and holds that skills or knowledge must be taught in all its complex forms rather than presented as isolated and discrete concepts. One of the key contributions of sociocultural theory to the issue of language learning is that of participation (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000) which combines the social context with individual acquisition. In other words, for an individual to become a competent speaker and efficient writer of a language, the mere personal effort would not result in the mastery of the language unless he benefits from other people's (especially adult) participation to negotiate through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Fahim, 2012). Brown (2002, p.220) differentiates between covert and overt errors. Brown (2002, p.220) defines covert errors to be grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to the obviously ungrammatical utterances. Vahdatinejad (2008) makes a distinction

between errors and lapses (simple mistakes). They call for on the spot correction rather than remediation, which is needed for errors.

However, Lightbown and Spada (2000, p.176) argue that when errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, it is useful for teachers to bring the problem to the students' attention. This can be done by giving learners corrective feedback provided within the learner's ZPD (Nassaji and Swain, 2000). Dweck (2000) agrees that positive feedback is a crucial aspect of formative assessment. Cook (2001) asserts that the gap between the learners' present level of knowledge and what he/she is going to learn is removed by the assistance offered by the experts. He holds that learning demands social interaction so that the learner can internalize knowledge out of external action (p.229).

There is also evidence from segment 4.5.6.1 of a range of writing errors that learners commit which were picked from their books. It has been noted by the researcher that they like to reverse words with double vowels and omit vowels and consonants. Hence Marković (2012) states that any deficiencies in vocabulary knowledge can prevent ESL learners from completing tasks and can hinder their academic progress. The lack of vocabulary can present a major barrier in written communication. It can cause students to make poor lexical choices and also lexical errors in their writing (p.10). Wen (2008) argues that in any given classroom setting, although all of the participants display the same or similar overt behaviours in a task, the activities might change from one moment to the next, this might be due to the fact that learners normally seek different goals in their language learning process (Lantolf, 2000). On the other hand, the quality of children lives before beginning formal education greatly influences the kind of learners they will be; their early childhood experiences and home support (UNICEF Report 2000; Munoz 2007). Yin and Ung (2001) mentioned that students commit errors because they use items incorrectly due to the interference from L1 and low proficiency of the target language. They use borrowed English words which accommodate their language when writing and they struggle to understand the letters that form words, hence they write what they hear. Sometimes some learners substitute the vowels or write one letter in vowel diagraphs thus omitting the silent letters. Researchers have reflected that learners' errors are systematic, rather than random, and many learners tend to commit the

same kinds of errors during a certain stage of language learning (Nunan, 2001, p.87). It is, therefore, the obligation of teachers to summarise these frequently appearing errors, and remind learners of these errors as often as possible so that they can make greater effort to avoid them.

In view of the above, data segment 4.5.6.2 of learner interviews reveals that they often make errors because of not knowing how to write the words. These include vowel omissions and insertion, letter transposition, language transfer errors, and consonant blending. The substitution of letters made by learners often produces words quite different from the ones intended. Ilomaki (2005, p.12) concludes that learners do not necessarily make the same errors in written and oral production, due to different processing conditions and learners with one native language do not necessarily make the same errors as learners with different native language. Errors are avoided through guiding and controlling learners' writing (Richards, 2006, p.36). Sarfraz (2011) states that committing errors is a reflection of a cognitive activity of a learner that tells us a great deal about the internalized processes of language production.

5.13 Language Proficiency

Proficiency is one of the most important factors determining the likelihood of language transfer. Jarvis (2000) presents six ways in which proficiency can affect L1 influence. With regard to conceptual transfer, in particular the Transfer to Nowhere perspective, it seems likely that L1 influence will increase with L2 proficiency as the learner acquires more L2 tools that can express her L1 perspective (Jarvis, 2000). Regardless of the direction of the correlation, it is clear that proficiency has a strong effect on the likelihood of language transfer. Proficiency figures prominently in discussions of L3 acquisition, and the general consensus is that much L2 and L3 transfer is the result of low L3 proficiency (Dewaele, 2001; Hammarberg, 2001). However, given the complex linguistic configuration of the multilingual, the effects of proficiency in all languages known to the speaker must be taken into account.

Donato *et al.* (2000) found a clear correlation between higher levels of proficiency and more positive attitudes to language learning. Warschauer (2000) claims that L2 learners need to be provided maximum opportunity for real-time social interaction,

not only by exposure to comprehensible input, but also by involvement with the kinds of conversational usage similar to the conversation in a community outside the classroom.

It is difficult to learn a foreign language. Although some people seem to learn faster than others, it still requires a considerable amount of time and effort. Data from interviews reveal that learners hesitate to speak English with their teachers and friends in or outside the classroom because they worry about making grammatical mistakes and felt embarrassed of their low language proficiency. This is due to the negative physical response, such as a smirk, that they received from other more proficient peers when they spoke incorrectly. The most interesting evidence was when one learner mispronounced the word 'tongue' as 'thoung' when she responded to the teacher's question. Although the teacher tried to help her with the correct pronunciation, she struggled and that resulted to some learners ended laughing at her.

Lewis-Moreno (2007) goes as far as saying that the only way to become fluent in a language is through producing that language and testing novel ways of using it. She emphasizes the need for English language learners to have opportunities to "make meaning of the content and the academic language they are learning to use their knowledge in other contexts" (Lewis-Moreno, 2007, p. 774). Meanwhile, some learners stated that they felt self-conscious about their speaking proficiency because they have negative preliminary presumptions about proficient peers' views towards them as being slow learners, incompetent and dull, among others. As a result, during classroom observation the researcher noticed that these learners were not fully involved in classroom activities even though they were constantly encouraged to speak freely by their teachers without being judgemental. Cheon (2003) notes that teachers should see the use of communication tasks as an effective way to assist speaking development. Therefore, these negative experiences and fear of negative judgement from others hindered effective language learning and development among the ESL learners.

Moreover, data also indicates that learners were unable to understand their teachers because they spoke too fast during conversations, when giving instructions or explaining a topic. In fact, even teachers with good intentions may "provide

inadequate or inappropriate [instruction]” to English language learners because they simply do not know how to work with these diverse students (Mantero and McVicker, 2006). Because of this, every teacher should be trained in practices that apply to learning English as a second language and literacy development (Lewis-Moreno, 2007). Another reason was due to uncertainty of the meanings of words. As a result, the learners misunderstood their teacher’s intended meaning of the conversation and instruction, thus replying or responding incorrectly. They mentioned that they feared the teachers would view them negatively as being incompetent in the language. Lewis-Moreno noted that students not only need literacy skills to show that they understand concepts in subject-specific school courses, but they also need literacy for everyday social interactions (2007).

5.14 Language preference in learning and teaching

Kern and Warschauer (2000) claim that socio-cultural contact is critical in language learning. Learning a language is not a process in which a learner can progress very far individually. That is to say that it is a process in which learners have to be involved through social engagement. The demand for English “has increased exponentially with economic globalisation” (Nunan, 2001, p.605). As Lambert (2001) has argued, language education programs need to ensure cumulative language development and more evident capacity to rejuvenate and reinforce previous learning.

In view of the above, many general education teachers who have not had specific training regarding English language learners have many questions such as how to teach the students in a language they are not fluent in and what they can do when the language is a barrier to the content (Lewis-Moreno, 2007). Echevarria *et al.* (2011) note that this may be particularly difficult because academic English requires the students to both learn English skills and to demonstrate an advanced knowledge of English at the same time. In the same light, Lewis-Moreno (2007) notes that it can be a struggle for general education teachers to have English language learners in their classrooms if they do not have the proper background knowledge and practice. However, it is useful to make it clear that there is an overlap between academic and social language, teachers should be able to draw on English language learners’ life

experiences and social knowledge to bring concepts and language from outside the school setting back into the academic realm (Coleman and Goldberg, 2010).

With respect to language preference, there was a great variance between the views expressed by the teachers and the learners. During the interview the teachers agreed that some of the learners were good in English. Actually, they confessed that they are shocked by some of the learners' competence in English because they did not think that the learners would do so much better. Their claims are based on the fact that these learners like the language. Therefore, as Thoms (2008) says, this indicates that the way in which an instructor interacts with her students in the L2 classroom can be powerful and influential with regard to how much language students are exposed to in addition to the way in which (and how much) students are able to freely practice and express themselves in the L2. In fact, the teachers' expectation in this regard reveals their beliefs that learning through the medium of English improves competence in it. They thought using English as language of instruction is a good way of learning the language, because learning a language involves listening. They also mentioned that globalisation makes it very important to know English. The researcher confirms the above information with the learners who confirmed that learning in English exciting. They indicated that it was good opportunity to learn in English. They feel that it would be easy for them to face the outside world if they know and understand English. Learners also showed confidence in terms of competence in English. They claim that some of them were doing better in English and in other subjects that were taught through the medium of English.

However, some did not enjoy to be taught in English because they said it is difficult for them to understand and answer questions correctly. They disagree with teachers who are adamant about speaking only English in the classroom and also imposing similar practice on them. They opined that it was necessary for teachers to explain certain procedures and meanings in the learners' mother-tongues so that they can fully comprehend the teachers' explanation. They commended the teachers' intentions to ensure their learners mastered the English language but they also needed to practice more flexibility and leniency in accommodating to the learners' language limitations. As a result some believe that isiXhosa as well as Afrikaans

could contribute to their advancement in various avenues of life, like English. That is, they showed interest in learning EFAL while retaining their language as a medium of instruction. They even mentioned that they wanted to go to higher educational levels with their home language as a medium of instruction. They had dreams about advancing in life through their own language (e.g. becoming doctors, scientists, actors, social workers, singers, etc.). According to Harlen and Qualter (2014), people learn through constructing their knowledge by comparing it with their prior knowledge in order to come to a new understanding. So the home language becomes the base on which to extend the classroom knowledge through the teachers' mediation or facilitation (Harlen and Qualter, 2014, p.97).

Moreover one teacher also believes that it would probably make schooling more interesting if learners were taught in their home language as he claims that it would increase learner participation. He said language is a very important factor and that content subjects would be more interesting and understanding would be easier if taught in home language. It is an important part of their culture he added that it would make it easier for the learners to get a firm grasp of the subject content. He continued to point out that there is already accumulated considerable research evidence showing that this is possible. He claims that learners are struggling to cope with their studies because of the English medium.

5.15 The place of home language in writing EFAL

Yin and Ung (2001) observe that native language influences the acquisition of English. In their findings, they identified items like: approximation; coined words and slang; language switch; medium transfer; inappropriate use of tenses; omission of articles; omission or wrong usage of articles; adjective morphology errors; prefabricated patterns; and literal translation in their findings. Adedimeji, (2007); Adeniyi (2006, p.25) and Babatunde (2001) argue that "... the very obvious deviations from Standard English ... may suggest that the speaker was translating directly from his/ [her] mother tongue." Writing encourages learners to think in a structured way, and to express their thoughts freely in order to show their scientific knowledge (Jones, 2000). If the learner cannot explain a concept clearly in writing, it is likely that the learner does not clearly understand that particular concept (Freire, 2002, p.100). Implementing the primary curriculum by teachers who have difficulties

of reading and writing English, the language of instruction is a big challenge. This implies teachers cannot express themselves and are not able to write current English for their pupils (ibid).

Behaviourists account claim that transfer is the cause of errors, whereas from a cognitive perspective, transfer is seen as a resource that the learner actively draws upon in interlanguage development (Selinker, 1972). According to McLaughlin and Yee (1988), transfer can occur because learners lack the necessary information in the second language or the attentional capacity to activate the appropriate second-language routine. In other words, “the L1 can have a direct effect on interlanguage development by influencing the hypotheses that learners construct” (Ellis, 2010).

Another interesting finding in segment 4.5.7.4 observed during classroom observations was rather the extensive use of code switching between English and isiXhosa and English and Afrikaans by both EFAL teachers. Both teachers’ reasons for code-switching were attributed to learners’ inability to communicate in English fluently. On contrary, English language has to be thought in English so that learners may be proficient. Moreover, the teachers might use simple concepts to explain difficult phrases or words. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement pointed out that at this stage the majority of children are learning through the medium of their FAL, English, and should be getting more exposure to it. Greater emphasis is therefore placed on using the First Additional Language for the purposes of thinking and reasoning. This enables learners to develop their cognitive academic skills, which they need to study subjects like Natural Sciences, mathematics, etc. in English. They also engage more with literary texts and begin to develop aesthetic and imaginative ability in their Additional Language (9).

Turkan *et al.* (2012) advice teachers to use the following strategy when introducing new concepts to learners: In pre-teaching vocabulary, for example, the first step suggested for the teacher would be to say the word in English and, if it is a bilingual classroom, in the primary language. Second, the teacher would state the word in the context in which it appears in the text and, third, provide a definition or key definitions from the dictionary. Fourth, the teacher would provide another example of the word in a student-friendly context. The teacher would also repeat the word at least three

times to familiarize ELLs with its phonological representation. Finally, oral activities follow whereby ELLs relate the word to their own lives (p.9).

For instance, to reinforce the meaning of mesmerize, ELLs might tell their partners about a time that they felt mesmerized (Calderón, 2007). Moreover, teachers may employ visual instructional strategies for developing ELLs' vocabulary, such as engaging ELLs in the graphic organization of key vocabulary terms with charts or diagrams (Turkan *et al.*, 2012). Another strategy Turkan *et al.* (2012) exemplify is word splash and webbing. With these activities, teachers allow ELLs to write a word on a piece of paper and then add all the words they know or make meaningful associations among words. Lastly, Herrera *et al.* (2010) suggested that helping ELLs make meaningful associations might involve teachers' drawing specific links to cultural backgrounds, cognates, and prior academic content. Ajayi (2005) also suggested that teachers should guide learners to construct vocabulary meanings reflecting their life experiences and prior linguistic and educational backgrounds.

It was evident from the data that teachers code-switch to explain concepts, explain activities and drills on the chalkboard as well as for classroom management. However, this does not help learners as they have to write their examinations in English. During the observation the researcher noted that in some instances the learners were allowed to use their home language when discussing or explaining during English period. In fact, during the lesson some of the group learners discussed the meaning of the words in their home languages with their peers before responding to the educator. It emerged that there were slightly more code-switching incidents in EFAL lesson than in other classes. Tien and Liu (2006) state that low proficiency students consider code-switching in their EFAL classes as helpful towards gaining better comprehension especially when providing equivalent comprehension as well as giving classroom procedures. It is not an allowance for educators to use it excessively whenever they want to, but should be considered as a strategy and not taken as a teaching method (Burden, 2001). This is also supported by Palmer (2009) in the Dual Language Program which believes that learners learn language more fluently if they "stay" in the desired language. The more they are "forced" to use the target language, the better they learn it (Palmer, 2009).

5.16 Developmental writing process

In the process approach, writing is an on-going process with several steps but the steps are however not linear since the writer moves forward or backward between them (Khater, 2002). Moreover, writing in process approaches is predominantly seen to do with linguistic skills such as planning and drafting, with much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge such as knowledge about grammar and text structure (Badger and White 2000, p.154). According to Holmes (2004), the use of a process-oriented approach is to facilitate the planning and production stages of writing for adult students of English as a Foreign or Second Language. He identifies some features of this approach and provides some suggestions to develop activities in order to humanize and make a more positive and effective experience from writing. Ur (2002) assured that the writing process is the starting point for developing students' writing abilities, teachers must recognize that students need a range of writing experiences to develop as writers:

You learn to write through writing... One of our main tasks then as teachers is to get our students to write a lot, thinking, as they do so and learning from their own writing experience (Ur 2002, p.169).

On the other hand, research conducted in the writing field showed that the process approach to writing includes a number of steps as follows: pre- writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. It allows students to manage their own writing by giving students a chance to think as they write (Brown, 2001, p.336). Thus, students are taught planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process to help them to write freely and arrive at a product of good quality (Ho, 2006). However, this is not the same thing that happened to this study, teachers were not using process approach in teaching writing. Thus the researcher engaged herself in participatory approach research and below are the findings

The findings from the segment 4.6 through classroom participant observation reveals that when learners are given enough time to the steps involved in the writing process, they can improve. This has been revealed by the samples of writing which involved pre writing, drafting, revising and editing and seemed to work very well to the learners writing development. Richards (2006) pointed out that the more time

students spend on pre-writing activities, the more successful their writing will be. Smith (2000) and Wyse and Jones (2001) states the main features of the process approach as follows:

- It includes a variety of writing models, expressive as well as expository.
- It emphasizes writing conferences in which the teacher sits with the students as they are writing and offers advice on how to progress.
- Writing normally takes place through a series of multiple drafts.
- Writing should be a cooperative activity; students assist one another composing texts.
- Errors are considered natural and are corrected in the final stages.
- Teachers respond to students' drafts with fewer judgment and more questions and suggestions.
- Grammar is learned in the context of writing for communication.
- It emphasizes revision as critical to the writing process as teachers give their students opportunities to review, clarify, and re-organize what they have written.

Therefore, if teachers can regularly expose their learners to writing activities which enable them to practice the writing process (prewriting, drafting, checking and writing final draft) this might develop their writing skill. This has been evident from the participatory research that has been done by the researcher from data segment 4.6.

5.17 Learners, effective involvement in writing

Hedge (2005) notes that students can be good writers only if they write a lot. While teachers may play a valuable part in raising awareness of the process of composition by talking explicitly about the stages of writing, their efforts can be fruitful if only they involve their students in the process by structuring activities that take account of these stages (Hedge, 2005). Several studies postulate that ESL students are anxious about writing. For instance, Hirst *et al.* (2004, p.74) acknowledge that many students often feel disempowered, lack confidence and feel completely unprepared for university studies.

The data in segment 4.5.3.1 provides a justifiable evidence that learners require longer period to write an essay as they experience difficulty procuring ideas to plan

their essay outlines in the pre-writing stage. It was also noted that they know that it is their responsibility to write effectively. However, they mentioned that they required longer time to write in the writing because they have to mentally construct sentences in their first language or mother-tongue before translating into English. At the same time, the learners also mentioned that they have to spend a large amount of time looking up unfamiliar English words using bilingual dictionaries. They also mentioned they want to know how to write beautifully by using words correctly and precisely. As a result when each writing task is finished, these learners are anxious to know whether they are right or wrong.

5.18 Conclusion

The anxiety of wrong or right writing that the learners have above, needs to be kept burning as a form of appetiser for their writing process. In light of this, teachers need to be careful the way that they give feedback because if the feedback is negative, it will crush the novice writer. Motivation, most especially in the form language learning as a social practice, should be the way to go as this will kill the fear in the learners, thus providing them the motivation to learn through their mistakes. With the understanding that the researcher have developed so far, the study is inclined to believe that there is a problem with writing. This, coupled with the fact that academic writing in itself is nobody's language, make matters for first additional language learners even worse. Thus, the difficulties posed by the language of teaching and learning (English) together with the challenges of the complexity and difficulties involved in academic writing, make matters even worse for EFAL learners. The findings also reveal that the learners from both schools are faced with different challenges and difficulties in writing skills, especially in writing essays, paragraphs and in implementing tenses in sentences as this came out from the interviews with the teachers as well as the participant observation of the classroom by the researcher. The main problems to writing have been noted to be related to understanding instructions, notes taking, participation in classroom discussions and accessing information from books. In the interviews with the learners many of them highlighted that they have problems with understanding instructions and using them in EFAL.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the study on the perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in EFAL, with a specific focus on isiXhosa and Afrikaans learners. This summary is based on strategies used by teachers in teaching writing, the influence of home languages on EFAL writing competency, teachers' perceptions of writing, learners' perceptions of writing, the possible causes of writing difficulties and the strategies that can be put in place to minimize/curb the problems. It provides a conclusion and proposes recommendations from the findings. The conclusion and recommendations are organized in a way that it attempts to answer the research question of the study.

To begin with, this study reveals that writing instruction come a long way and needs to be taken seriously in language teaching. It has evolved from rote; a traditional method with an emphasis on writing conventions, maturing into a process that is able to accommodate a writer's need to plan, brainstorm, seek feedback, and revise their work.

The discussion here is meant to suggest that although there is a need for more research including large-scale studies, substantial evidence documents, etc. the benefits of a writing process to learners writing cannot be overemphasised. A few key determinants of producing quality writers stand out and include teaching learners how to plan their writing (via pre-writing), to combine sentences, and to engage in the process of inquiry as they learn to write. Teaching learners to use even one or two stages of the writing process can enhance their writing abilities significantly. Together, these findings provide a compelling rationale for using the writing process as a method of instruction in all classrooms and in so doing, helping our learners to develop the skills that they need to communicate for the future. In order to be able to speak a language to some degree of proficiency and to be able to say what people really want to say, some writing skills must be grasped. By teaching writing, the teachers not only give the learners the means to express themselves, but also fulfil their expectations of what learning a foreign language involves.

6.2 An overview of the study

The question asked by this study has to do with perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in English FAL. Borg (2003, p. 247) argues that in order to provide an adequate basis for the study of what teachers think, know and believe, "researchers may draw inferences about teacher cognition from what is observed, but verification for these must be sought through further source of data." The study portrayed that they perceive writing as a skill that can be mastered through learning and regular practice. In addition, the results also show that the teachers perceive writing as a difficult skill to teach since it requires more than language skill to construct a good piece of writing. However, it was evident from the study that steps of the writing process were not practiced and there was no evidence of regular practice of writing.

It is worth mentioning that the theoretical framework guiding this study, English as an international language as well as the constructivist perspective of learning underlie the researcher's belief system. Teaching and learning in English as international language is essential in any society because English has become the global lingua franca, language of trade and technology. An increasing need to teach and learn English as a second/foreign language has been observed in many countries in recent years. Many people admit its key role as a link-language, a library language and a medium of instruction in any educational system (Van Weijen *et al.*, 2009; Mallozzi and Malloy, 2007). On the other hand the constructivist approach is based on the premise that knowledge is a construction of reality. It focuses on the ways in which young learners think as they interact with the world. That is, it emphasizes active engagement of learners in constructing knowledge that can enable them to build theories about the world. According to the constructivists to which this researcher is a devotee, people learn by constructing their knowledge through comparison with prior knowledge in order to come to a new understanding. To support this, Leach and Scott (2000, p.43) state that constructivists are natural scientists and active learners who should be given the opportunity to engage in their own experimentation and problem solving. They further state that learning science is to be introduced to the ways of thinking and explaining the world using the tools of the scientific community.

In addition, this study justifies the research methodology which is the qualitative approach. The interpretation of the results was done using the qualitative method. The researcher used different techniques to collect and analyse data. This study used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to van Dijk (2001); Wodak and Meyer (2008), CDA has an interest in the properties of 'naturally occurring' language use by real language users, a social practice and focus on larger units than isolated words and sentences and new basic units of analysis: texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or communicative events. Put simply, CDA is concerned with studying and analysing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias (subjectivity) (van Dijk, 1998, 2001). It emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge, in organizing social institutions or in exercising power (Wodak, 2000; Lemke, 2002). The data collection techniques used were semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis (learner's portfolios). Field notes techniques and tape recording were also used to collect data and the data was analysed through critical discourse analysis that led to common emerging themes.

The findings from the study were derived from the interviews with the teachers and learners, classroom observations and document analysis. As explained in chapter three, the interviews used in this study provided the researcher with the opportunity to listen to the teachers' and learners' voices when they shared their views (and beliefs) about experiences on learners' writing. The interviews also reflected on their observed lessons and discussed some of the contextual factors they believed have impacted on their practices. In order to give the reader some insight into the participants of this study, some biographical information regarding age, gender, grade/s taught, qualifications and teaching experience is given. The researcher began by introducing the four teachers who participated in the study as well as the twenty four learners. The researcher used pseudonyms for the schools, teachers and learners to ensure adherence to ethical issues such as confidentiality, privacy and anonymity as mentioned in the previous chapter.

6.3 Relating the findings of the study to the research questions

The first and utmost duty of a language teacher is to make a writing task interesting and relevant to learners' interest. This might help learners to remove barriers and boost their motivation. Writing skills could be developed through three phases being controlled, guided, and free writing (Massi, 2001). These phases can help learners to communicate, learn and express creativity. In addition, helping learners to become more skilful writers remains a vital educational task because writing plays a key role in their conceptual and linguistic development (Isleem, 2012, p.5). Writing is also considered an important part of all university courses" (Darus and Hei Ching, 2009, p.10). Massi (2001) considers writing as a tool for the creation of ideas and the consolidation of the linguistic system by using it for communication in an interactive way. Therefore writing is an interactive process by nature, since it results from the symbolic interplay between the writer, text and reader. This means that EFAL learners have to learn to write in order to satisfy the requirements of different school activities. That is to say writing is a means of communication through which an individual may even communicate with an unknown other, which is different from the other skills because they are used to communicate with the known.

The question that arises is: Are these EFAL learners well equipped to identify, deal and conquer these challenges while at the same time able to write fluently? In an attempt to respond, the study brought out the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences of isiXhosa and Afrikaans Grade 6 learners' writing in EFAL in two primary schools in the East London Education district. The findings reveal that, teachers and learners are faced with many challenges that seem to be affecting writing. This is based on the fact that EFAL is not only the lingua franca but also the language of teaching and learning. Among the issues that came up were writing in ESL, difficulties of writing, importance and experiences of writing, strategies that can be used to monitor learners writing in EFAL, teaching approaches, English errors in writing EFAL, the place of home language in writing EFAL, the role of vocabulary in ESL and effective feedback approach. Despite these challenges, writing is one of the most important tools for communication in foreign language which is an essential skill nowadays. Based on the findings derived from the research questions and analysed data, the researcher came up with some recommendations for a possible

strategic plan for writing in EFAL and teachers that may suit the two primary schools in particular and other South African schools in general in the effective teaching and learning process of writing in EFAL. To clarify this, the researcher would attempt to respond to the research questions one by one in order to shed some light.

6.3.1 Research question 1: What strategies do teachers use in teaching writing?

Phipps and Borg (2009, p.381) argue that beliefs may have a strong impact on practices, or pedagogical decisions. This study has illustrated how the teacher's beliefs, professional coursework (their experiences as teachers) and knowledge of EFAL influenced their writing pedagogy. The data revealed that in teaching writing, the focus of teachers' was not primarily on the process (brainstorming, drafting, revising etc.) of developing learners as writers but rather on their learners' completed written work which they would then mark. This goes against the tenets of the process/genre approach to teaching writing advocated in the CAPS documents. Since the participants appeared to have the perception that learners need to be given work and this work marked; they do not seem to have taken on board the curriculum recommendations on writing and thus did not familiarize themselves with what the process/genre approaches might be about. The findings further reveal that there was little evidence that these teachers were even aware of these approaches. It should be taken into account that the process approach, which is a step-by-step procedure and which requires an active invention, pre-writing, drafting, and careful revision is better (Harmer, 2004).

In light of the above, English is the FAL to these learners and therefore, teachers have to contribute their time to see to it that learners try to speak English so as to master the four language learning skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. This would not only help them to have a firm base in English, but it would also contribute towards proficiency and perfection of the attested language. Porter (2009) suggests that teachers have to incorporate instructional conversations, having students participate in discussions during the course of all these activities. However, the findings reveal that learners hesitate to speak English with their teachers and peers in and outside the classroom because they are worried about making grammatical mistakes and thereby feeling embarrassed of their low language

proficiency. In fact, even teachers with good intentions may “provide inadequate or inappropriate [instruction]” to English language learners because they simply do not know how to work with these diverse learners (Mantero and McVicker, 2006). In this regard, every teacher should be trained with practices that apply to learning English as a second language and literacy development (Lewis-Moreno, 2007). This method of teaching writing would therefore tie with the CAPS policy which requires all teachers to function as language teachers most especially when it concerns academic writing.

Moreover, the data indicates that the quality of feedback given by the teachers to the learners seem to have affected the quality of learners writing skill. Granville and Dison (2009, p.56) recommend modelling as a teaching tool as well as teaching through feedback. In addition, the data also show that teachers seem to assess and provide feedback on their learners’ writing for accountability rather than formative (to promote learning) reasons. Their feedback is insufficient to help the learners to improve on their EFAL writing competence. These are in agreement with the findings of Baroudi (2007) who reports that feedback helps in preparing for further instruction. To throw more lights, Otsuka *et al.* (2007) conclude that it helps teachers plan future instruction and modify instructional strategy. In view of this, Gibbs and Simpson (2002) observe that feedback helps ensure that students are motivated and interested in learning. For longer pieces of writing, neither the teachers provided enough scaffolding to their learners before they instructed learners to produce their texts independently.

The data further reveal that the teachers did not discuss their feedback with their learners after they handed them back the marked work. They identified things such as time and the number of learners in their classrooms as some of the contextual factors that constrained them from providing effective feedback to their learners (allowing for multiple drafts). It is therefore important to use scaffolding with care and to always examine the match between the learner’s abilities and the demands of the task (Lewis-Moreno, 2007). In addition, time is also a crucial factor when providing feedback (Bailey 2007; Ellis 2010) because of tight deadlines that need to be met by the teachers, the provision of effective feedback to students is compromised. The

study also found that, despite some teachers doing relatively well, feedback given to learners by teachers is not of a very good quality.

6.3.2 Research question 2: What is the influence of home languages on EFAL writing competency?

The policy for the use of EFAL as language of learning and teaching states that learners should reach high levels of proficiency in EFAL in order to communicate and understand other learning areas. The policy further states that CAPS learners should achieve the same degree of proficiency in their additional language as they do in their home language (DoBE, 2011). On the contrary, the study discovered that there was rather the extensive use of code switching between English and isiXhosa and English and Afrikaans by EFAL teachers from both schools. The teachers' reasons for code-switching were attributed to learners' inability to communicate in English fluently. Hence some learners remained silent when the questions were asked in English. They would start raising their hands after the teacher has translated the question into isiXhosa. In some instances, the learners would answer in their mother tongue although the teachers' questions were asked in English or give one-word answers in English. This situation could be linked to the learners' lack of proficiency in English. Adedimeji, (2007); Adeniyi (2006, p.25) and Babatunde, (2001) argue that "... the very obvious deviations from Standard English ... may suggest that the speaker was translating directly from his/ [her] mother tongue."

The data further reveals that learners were disturbed by their home language because when they do not know a word they would write either the isiXhosa or the Afrikaans equivalent. Code-switching seems to have instilled a sense of "dependence on translations" where some learners would not even try to answer English questions but they would wait for the teacher to translate the questions into isiXhosa or Afrikaans before they could attempt to give answers. Although translation in the learners' mother tongue was used to facilitate learning, the data reveals that it seems as one of the factors that limited the learners' exposure to English language input in the classroom. Thus, some of them ended up with very limited academic proficiency in English. The data further reveals that in some instances, the learners were allowed to use their home language when discussing during an English period. Tien and Liu (2006) state that low proficiency students consider code-switching in

their EFAL classes as helpful towards gaining better comprehension especially when providing equivalent comprehension as well as giving classroom procedures.

Moreover, the data reveals that interacting in their mother tongue was more relaxed than using English because the learners could express their views in a more meaningful way than using English. Furthermore, using isiXhosa or Afrikaans was the only way through which they could understand each other during group work and they were able to reach a higher level of understanding by assisting each other. This shows that home language has become the base on which to extend the classroom knowledge through the teachers' mediation or facilitation (Harlen and Qualter, 2014, p.97). Therefore the process of scaffolding would have benefited the learners wherein they can be assisted to achieve tasks and complete functions in the target language (TL) (Ellis, 2000).

6.3.3 Research question 3: What are the teachers' perceptions of writing

EFAL?

The findings show that learners have low literacy levels and struggle to express themselves in English. Some of the teachers even mentioned that these learners have bad language skills which require serious interventions. The teachers also observed that ESL learners struggle with sentence and paragraph construction as well as coherence (Lloyd 2007). Some teachers also indicated that there are gaps that exist between foundation phase and intermediate phase. They suggest that students should be exposed to more reading and writing activities as they seem to have less exposure to these activities (Wingate 2006).

Moreover, the study identified a weak correlation between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching practices. Although the teachers believed that writing is as important as listening, speaking, reading, grammar and vocabulary, and that it needs regular practice, the data reveal that they fail to put their beliefs into practice. Thus if English language teachers give less attention to writing due to their perception that writing is less important and that teaching writing is a difficult task, this can adversely affect their teaching and their students' performance in writing (Ferede, 2010).

Secondly, despite their expression of views that the process approach to the teaching of writing is preferable to the product approach, the data reveal that the

teachers do not regularly expose their learners to writing activities which enable them to practice the writing process (prewriting, drafting, checking and writing final draft). Thus, the problem associated with the teaching of writing to learners appears to be the result of teachers' lack of practical skills, courage and determination to practice what they preach, and the resulting loose correlation between their perception of writing and their practice of teaching this skill. This was revealed by the data which clearly illustrated that steps of writing process are not practiced and there is no evidence of regular practice of writing. This condition may force one to critically consider Noe's (2004) claim that the individual's perception is realized through action, because in this case, either the teachers' perception is only a claim or perceptions, not an action.

6.3.4 Research question 4: What are the learners' perceptions of writing EFAL?

The findings further reveal that learners engage in various writing activities, including writing essays, grammar exercises, comprehension tests and analysing literature. Some of the learners think these activities are developing them but some learners were confident and perceived themselves to be proficient. However, some still manifest gross grammatical errors in their writing. This also suggests that teaching writing to these learners is superficial and that they have little practice in improving their writing and which resonates with the observation made by some scholars (Wingate 2006) that learners are not adequately taught writing.

Regardless of the fact that some participants thought they were ready to deal with writing demands, the reality is that most of them are not ready yet. In addition, this was also revealed by the data that their writing skills are within the range of fair to average. Evidently, this is an acknowledgement that they might still need some more writing practice for further development which is never provided by the teacher as a facilitator.

Adler *et al.* (2002) argue that there is a specific challenge that is immediately visible in classrooms during the teaching and learning of content subjects through FAL same as the language of instruction in which texts for the different subjects are produced. The findings reveal that learners are facing different challenges. These challenges point towards limited proficiency in English as some learners acknowledged and admitted of having a challenge to express themselves and

comprehend through the language of instruction. The data also indicates that they become confused when learning English and that result in work unfinished activities. Honig, *et al.* (2008) assert that learners may not comprehend or make meaning of what is said by the teacher if the teacher uses unfamiliar words or words with specialist meanings.

Moreover, data revealed that some learners become bored because they do not understand when teachers are explaining instructions in English. Many learners highlighted that they face difficulties in writing when they do not understand the topic or when they do not know what they are writing. Therefore it is equally important for teachers to help English language learners (ELLs) understand how a variety of sentence structures are used to convey meaning in different types of texts like compare–contrast, persuasive, or argumentative texts (Sarfraz, 2011). Dreher and Gray (2010) point out that familiarizing ELLs with text structures like compare-contrast will help the teachers to expand and enrich ELLs' academic vocabulary knowledge, especially of terms such as unlike, similar to, compared to, and resembles.

The CAPS documents for Intermediate Phase EFAL assumed that learners would have reached a fairly high competence in English by Grade 6 (DoBE, 2011). However, the data reveal that some learners have writing difficulties that could be attributed to their lack of proficiency in English. Where some of the learners gave answers to explanatory questions, their answers did not make sense at all. These learners could not write one correct sentence in English. The other common problem which the data reveals from some of these learners was grammatical and spelling errors which resulted in meaningless work.

6.3.5 Research question 5: What are the possible causes of EFAL writing difficulties?

Richards and Renandya (2003) assert that writing is the most difficult task for L2 learners. This difficulty lies in both generating and organizing ideas and then translating these ideas into a readable text. The findings reveal that learners write words as they sound because they are unfamiliar with the sound system of English. Some of the teachers highlighted that learners write words as they hear and as they

sound. Sometimes they drop the final consonant or create more than what is needed in a word to facilitate their pronunciation. Moreover they carry over isiXhosa and Afrikaans letter pronunciation habits into English.

The data further reveals that some of their works show no understanding on questions and instructions. Most of the learners' book indicated a sense of negligence and poor standard of work as most learners had incomplete tasks, poor spellings and lack of understanding to high degree questions. The data further reveals that learners cannot explore and explain concepts meaningfully if they are using a language in which they lack proficiency. Likewise, the language used in evaluating knowledge is very important. If learners are evaluated in a language which they do not understand well, the evaluation results may be distorted. In each case, the teacher has a significant role to play as a facilitator of knowledge construction. Stanley (2007) explains that the learner is the centre of the process. He emphasizes that learner's previous knowledge, needs and interests should be taken into consideration in writing.

6.3.6 Research question 6: What strategies can be put in place to minimize/curb the problem?

Language as a means of communication is a very important tool in the classroom because it enables learners to talk, think, read and write. In other words, it mediates learning hence it is regarded as a prerequisite to science learning (Wallace, 2003, p.8). With regard to teaching strategies, the common feature in teaching through English is more teacher talk with little learner involvement, and few challenging questions. Teacher talk or the telling teaching method is less interactive and it does not encourage active participation by learners in their lessons. Therefore the question and answer method is usually effective interactive and learner-centred because it stimulates the learners to think and express their thoughts, its effectiveness is determined by the types and quality of questions asked.

Likewise, group work is an interactive strategy where learners learn collaboratively. It encourages learners to explore and discover things on their own, and instil good values in learners (e.g. sharing, tolerance, respect, etc.) if it is managed properly. In terms of the Vygotskian theory, group work can also enable the learners to attain the

ZPD if they work in collaboration with more capable peers and under the guidance of a teacher or adult (Foncha and Abongdia, 2014; Foncha, 2014). So if group work is not properly managed, it may not scaffold learners to reach their highest level of learning (ZPD).

Significant changes in their classroom practice are needed if they are to improve the feedback between teacher and learners. They need to structure learning environments that support collaborative problem-solving and construction of English knowledge and offers ample opportunity for classroom discourse.

6.4 Conclusion

The study used a qualitative research approach to investigate the strategies to the teaching of writing. In terms of the small scale nature of this study, it was not possible to generalise the findings. Nevertheless, it stands to contribute to the small but growing number of studies that are pointing to the impoverished methods of teaching writing in English FAL in South African schools.

In conclusion, the researcher believes that the process approach to writing could enable teachers to focus on the various parts of the writing process and which gives more freedom for learners to experiment with their language. In addition, such orientation could help learners to develop confidence and to establish fluency before they are concerned with a finished product.

In a nutshell, the study showed that both learners and teachers face numerous challenges relating to writing. This means that more work still needs to be done in this area, most especially in training teachers to be able to assist learners in the development of writing. The present study argues that; teachers teaching EFAL learners should approach writing as a critical and core aspect of learners' education. Learners should be exposed to intensive writing activities throughout their school years. Teachers who lack the skills should also be given specific training in teaching writing in particular and the other skills in general. This would go a long way to ensure that when learners go to institutions of higher education, they are fully equipped to handle academic writing. Teachers should also be equipped to teach academic writing that addresses learners' specific needs. However, the challenges relating to learners writing will continue to be a problem, particularly in EFAL

contexts, unless institutions of learning start addressing academic writing as a critical and core component of learners' academic development.

6.5 Recommendations

In light of the findings from this study and having examined these findings and problems encountered during data collection, the following recommendations are made from the perspectives of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 isiXhosa and Afrikaans learners' writing in EFAL.

Teachers need to learn to recognize how much language learners have and how to encourage its use and growth through meaningful conversations. This is in view of the fact that the way learners perceive, remember, comprehend, and make sense of their world is all tied up in language (Bransford *et al.*, 2000). Thus, teaching writing would equip them with the ability to communicate with the world at large.

It is necessary that the teachers give equal emphasis to writing as they give to reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary in their instruction. They need to realize that writing helps learners to reinforce their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary and also to develop other language skills, since language skills are learned iteratively. Teachers should also internalize their claimed beliefs, develop practical skills, and possess courage and determination to put their beliefs into practice.

In addition, the Ministry of Basic Education or other responsible bodies need to train teachers, especially in the implementation of the process approach to the teaching of writing. Teachers who lack the skills should be given specific training in writing skills. The purpose of teacher development is to help teachers to grow and to be effective in their practices. Teachers should be trained adequately so that they can teach writing effectively and not just spend more time on administrative work. They should undergo continuous professional development in the form of in-service training and should also be given incentives to further their ESL studies. In order for teachers to have professional growth, they require good programmes to re-skill them and increase their knowledge to address the demands of the curriculum. The government should introduce a programme on teacher development. The programme should focus on:

- Training teachers on English teaching strategies appropriate for the language levels and age of the learners.
- Training teachers on language acquisition, language learning and writing process.

The success or failure of curriculum innovation depends on teachers' views about, and understanding of it, and their willingness to implement it. For English teachers to be able to function effectively as mediators of learning, they need to be well informed about genre theory and its application. The various text types, that is, their contexts, phases and language features. To be able to realise the text-based approach recommended by the curriculum, teachers need to know about the structural organisation of texts, their social purpose and their related language features, which are made explicit in genre-based theory. This type of knowledge would provide teachers with language resources to draw on.

Many scholars point out that exposure to English provides more practice (Fullana, 2005; Magno *et al*, 2009). Learners need to acquire the ability to speak, comprehend, read, and write; and they need to possess knowledge of vocabulary, the command of grammatical structures, understanding of cultural contexts in which language appears, etc. Such skills and sub-skills are interrelated and affect each other. This means improving one's ability in one skill or area will cause some improvement in other areas. Therefore, it is helpful and essential for EFAL learners to be exposed to and to practice language in various ways. Using effective teaching methods and techniques, and dealing with learners in a human fashion are as important as language exposure and practice. For instance, a good EFAL teacher should be able to handle whole classes and, at the same time, be able to deal with individual learners. In this regard, Kannan (2009) states that teacher's responsibility lies not only with the average and above average students, but this should depend on learners' needs. Slow learners, for example, should be given extra coaching and counselling. Such counselling can be in private in order not to embarrass learners.

Additionally, EFAL teachers should encourage and motivate their learners to participate in class using English only. If this step is taken early in the first class session, learners will get used to this and therefore, their language exposure and practice will increase. As for shy learners, it is up to the teacher to use effective ways

to attract them into the discussion such as using groups, asking opinion questions, etc. In this way, learners will learn, know and understand, but not memorize for the exam.

Teachers should use English as a medium of instruction instead of code switching. In addition to this, teachers should expose learners to English through newspapers, magazines, and school radio programmes. Teachers should encourage learners to make sure that they use English as a medium of communication, especially in the classroom as well as inside the school premises. They should motivate learners should listen to English news both in the radio and television and participate in debates.

Before teaching writing, a teacher should be able to build the learners' knowledge of the field, the learners' needs, their potentials and problems. In addition, keeping in view the educational and cultural backgrounds of the learners, teachers may devise more ways to tackle the identified problems in the best possible manner. Then, the teacher can implement the right and appropriate approach to apply in the classroom. It is done to give the suitable service to the learners in order to be effective and efficient in conducting the learning process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: CONSENT LETTER

Dear Participant

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study entitled: **Teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in English First Additional Language.**

This study, then, will investigate the experiences of learners when they are writing in English, to establish what is working and what is not working for teachers, learners and stakeholders, and suggest possible solutions.

The researcher undertakes to assure you of the following:

- To maintain your confidentiality;
- To protect your rights and welfare; i.e. to ensure that no harm comes to you as a result of your participation in this research.
- No manipulation or withholding of information is involved in this study.
- To present information and transcripts used in this research in such a way as to maintain the participant's dignity and if in doubt to first consult with you.
- To make available the final copy of this research publication in the library.
- The participant is free to withdraw from this research process at any time whatsoever if the need should so arise.

It is hoped that education at large will benefit from your insights into academic composing arising from this research. I acknowledge your sacrifice in volunteering to add to the body of academic knowledge and your perseverance in carrying out the research task to its completion.

Yours sincerely

T. Mpiti

PhD student

Participant's signature of agreement: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE PRINT NAME: _____

APPENDIX B – PERMISSION LETTERS

University of Fort Hare
East London

5200

The Circuit Manager
Department of Education
Private Bag X 9007
East London
5200

Dear Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I Thandiswa Mpiti currently doing Doctor of Philosophy in Education through the University of Fort Hare would like to request permission to carry out fieldwork at a certain schools in the East London District. The day to day functioning of the school will not be disrupted because all activities related to the research will be conducted after hours at a convenient time for the teachers.

My topic of research is 'Teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in English First Additional Language.' The research will be qualitative in nature; therefore I would like to conduct interviews with some educators and check learner's books. This will work on a voluntary basis. In order to ensure confidentiality the name of the schools and persons involved will not be mentioned in the study. I would appreciate it if I could visit Parkside and Ncerha Primary Schools.

Permission will also be sought from the respective school principals and those teachers willing to voluntarily participate in the study. Please treat this request as urgent as time to complete the study is limited.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. You may also contact my supervisor at the University of Fort Hare. Her details are as follows:

Doctor J.F. Abongdia

Tel: 043 704 7229

Email: JAbongdia@ufh.ac.za

Looking forward to a positive response

Yours in education

T. Mpiti

Email: tmpiti@yahoo.com

Cell: 073 273 1810

University of Fort Hare
East London
5200

The Principal
... Primary School
East London
5200

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Thandiswa Mpiti currently doing Doctor of Philosophy in Education through the University of Fort Hare would like to request permission to carry out fieldwork at your schools. The day to day functioning of the school will not be disrupted because all activities related to the research will be conducted after hours or at a convenient time for the teachers. My topic of research is Teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in English First Additional Language. The research will be qualitative in nature; therefore I would like to conduct interviews with some teachers and learners. This will work be on a voluntary basis. In order to ensure confidentiality the name of the schools and persons involved will not be mentioned in the study. Please treat this request as urgent as time to complete the study is limited.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. You may also contact my supervisor at the University of Fort Hare.

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Dr. J.A. Abongdia
Tel: 043 704 7229
Email: jabongdia@ufh.ac.za.

Looking forward to a positive response

Yours in education

T. Mpiti

Email: tmpiti@yahoo.com

Cell: 073 273 1810

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Thandiswa Mpiti currently doing Doctor of Philosophy in Education through the University of Fort Hare would like to request permission to work with your child to do a research. The day to day functioning of the school will not be disrupted as I will only seat with him/ her at the arranged time that will be convenient for both of us. The research will require interviews therefore I would like to conduct interviews with him/her. This will work be on a voluntary basis. In order to ensure confidentiality the name of the school or persons involved will not be mentioned in the study. Would very much appreciate your cooperation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. You may also contact my supervisor at the University of Fort Hare.

Her details are as follows:

Dr. J. A. Abongdia

Tel: 043 704 7229

Email: JAbongdia@ufh.ac.za

Looking forward to a positive response

Yours in education

T Mpiti

Email: tmpiti@yahoo.com

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEWS – 1

Teacher's interviews

Question: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Dave: *They are quite challenging and yet fruitful. Challenging in the sense that hierdie kinders [these kids] have a tendency of using moedertaal [mother tongue]. They struggle in writing essay type question.*

Researcher: What do you mean when you say they struggle in writing essay type question?

Dave: *Some of them struggle to construct full sentences that are grammatically correct and some struggle to write a paragraph in essay type question. Sometimes they have a tendency of writing something that does not make sense. For example, you can see that their style of writing is not appropriate to the purpose of the essay type question. Or the series of events written are not in a meaning full order.*

Question: What are some of the difficulties that learners face in their writing?

Dave: *Ja [yes] there are [long pause]. They write words as they sound because they are unfamiliar with the sound system of English. In my teaching experience I came to know that in understanding the correspondence between a vowel and sound is the most difficult part learners struggle with in acquiring writing skills in English. [pause] Some of them write words as they hear them and write words as they sound. Sometimes they drop the final consonant or create more than what is needed in a word to facilitate their pronunciation.*

Question: What are learners' experiences when they are writing?

Dave: *Studente is verskillende [Students are different]. Some of them are good and most of them are not good. Not all of them are good when it comes to writing as you know. The only thing I am positive about is that they all can write. Well their writing may not be that meaningful at times but as a teacher I can understand, oh, this one wants to write about this and that. Like I said their level of writing is not the same so as their ability to learn is not the same.*

Question: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Dave: *I think it is beneficial to the learners when we take them to the library to have access to reading books because before you write you must be able to read, so exposure to English books is so helpful. Our library is functioning so sometimes I engage learners in reading story books which could improve their performance in English writing. Sometimes I provide them with opportunities to acquire language in a context that is interesting and relevant so to assist the teaching and learning of writing skills.*

Question: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Dave: *For me, I use a lot of (my former primary school teachers') methods because my teachers inspired me a lot and I feel they work. I feel they use a bit of 'old school' and I like bringing new things. I won't take activities that have been done already in doing my own work, so I implement or combine their method with my skills and I feel it works.*

Question: What kind of English errors do learners commit?

Dave: *They translate English words in Afrikaans. They like to reverse words with double vowels. They omit vowels and consonants.*

Question: What is your view about code- switching during the English lesson?

Dave: *I have a clear understanding of Afrikaans as language, I have to at times translate words in Afrikaans which I feel is wrong in an English class. Because in an English class, they should be forced to speak only English.*

Teacher's interviews – 2

Question: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Anele: *I have noticed that learners struggle to express themselves in English, ngamanye amaxesha [sometimes] they choose to keep quiet in class because they can't express themselves. Nasezincwadini zabo [even in their books] they write in their mother tongue xa into bengayazi kwi English [when they do not know it in English]. Enye into [another thing] kids are lazy to read instructions. Babhala nje [they just sit] without understanding as a result babhale into engeyiyo [they write something else]. Hayi ke andithethi ngokubhali [more especially] in story or a letter they struggle kakhulu [a lot].*

Question: What are some of the difficulties that learners face in their writing?

Anele: *mh... they carry over isiXhosa letter pronunciation habits into English. Umzekelo [for an example]: they pronounce letter g in word giant as letter g as in word gate. Bayabethakala [they struggle] to know the rule – when g is followed by i or e is soft. Enye ke phofu ingxaki [another problem] they don't have the word giant in their vocab. Injalo ke naku (they do the same thing in diagraph) 'th' they pronounce it as t-h. Lento keye [this thing of] mispronunciation ibenza babhale into engeyiyo [lead learners in writing words totally different from what was intended]. In fact, aba bam ngoku [my learners now] banalongxaki [had that problem]. Banento yokulahla [they tend to drop] the consonant or add the vowel bazenzela lula bona [making easier for them] to pronounce a word. Ungabeva bebiza u 'road' as 'rodd'.*

Question: What are learners' experiences when they are writing?

Anele: *There are some learners who will be good when we are doing oral, but when you say to them write what you are saying. Nothing will come out. They will*

have lots of spelling mistakes, some have bad handwriting, most of them did not have good foundation from the lower grades, so that gives us who are teaching at the Intermediate Phase tough time because we are teaching them how to write and we should also teach them writing for learning. You see all their other subjects are taught in English, except isiXhosa, so they have to really have knowledge of writing to pass all the other subjects. Now they are already struggling to form words yet we have to make them writing sentences and paragraphs. Sometimes I blame it on the language.

Question: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Anele: *uummm, (pause) it depends on your experience as a teacher on your approach you understand. Mna ndiye ndijonge ukuba unjani lomntwana [I look at the type of learner] and decide on the approach that may be suitable kulo meko [in that situation]. It depends on the type of learners that you are teaching, if you understand them to be slow, you would go with their pace and what is important is not to leave them behind make sure that they understand. I sometimes scaffold them, or give them extra time.*

Question: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Anele: *Each of us have our own way of bringing explanation across to the learners, you know in my own class I choose to try and use interactive approach where the text is there and we discuss together you know I try and engage them a little bit more with the text.*

Question: What kind of English errors do learners commit?

Anele: *They use borrowed English words which accommodate their language isiXhosa when writing. This occurred especially when the sound of the English word is pronounced similarly to their mother tongue. They struggle to understand the letters that form words, hence they write what they hear. Ngamanye amaxesha (sometimes) some learners use isiXhosa words in*

their English writing. Some learners write in what is termed 'cellphone language'

Question: What is your view about code- switching during the English lesson?

Anele: *If it means I have to explain in their mother tongue what I am trying to explain in English that I need to do. But as much as I do not encourage that, but for progress sake and also for understanding, I do that. I combine the languages, their home language with what I am doing in English. ... I do switch over to Afrikaans to make them understand this is what they would say and in English.*

Teacher's interviews – 3

Question: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Nancy: *In my experience in teaching English to grade 6 is that it dawned in my mind that when learners understand the language or familiarise themselves with the language they learn to know it and understand what is expected from them to do. You will see them reading with understanding and becoming fluent. It also becomes easy for them to understand content subjects. But we cannot run away from the fact that children are different. There will always be those who will struggle in understanding, sometimes as a teacher you can think you have explained everything to them but let's come to what is written you will be surprised. Otherwise all in all teaching English is a good experience at the same time a challenge.*

Question: What are some of the difficulties that learners face in their writing?

Nancy: *Yes, there is no doubt about that. You see students are not the same and their understanding is not the same. There are those who grasp a lesson quicker than the others and there are also those who are having learning disabilities or let me say they are 'struggling' [using her fingers] with English. Coming to your question, it's a struggle when they deal with comprehension task because you will come to notice that once they see one word from the question, when answering they will copy the whole sentence even when it doesn't apply to the question.*

Researcher: What does it mean when they do that?

Nancy: *To me that simply means they did not understand the question, they are just writing to finish.*

Researcher: I am listening

Nancy: *Okay, let me give you another example: when you give them a factual recount type of activity. It is sometimes difficult for them to retell facts in the order they happened, or they have a tendency of struggling to sequence words in explaining the order in which things happened. They will mix and if they do not know a word in English they will write it in their mother tongue.*

Question: What are learners' experiences when they are writing?

Nancy: *Some of them are slow but some write with ease. There are those who will never finish a task.*

Researcher: What do you do with those who do not complete their work?

Nancy: *The first thing I do is to let them write on their pace, but then sometimes I am forced to give them a little than I intended to give. Because what is the use of loading them with a lot of work which they won't finish anyways? So I give them just enough for the lesson and I don't rush them. Or maybe let them write it groups. Then they are a bit faster when they work in groups, but I don't really like group work because it is not easy to tell if all learners have learned anything or sometimes I allow them to finish the task as homework. That also is a problem on its own, because they will have more work to do at home, as I have sometimes homework prepared for them already. What I can say is that learners are challenged when it comes to writing.*

Researcher: How do you deal with formal task?

Nancy: *When they are writing a formal task and are taking a longer time to finish it. Sometimes I extend the time; sometimes I don't have a choice but to take the books while they are writing. That how it is mos with the common papers, there is a time that is stipulated and they have to write within that period of time.[mhhhh] Another important thing I almost forgot is that some of them also have a problem with what is called cell-phone language. Learners write letters instead of words. I don't know now if they have cellphones or they see it at home from their siblings. For example instead of the word you, the learner will write letter u, be, will write b, etc.*

Question: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Nancy: *I think first and for most it's for teachers to understand the kind of children they are dealing with. Then they will be able to teach them according to their needs (pause). Another important thing is to engage them in reading activities. (Mmmmhh) Another thing that I do when I'm teaching English is this, when we are reading a story and we come across with difficult or*

unfamiliar words I explain that word in a simple, straightforward word that we use every day. I do not like to code-switch, rather I look for a word that can explain that difficult word in a simple way so as to develop their language. Lastly, I think it is also equally important to have the goal of getting your children to participate in classroom discussions.

Question: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Nancy: *I think to encourage and promote quality writing in English it's so important to not only develop their language skills, but also developing their critical abilities, the critical thinking. Because the process of speaking publicly, with a group, engaging with one another's comments forces them to think and to speak in ways that they wouldn't if it was a more writing-focused only class. So to me I think once they master this, quality writing will develop. Another important thing that I do is to seat the learner where she or he can see and hear all classroom activities or near their peers that will provide support and language models. This does not end there, when they write a descriptive task I like to use a process approach.*

Researcher: *Can you please dwell more and explain what do you mean when you say, you use a process approach.*

Nancy: *Okay, well. Process approach involves steps of writing process.*

Researcher: *May you please explain in details*

Nancy: *That is pre-writing, drafting, revision, editing and presenting.*

Question: What kind of English errors do learners commit?

Nancy: *They are so many like reversals of consonants, omitting vowels and last but not least they write words as they hear or sound.*

Question: What is your view about code- switching during the English lesson?

Nancy: *I do not like to code-switch as I have said earlier on that I like to use rather simple concepts to explain the difficult part that is not understood by learners. To me I like learners to understand the language and not to use their home language when they are stuck. I think rather let them use their Afrikaans-English dictionary if they got stuck so that they may develop in the language.*

Learner interviews – 1

Question: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Learner: *I like to learn English because I understand it.*

The researcher: What makes you understand it?

Learner: *Teacher Dave teaches us to read instructions and I understand it easily. I become happy because there are things that I know and when I read English I find words that are difficult but teacher explains.*

Question: What are some of the difficulties that you face when you are writing?

Learner: *It is when I don't understand the topic.*

Question: What are your experiences with writing?

Learner: *I sometimes forgot how to write a word or I forgot the meaning of the word. I sometimes mix words when I write. Maybe there is something that is disturbing me from home. Because I don't know English that is why I have mistakes.*

Question: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Learner: *If he can write words on the chalkboard. We look at our books when we don't know the word. Teacher writes the meaning in Afrikaans and we write them in our books.*

Question: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Learner: *The teacher can write the words we read and if we know and the teacher can add more. Or (uummm) the teacher gives us words in Afrikaans change in English. If we don't know the meaning of the word, the teacher must ask in Afrikaans the word and then in English. Or the teacher can write the words on chalkboard for us to practise them every day.*

Question: What kind of English errors do you commit?

Learner: *When I do not know words I write them wrong*

Researcher: Can you give me example?

Learner: *Ja, soos,[yes like] beautiful or laugh*

Researcher: How do you spell them?

Learner: *I mix the words or start with the wrong one*

Researcher: Do you mean the vowels or the consonants?

Learner: *Nee, die [no the] vowels*

Question: What is your view about code- switching during the English lesson?

Learner: *It does not happen I focus in the English, I think of words in Afrikaans I write it down, I take a dictionary if I do not know the word I ask teacher because I don't know the word in English, I write Afrikaans in Afrikaans.*

Learner interview – 2

Question: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Learner: *English is confusing me maar [but] our teacher hulp [helps]. I become confused and I think in Afrikaans and I think English. But I do not finish because ek verstaan nie [I do not know].*

Question: What are some of the difficulties that you face when you are writing?

Learner: *Ja [yes] when I don't know what I write I am not interested.*

Question: What are your experiences with writing?

Learner: *When I first learn the word or I hear it I don't know how to write. When I am not listening to the teacher or I write wrong answer. Maybe I did not hear the teacher or maybe she is quick to do other work.*

Question: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Learner: *If the teacher can write difficult words and we write those words at the back of our books.*

Question: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Learner: *Teacher must write the list of words in the paper and give the us to practise the words.*

Question: What kind of English errors do you commit?

Learner: *There are so many errors I make like when I do not know how to write a word I just write what I think. And when I do not know that word I will write it wrong.*

Question: What is your view about code- switching during the English lesson?

Learner: *When I want to write a word in English if I don't know I write in Afrikaans and leave it like that. When we read there are words that I don't understand clearly, I decide to write them in Afrikaans.*

Learner interview – 3

Question: What are your experiences with teaching writing in EFAL?

Learner: *Sometimes I become bored because I learn something confusing. My teacher explains but I don't understand. I end up not finishing writing. When I arrive at home I try to finish up and expect the teacher to do the corrections, but she does not always do the corrections. [Ngamanye amaxesha ikhe indibhore ndidibane nento exakayo. Umiss andicacisele ndingamva tu. Ngoku ndiphela ndingagqibi ukubhala. Ndifike nasekhaya ndizame ukuyenza ndilindele umiss enze corrections qha yena asuke angazenzi ngamanye amxesha].*

Question: What are some of the difficulties that you face when you are writing?

Learner: *isiXhosa is disturbing because when I don't know a word I write it in isiXhosa [IsiXhosa siyandiphazamisa kuba igama xa ndingalazi ndiye ndilibhale ngesiXhosa].*

Question: What are your experiences with writing?

Learner: *When I am unable to read English words and when I don't know their meaning I just guess. I sometimes write what I think but what I think is wrong I just write what I guess with my mind though I know it's wrong but I write. [Xa ndingakwazi ukuwafunda amagama e English naxa ungawazi ukuba athini na ndiveske ndithekelele nje. Ndibhale nje lento ndiyicingayo kodwa lento ndiyicingayo irongo. Ndibhale nje lento ndiyithekelelayo ngengqondo kodwa ndiyayazi ukuba irongo qha ndiyabhala].*

Question: What do you think could be done to improve teaching and learning of writing skills in EFAL?

Learner: *When we read isiXhosa it would be better if our teacher explains it in English then we will know and we will continue to read on our own. I think*

maybe the teacher can give us words and we take them home and we read them. Then our teacher tests us from those words. [Ukuba umiss angathi xa sifunda isiXhosa asicacisele nange English thina sizoyazi sikwazi ke ngoku ukuzifundela siqhubekeke nayo. Mna ndicinga mhlawumbi umiss asinike amagama sigoduke nawo siwafunde umiss asibizele siwabhale].

Question: What teaching methods are used to encourage and promote quality writing in EFAL?

Learner: *Angabhala amagama we English then thina siwakhuphele. Xa lisixakile igama thina silijonge ngasemva silikhumbule. Miss makabanike dictionaries. [Umiss makabacacisele ngesiXhosa]. [She can write English words then we copy them. If we are stuck we can refer at the back to remind ourselves. I think the teacher must give the learners dictionaries. The teacher must translate the words in isiXhosa]*

Question: What kind of English errors do you commit?

Learner: *I struggle to write words as a result I make many mistakes because I cannot spell. I end up being marked wrong because I just write words the way I think and then I become wrong. [Mna ndiyasokola ukubhala amagama ndenze imistakes ezininzi kuba I cannot spell. Ngoku ndiba rongo into ezininzi, kuba mna ndiveske ndiwabhale nje amanye amagama ngoluhlobo ndiwacingayo, ndibe rongo ke ngoku].*

Question: What is your view about code- switching during the English lesson?

Learner: *I want to translate but I am unable, then I write it in isiXhosa, I put it in brackets so that the teacher may translate it for me to know the word. [Ndiye ndifune ukuyiguqula qha ndingakwazi, ngoku ndiye ndiqale ndiyibale ngesiXhosa ndiyifake kwi brackets ukwenzela ba no miss andiguqulele nditsho ndilazi elagama].*

APPENDIX D: Classroom observation

Classroom Observation Schedule

Date School.....
 Teacher Class.....
 Topic..... Time.....

Number of learners	
Resources	
Factors to be observed	Comments
Learners' prior knowledge was considered during the lesson presentation	
Learning goals were shared with learners.	
A variety of verbal questions were used by the teacher and learners to stimulate classroom interaction.	
Teacher's perceptions in writing of learners	
Feedback was given in a constructive manner to promote learning.	
Strategies used by the teacher in developing writing	
Learners perception of EFAL	
Communication language used in classroom	
General Comments:	

APPENDIX E: Sample of learners' work

Learners did not understand how to make the link between mind map and topic

Mphahlele Primary School -
P.O Box 945
East London
5200.
Mphahlele village 5.
12 March 2015

Take this out

Dear Anamile Do not underline

I hope you have a good time in holiday
I know that you miss me when you could
me I was at my grand father's house to
see what the earth like Christmas holiday
and they didn't want me to go to
your place My father stop me and say
I must not go to your place because it
is to late for me to go he say he will
do anything that I want and last for ever
new pair of school shoes and he didn't buy
them I get money and I give
you to my mother and My aunt say
to my mother I must stop because he must
to buy school shoes for me look and
not have them.

No paragraphing

Your friend friend

John

~~John~~
~~13/3/15~~

~~John~~
~~12~~

~~12/3/2015~~

13 March 2015

Muna Lwazi ~~bed~~ public Primary,
Village 5 (Mphintso Kidd Beach)
P.O. Box 954 Mphintso Address,
Date: 13 March 2015

Dear Lulibo, ~~and~~ ^{out} underline.

I am afraid who you ^{untidy} breathe and I am also ^{breathing} breathe.
I call you my friend Lulibo.

You remember that day ^{untidy} we are ^{cry} cry because your father
^{beat} beat us because we are ^{jumping} jumping in her bed - her
bed ^{untidy} ~~going~~ and her bed to be ^{dirty} dirty.

Before your father ^{beat} beat me and you my sister
tell you that ^{untidy} ~~untidy~~ Lulibo and Thuli ^{beat} jumping in your
bed and then your father ^{beat} beat us.

Me and you we do not ^{untidy} ^{jumping} jump in your dad's
bed ^{again} again.

Thank you if you read this letter.

From Your friend [redacted]

To: Lulibo. ^{take this out}

2
30 13/03/15

13 March 2015

Muna Lwazi ~~Public~~ Primary,
Village 5 (Mphintso Kidd Beach)
P.O. Box 954 Mphintso Address.
~~Date~~ 13 March 2015

Dear Lulibo, ~~write~~ ^{out} underline.

I am afraid who you ^{untidy} breathe and I am also ^{breathing} breathe.
I ^{beat} miss you Lulibo.

You remember that day ^{untidy} we are ^{cry} cry because your father ^{beat} bite us because we are ^{beat} jumping in her bed - her bed ^{untidy} messy and her bed to be ^{beat} dirty.

Before your father ^{beat} bite me and you my sister tell you that ^{untidy} challenge Lulibo and Thuli ^{beat} jumping in your bed and then your father ^{beat} bite us.

Me and you we do not ^{untidy} jump ^{jumping} in your dad's bed ^{again} again.

Thank you if you read this letter.

From Your friend [redacted]

To: Lulibo. ^{take this out}

2
30 13/03/15



Cover page

Dear: Hlonla.

13 March 2015

Writing

Mfundwazi Primary
P.O. Box 2600
East London
5219.

13 March 2015

→ Skip one line

Dear: Hlonla.

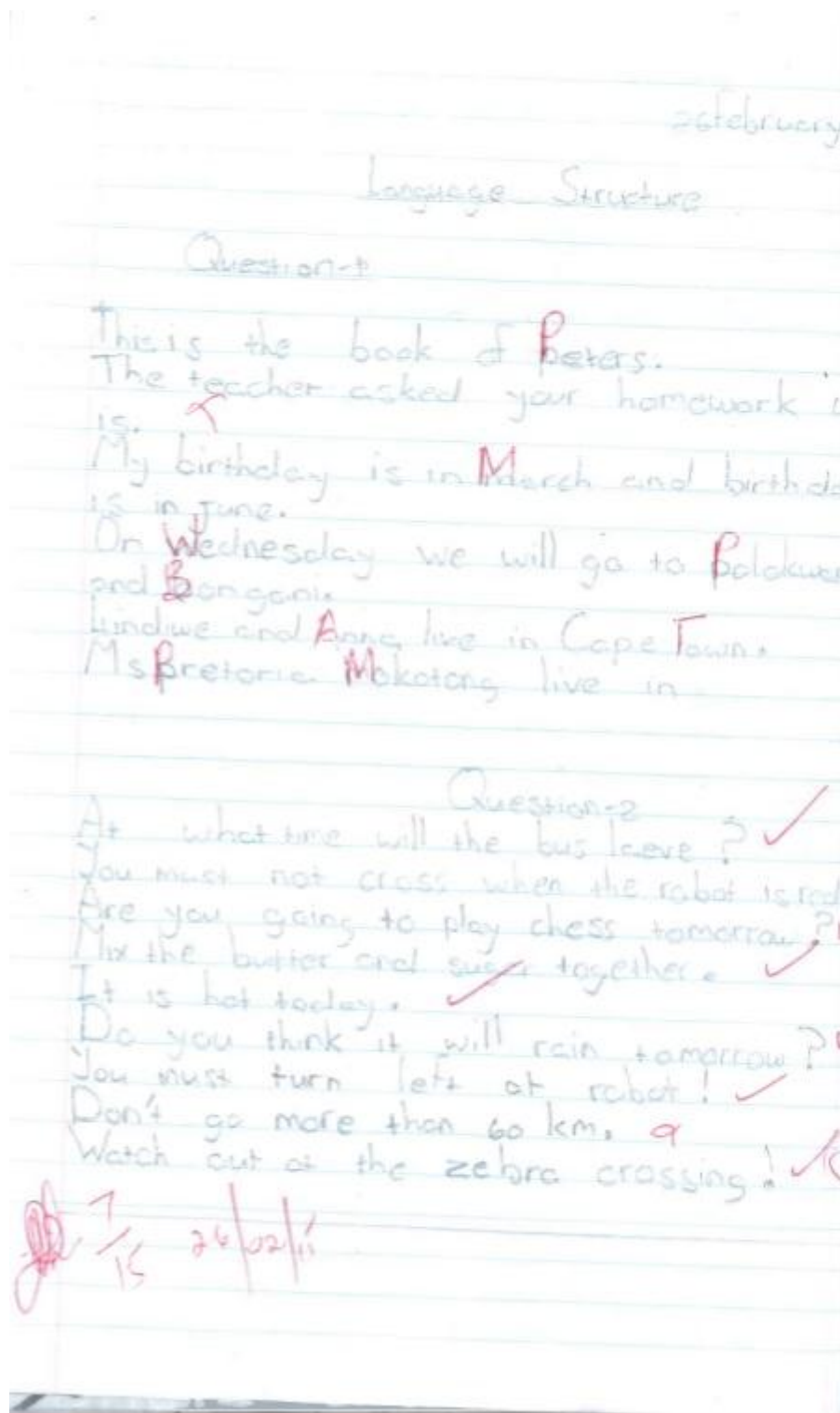
My friend and I was playing
with my brother a soccer
and I lost. He ~~scored~~ ^{goals} one
goal the match was knee
out. When and when I
go to school he will give
me R5. I will play with my
friends Abegathi and Luthando, Lommes
lethu, Amzobe. I ~~do~~ ^{use} a method ^{method} is
Ma maths ends at 13:00 am I will go
home and ask for food
and eat and we play again

No paragraphs

Your friend: ~~Abegathi~~

12/30 13/05/14

APPENDIX F: Sample of learners' work



Dear: Hlonla.

13 March 2015

Writing

Mfundwazi Primary
P.O. Box 2600
East London
5219.

13 March 2015

→ Skip one line

Dear: Hlonla.

My friend and I was playing
with my brother a soccer
and I lost. He goals one
goal the match was knee
knock out. When and when I
go to school he will give
me R5. I will play with my
friends Abegathi and Luthando, Lommes
lethu, Amzobe. A 80idoch method is
Ma maths ends at 13:00 am I will go
home and ask for food
and eat and we play again

No paragraphs

Your friend: ~~Abegathi~~

12/30 13/05/14

Ethical Clearance Certificate



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE REC-270710-028-RA Level 01

Certificate Reference Number: ABO041SMPI01

Project title: **A comparative perspective of teachers and learners' experience of Grade 6 learners' writing in English First Additional Language.**

Nature of Project: PhD

Principal Researcher: Thandiswa Mpiti

Supervisor: Dr JA Abongdia
Co-supervisor:

On behalf of the University of Fort Hare's Research Ethics Committee (UREC) I hereby give ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project and research instrument(s). Should any other instruments be used, these require separate authorization. The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this certificate, using the reference number indicated above.

Please note that the UREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the document
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UREC in the prescribed format, where applicable, annually, and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

Special conditions: Research that includes children as per the official regulations of the act must take the following into account:

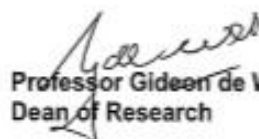
Note: The UREC is aware of the provisions of s71 of the National Health Act 61 of 2003 and that matters pertaining to obtaining the Minister's consent are under discussion and remain unresolved. Nonetheless, as was decided at a meeting between the National Health Research Ethics Committee and stakeholders on 6 June 2013, university ethics committees may continue to grant ethical clearance for research involving children without the Minister's consent, provided that the prescripts of the previous rules have been met. This certificate is granted in terms of this agreement.

The UREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance Certificate if
 - Any unethical principal or practices are revealed or suspected
 - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
 - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
 - The conditions contained in the Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
- In addition to the need to comply with the highest level of ethical conduct principle investigators must report back annually as an evaluation and monitoring mechanism on the progress being made by the research. Such a report must be sent to the Dean of Research's office

The Ethics Committee wished you well in your research.

Yours sincerely


Professor Gideon de Wet
Dean of Research

14 April 2015

PARKSIDE
PRIMERE SKOOL



PARKSIDE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

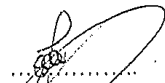
Windyridgeweg, Parkside, Oos-Londen, 5209, Tel:043-7224303/Faks:043-7227718
Windyridge Road, Parkside, East London, 5209, Tel:043-7224303/Faks:043-7227718

On behalf of the SGB, SMT and the staff of Ncerha Primary School, I am writing to formally indicate our awareness of the research proposed by Ms. T. Mpiti, a student at University of Fort Hare. We are aware that Ms. Mpiti intends to conduct her research by interviewing Grade 6 teacher and 12 learners, by observing teaching and learning process in Grade 6 classroom as well as by looking at the learners' books.

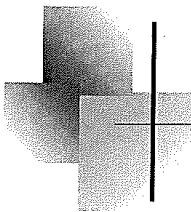
I give Ms. Mpiti permission to conduct her research in our school. If you have any queries or concerns, please feel free to contact my office at

Sincerely

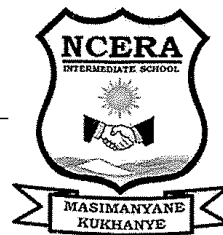
Yours faithfully



.....
B. FRITZ
PRINCIPAL



NCERA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL



Dear Madam

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I give Thandiswa Mpiti permission to conduct the research titled 'A comparative perspective of teachers' and learners' experiences of Grade 6 learners' writing in English First Additional Language' at Parkside Primary School. I have spoken with Ms Mpiti and understand the scope of her research and how she will collect and present her data. All information to be gathered will be done in a confidential and appropriate manner.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me

Sincerely

NCERA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL P.O. Box 1151 EAST LONDON 5200 2014-08-04 PRINCIPAL <i>N. Dingo</i> TEL: 061 324 9265

University of the Western Cape
Cape Town, South Africa
November 19th, 2015.

CONFIRMATION OF EDITING

This is to confirm that I Dr. Dinis Da Costa edited for language use, the thesis entitled **Teachers' and learners' experiences of learners' writing in English first additional language: a case of isiXhosa and Afrikaans learners** by **Thandiswa Mpiti** student number **200096421**. This editing involved issues such as spelling, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure as well as language usage. I hold a PhD degree in Linguistics from the University of the Western Cape.

Regards

Dr. D. Da Costa

Cell no: 0727774508