TEACHING ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO GRADES 10 AND 11 PROGRESSED LEARNERS TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY

by

NTHABISENG JACINTHA DITSHEGO

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

CURRICULUM STUDIES

at

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: Dr MM MAJA

25 SEPTEMBER 2020

DECLARATION

Name: NTHABISENG JACINTHA DITSHEGO

Student number: 40917800

Degree: MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN CURRICULUM STUDIES

Title of dissertation: **TEACHING ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO GRADES 10 AND 11 PROGRESSED LEARNERS TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY**

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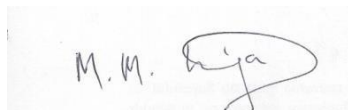
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Through learner progression in South African primary and lower secondary public schools, many learners proceed to the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase without proficiency in English First Additional Language (EFAL), the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Compelled by this challenge, this multiple-case study aimed to explore the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL. The study was informed by a qualitative research approach, embedded in a constructivist paradigm, guided by Vygotsky (1978) social development theory. Observations and one-on-one, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from a sample frame of five grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in selected rural secondary schools and thematic analysis was used for data analysis. Findings revealed that in this era where learner diversity requires differentiated teaching that appeals to the needs of diverse learners, teachers hold on to the past training one-size-fits-all teaching methods. Consequently, teachers experience challenges related to lack of exposure to teach complex grades of able and progressed learners together. Among others, recommendations are made to policy makers that the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for EFAL be aligned with the needs of diverse learners. The EFAL teachers should also engage in a culture of reading and lifelong learning to empower themselves professionally in order to overcome challenges in the inclusive teaching of able and progressed learners who have barriers to learning the language.

TEMANA

Ka leano la ho fetisa baithuti leha ba sa atleha likolong tsa mathomo, le tse maharing Africa Boroa, baithuti ba bangata ba fetela mokhahlelong oa thuto e phahameng ntle le bokhoni ba puo ea mantlha ea Senyesemane, puo ea ho ithuta le ho ruta. Ka ho susumetsoa ke qholotso ena, lipatlisiso tsena li entsoe ho hlahloba boiphihlelo ba mesuoe ea sehlopha sa leshome le leshome le motso o mong, ho ntlafatsa tsebo ea ho ruta ka Senyesemane. Boithuto bona bo ile ba etsoa ka lipatlisiso tsa boleng tse kenelletsang tataiso le khopolo ea ntšetso-pele ea sechaba ea Vygotsky (1978). Litebello le puisano tse hlophisitsoeng le mosuoe kapa mosuoetsana ka mong, li sebelisitsoe ho bokella lintlha ka ho qotsa le ho batlisisa ho mesuoe e mehlano ea puo ea mantlha likolong eleng Senyesemane. Ho khethiloe lihlopha tse boharing le hlahlobo ea mantlha e sebelisitsoe ho shebisisa liphuputso. Se senotsoeng ke liphuputso tsena ke hore nakong eona ena eo barutoana ba hlokang thuto e ikhethang, e ipapisitseng le litlhoko tsa boiphihlelo ba bona, mesuoe e bonahala e tsitlalletse mokhoeng oa khale oa ho ruta, o nkang joalokaha eka barutuoa bohle bana le boinahano le boiphihlelo bo tšoanang. Ka lebaka leo, mesuoe e tobana le bothata ba ho ruta ka boiphihlelo baithuti ba atlehileng le ba fetisitsoeng ha ba kopa-kopane ka litsebo tse arohaneng. Mehato e nkiloeng ka boithuto bona e kenyeletsa ho eletsa baetsi ba manene-thuto hore Tokomane ea Leano la Lenane-thuto ea puo ea Senyesemane ea pele e lokele ho arabela litlhoko tsa baithuti ka bokhoni ba bona bo fapaneng, 'me mesuoe e lokela ho ikoetlisa ho-ea-ho-ile e le ho ichorisa le ho itlhahlella thutong ea senyesemane e kenyelelitseng baithuti bohle le ba fetisitsoeng ba e-na le bothata ba puo ena.

ISICATSHULWA

Ngokuqhubela phambili kwabafundi kwzikolo zikarhulumente eziziiprayimari nezizezantsi ezikarhurumente, abafundi abaninzi baya kwinqanaba leMfundo ePhakamileyo noQeqesho ngaphandle kobuchule besiNgesi uLwimi lokuQala oLongezelelweyo, ulwimi lokufunda nokufundisa. Benyanzelwe ngulo mngeni, esi sifundo sinamacala amaninzi sijilise ekuhloleni amava aphilayo ootitshala beBanga le-10 nele-11 ekufundiseni abaqhubela phambili abafundi ukomeleza ubuchule bonxibelelwano kulwimi olongezelelweyo lesiNgesi. Olu phononongo lwalwaziswe ngendlela yophando olusemgangathweni, olungeniswe kwiparadise yabafundi, ekhokelwa yithiyori yophuhliso lwentlalo yaseVygotsky. Ukuqwalaselwa, udliwanondlebe olwenziwe ngamnye ngamnye eyakhelweyo, nohlalutyo lwamaxwebhu kwasetyenziswa ukuqokelela idatha kwisakhelo sesampula yootitshala abaLwimi abahlanu abakwiBanga leShumi elinanye ku-11 kwizikolo eziziisekondari ezikhethiweyo, kwaye nohlalutyo lobugcisa lwalusetyenziselwa ukuhlalutya idatha. Iziphumo zophando zibonisa ukuba ngeli xesha apho ukwahluka kwabafundi kufuna ukufundiswa okwahlukileyo okubonakalisa iimfuno zabafundi abahlukeneyo, ootitshala babambelela kuqeqesho lwangaphambili ngokweendlela zokufundiisa. Ngenxa yoko, ootitshala bafumana imiceli mingeni enxulumene nokungafikeli ekufundiseni amabanga anobunzima abafundi abakwaziyo nokuqhubela phambili kunye. Phakathi kokunye, izindululo zenziwa kubaqulunqi bomgaqo-nkqubo zokuba iNkcazo yoMgago-nkqubo woVavanyo lweKharityhulamu yolwimi lwesiNgesi oLongezelelweyo mayihambelane neemfuno zabafundi abahlukeneyo, kwaye ootitshala kufuneka bazixhobise kangangoko ukufunda ukuze bazixhobisele ukukwazi ukufundisa abantwana ngokwale mfundo iqukayo.

KEY TERMS: English First Additional Language; Progressed learners; Communication proficiency; Further Education and Training phase; Grades 10 and 11; Teachers' experiences; Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement; National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements; Teaching strategies; Differentiated teaching

ACRONYMNS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACTFL	American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EC	Eastern Cape
ECDoE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
EFAL	English First Additional Language
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
FAL	First Additional Language
FET	Further Education and Training
FP	Foundation Phase
GET	General Education and Training
HOD	Head of the Department
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NCSSFL	National Council for State Supervisors for Languages
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NPPPPR	National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SBA	School Based Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDT	Social Development Theory
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNISA   University of South Africa

USA   United States of America

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEACHING ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO GRADES 10 AND 11 PROGRESSED LEARNERS TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY

CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK OF PROGRESSED LEARNING

<div align="center">

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

</div>

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, countries of the world have worked collaboratively to ensure the provision of equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all its global citizens. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has recognised education as a vital contributory condition of reducing social inequality and generating the opportunities for just, inclusive and sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2015:2). The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) Education 2030 highlights the value of equitable education in stating that education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right (UNESCO, 2017:8). Therefore, to fulfil this right, countries must ensure that amongst other targets, all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, develop the skill of literacy. In the process of ensuring that all global citizens have access to quality education, identifying and supporting learners with learning difficulties is a task being given major attention worldwide. The phenomenon of 'learner progression' is referred to as social promotion in places like the United States of America (USA) and it was used not only as a strategy to reduce social inequality but also to retain in the education systems, learners with barriers to learning (Greene & Winters, 2004:2). The reason is that these learners may ultimately access higher education standards suitable to improve lives in local communities and contribute to sustainable development of the global world.

As an English First Additional Language (EFAL) teacher teaching Further Education and Training (FET) (Grades 10-12), the researcher has had progressed learners in her classes who have had no proficiency in EFAL, which is the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Although the ability to read influences the ability to write, the focus of this study is on oral communication proficiency. The researcher became interested in this field of study as one among thousands worldwide who wish to maintain the value of schooling by investigating effective ways to provide underperforming learners with the appropriate EFAL basic skills. Kim (2016:40) indicates that literacy in EFAL is considered as an essential tool for academic and career advancement. Some of the

progressed learners came into the FET Phase lacking foundational literacy skills, which according to Spaull (2015:35), should be laid in the Foundation Phase (FP) (Grades 1-3). If learners have no grasp of the principles of reading and writing at the end of FP, it is challenging to make up this cumulative deficit in later years (Spaull, 2015:35).

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In the South African context, categorisation of schools is based on the socio-economic status of a school and measures of average income, unemployment rates and general literacy levels in the school's geographical area. Low quintile schools are Quintiles 1 to 3, and comprise non-fee-paying schools that receive more funding per learner from the government than Quintiles 4 and 5, which are fee-paying schools with the assumption that parents can afford to pay school fees, and thus require less governmental support (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019:106). To mention only a few, challenges of low quintile schools are issues of overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages and low literacy in the LoLT. The study by Stott, Dreyer and Venter (2015) found that the presence of large numbers of unmotivated, ill-disciplined and ill-prepared progressed learners places an immense emotional burden and increased workload on teachers who are working in the already difficult low quintile South African schools. Whereas, Spaull (2015) found that the vast majority of schools that serve black learners are unable to impart the necessary numeracy and literacy skills to learners. Spaull (2015) further reveals that by the end of Grade 4, many black learners who participated in cross-national assessments of educational achievement could not read fluently in the LoLT, therefore, these learners fall further and further behind as they are promoted to the next grade in spite of severe learning backlogs.

In order to uphold the South African constitution founded on relatively similar worldwide values of human dignity, South Africa established an inclusive education and training system through the promulgation of White Paper 6. According to the Department of Education (DoE) (2001:11), the training system creates educational opportunities, in particular for those learners who experience or have experienced barriers to learning and development or who have dropped out of learning. The training system offers learners an opportunity to achieve an exit qualification such as the National Senior Certificate (NSC) (DoE, 2001; Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2015). The White

Paper 6 explains learner progression or what is commonly referred to as phase progression legislation in the South African education context.

The White Paper 6's transformation initiatives of the education system in the post-apartheid era has led to the revision of educational policies relating to schools and colleges to provide a basis for overcoming the causes and effects of barriers to learning (DoE, 2001:27). The revision of educational policies gave rise to the current admission policy, the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (ELRC, 2003a) and is currently read in conjunction with the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (DBE, 2011b), as well as the Guideline for the Implementation of Promotion and Progression Requirements for Grades 10-12 (DBE, 2015). These policies consider age grade norms and have abolished multiple retention in a phase. However, learner progression with age cohort can be problematic as academically weak learners may progress with cumulative curriculum backlogs.

Although improvements in the education system are made annually, there are still contextual factors that affect education negatively in the rural provinces of the country like the Eastern Cape (EC). These factors are, but not limited to, dealing with learner transport, school nutrition as well as insufficient supply of teachers (Msila, 2014:262). Learner progression is also considered a problem as evidenced in the annual National Senior Certificate (NSC) (matric) results. Reports reveal that as compared to other provinces, performance of learners in the EC province is the poorest specifically learners rarely use English as a means of communication. Francis, Abongdia and Mpiti (2015:91) assert that learners and teachers' challenge is the limited exposure to English. Therefore, some learners prefer to use their home languages during EFAL oral activities which means that they cannot express themselves in English.

The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) provincial analysis of 2016 NSC results illustrated that of the nine South African provinces, the EC province was ranked in the lowest position in consecutive years, specifically in 2015 and 2016 (ECDoE, 2017:9). The analysis of performance in matric subjects indicates that EFAL put EC in position eight with 96% out of the nine provinces (ECDoE, 2017:38). The analysis also

showed that out of 9163 progressed learners in the province who wrote 2016 matric examinations, only 2513 (27.4%) progressed learners passed (ECDoE, 2017:9). Therefore, failure of 6650 (72.6%) progressed learners should challenge teachers to identify the challenges and through research, find ways to ameliorate the situation.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Reflecting on the exhaustive nature of research by full dissertation especially for beginners, one would not want to believe that student-researchers do it for enjoyment. The researcher believes that every researcher begins the research journey due to a challenge, a social problem encountered or observed, then has a purpose to gain knowledge in order to develop and capacitate oneself professionally and be able to provide recommendations for the identified problem.

Research systematically describes or measures phenomena, and it is a better source of knowledge than one's own experiences, beliefs, traditions, or intuition alone (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:5). Cited by Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2012:3), Crigger, Holcomb and Weiss (2001) affirm that changes come through knowledge and knowledge, as a science, is based on sound research. Thus, in this study the researcher engaged in empirical inquiry which means being guided by evidence (data) obtained from systematic research methods rather than by opinions or authorities (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:10). The potential value of this study is to generate knowledge that suggests change to the research problem and may offer feasible strategies to enhance communication proficiency and to teach EFAL effectively even to progressed learners who have the language as a barrier to learning.

Contribution of this study is in its particular focus on the phenomenon of progressed learners in the South African education context. The challenge of teaching EFAL to progressed learners in Grades 10 and 11 has been given less attention, therefore, insights from this study could contribute to the body of knowledge on the impact of the phase progression policy. Findings in this study could inform education stakeholders about the current situation with regard to progressed learners and influence review and debates on relevant policies.

1.4   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to uphold the best interest of the learner and to minimise unnecessary school dropout in the schooling system so that every learner has the opportunity to achieve an exit qualification such as the NSC (DBE, 2015:2), the South African education system endorsed learner progression or phase progression legislature in the FET phase in 2013. The policy has been largely applied to GET phase (Grade R-Grade 9) since it was gazetted in 1998 (Kika & Kotze, 2017; Stott *et al.*, 2015). However, learner progression with age cohort, irrespective of academic performance, is becoming a hindrance to learning and teaching in South African public schools situated in rural areas. In some schools, progressed learners cannot verbally communicate, read or write in EFAL, the LoLT in Grades 10 and 11. Recent studies conducted in the South African contexts of rural and township schools by Mukhathi (2017; Letshwene, 2019) demonstrate that phase progression with less regard for learners' academic performance is problematic. Mukhathi, (2017:135) attests that socially promoted learners struggle in class because they do not have the necessary basic reading skills as compared to learners who have been promoted having mastered concepts in the previous grade. Letshwene (2019) shows that progressing learners for psychosocial reasons has a negative impact on learning and teaching as learners do not have requisite literacy skills and have not mastered reading, writing and listening skills required for Grade 12.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is:

What are the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

1.5.1   Research sub-questions

In order to answer the main research questions, the following sub-questions have been formulated:

- What are the grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers' understanding of progressed learners?
- What are the challenges experienced by EFAL teachers when teaching progressed learners?
- What strategies do grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers use when teaching the progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

1.5.2 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this case study was to explore the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency.

1.5.3 The objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- explore grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers' understanding of progressed learners;
- investigate the challenges experienced by EFAL teachers when teaching progressed learners;
- Analyse the strategies grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers use when teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Van Den Aardweg and Van Den Aardweg (1993:239) define a theory as a mental view formulated to explain a behaviour or learning. The authors assert that a theory attempts to create some order and pattern of the phenomenon under study. Hence, a theoretical framework refers to a theory or theories that guide the researcher to decide on the suitable research topic, research question, literature for review, methods to use in data collection, analysis and interpretation (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:2).

This study uses the Social Development Theory (SDT) developed by Vygotsky (1978). The SDT argues that social interaction precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end product of socialisation and social behaviour (Vygotsky, 1978:57). SDT consists of three major themes: the social interaction, more knowledgeable others, and the zone of proximal development. Social interaction and the zone of proximal development are employed as guiding principles in this study.

1.6.1   Social interaction

Social interaction refers to shared actions between individuals in the same context which could be through use of language, a cultural tool used in communication. Vygotsky (1978) shows that social interactions play a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. Palincsar (1998) affirms that social interactions are not only simple influences on cognitive development but also create our cognitive structures and thinking processes (Woolfolk, 2014:55). In other words, as a social being, a learner's thinking and behaviour are influenced by activities with others. To emphasise, every function in the child's social development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level (Vygotsky, 1978:57). Therefore, during data collection, the researcher planned to observe how knowledge and support to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL is offered and how much time during teaching and learning is given to learners to practise the language in socially-shared contexts such as the classrooms.

1.6.2   The Zone of Proximal Development

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to the distance between a learner's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the learner's ability to solve the problem independently. Simply, the ZPD is the gap between what an individual can do alone and unaided, and what can be achieved with the help of more knowledgeable others (Criticos, Long, Moletsane & Mthiyane 2002:127). According to Vygotsky, learning occurs in this zone. In this study, the researcher plans to observe whether the participants considered the ZPD concept during lessons. Particularly, observation will be done on how the participants check the level of learners'

pre-existing knowledge and on strategies used to take progressed learners from the known in EFAL to the unknown through scaffolding – support for learning and problem solving (Woolfolk, 2014:62) in order to help them learn the language effectively.

Vygotsky's regard for social interaction in learning, the need for learners to master a language used for communication in the process of learning and its regard for teaching in the ZPD were considered suitable to guide this study.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the way in which the research phenomenon is studied (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:51). It suggests systematic techniques used in collecting and analysing data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:9). For a researcher, a methodology includes asking oneself whether the research question leads to collecting data through numbers (quantitatively), in words (qualitatively) or by combining the two common methodologies (mixed methodologies). In order to meet the purpose of this study (*cf.* section 1.5.2) that depicts a social phenomenon of teaching EFAL to progressed learners, the researcher follows a qualitative methodology which is typical for exploring, describing, identifying and explaining a social problem (Wagner et al., 2012:10).

The following sub-sections introduce crucial elements employed in this qualitative methodology: the research design, paradigm, approach and the research type.

1.7.1 Research design

As an element in methodology, a research design is a particular plan of action for collecting and analysing data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:22). Similarly, Wagner *et al.* (2012:21) indicate that a research design describes and summarises the procedures for conducting the study including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained as well as what methods of data collection and data analysis are used. Out of the five interactive qualitative designs - ethnography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory and critical studies discussed by McMillan and Schumacher (2006:26-27), the researcher employed a case study as it served the purpose of this

study. It allowed the researcher to interact with EFAL teachers in selected rural schools in order to explore their experiences with regard to teaching progressed learners. In a case study, there is a natural socio-cultural boundary and face-to-face interaction encompassing participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:317).

1.7.1.1 The research paradigm

As much as every researcher has his/her own way of thinking and deciding what constitutes the truth and knowledge of the world, in a research process the researcher's territory of thinking must relate to or find location in pre-existing, established academically approved theories or philosophies – paradigms. Cited by Wagner *et al.* (2012:51), Schwandt (2001) describes a paradigm as a shared world view that represents the beliefs and values in a discipline and guides how research is conducted and problems are solved. A paradigm guides our thinking and our assumptions about society and ourselves, and these views frame how we view the world around us (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:51).

This study is grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which is also referred to as an interpretive paradigm. Wagner *et al.* (2012:51) state that a paradigm is informed by philosophical underpinnings such as *ontology, epistemology* and *axiology* (ethics and value systems). Constructivists therefore believe that *ontology* (nature of reality) and *epistemology* (ways of knowing) are socially constructed (Thomas, 2010:295). That is, individuals and groups derive or ascribe meanings to specific events, persons, processes and objects; people form constructions to make sense of their world and reorganise these constructions as viewpoints, perceptions and belief systems (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315). This research considered understanding the phenomenon of teaching EFAL to progressed learners through the experiences and perspectives of EFAL Grades 10 and 11 teachers who give instruction to these learners on a daily basis in the social context where teaching and learning occurs.

1.7.1.2 The research approach

In consideration of the social aspects portrayed in the research topic, and also

considering the questions that this study seeks to answer, the researcher deemed it appropriate to engaged in a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315). Concurrently, the characteristic of collecting data from the natural setting in qualitative research means that researchers collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study (Creswell, 2015:185). Wagner *et al.* (2012:126) assert that qualitative research assists the researcher in creating a coherent story as it is seen through the eyes of those who are part of the story, to understand and present their experiences and actions as they encounter, engage with, and live through situations. This characteristic of qualitative research approach was appropriate as it depicted the focus of the study which was to visit selected rural schools and explore participants' experiences and understandings, in their school settings of teaching EFAL to progressed learners.

1.7.1.3   The research type

This study used an interactive method, an exploratory multiple-case study because topics that are new or have not been written about extensively are studied by exploratory research (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:8). Similarly, Zainal (2007:4) posits that in multiple-case studies, researchers are free to explore new areas and discover important questions to ask concerning the issue explored. Relevantly, phase or learner progression is a new practice, which was endorsed in the FET phase in 2013.

Baxter and Jack (2008:548) affirm that a multiple-case study design examines several cases to understand the similarities and differences between cases. Generally, case study research is considered a robust method when in-depth investigation and understanding of complex issues is required (Zainal, 2007:1). Suitability of multiple-case study design in this research is based on the characteristic that in essence, case studies explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships (Zainal, 2007:2).

1.7.2   Research methods

Research methods are developed ways for acquiring knowledge by reliable and valid procedures, ways in which one collects and analyses data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:9). The following sub-sections introduce procedures of data collection that were considered in this study.

1.7.2.1   Selection of participants

For this qualitative exploratory multiple-case study, a purposive sampling technique was employed. With purposeful sampling, the researcher relies on his/her own experience, previous research or ingenuity to find the participants (Wagner *et al.* 2012:93) in a manner that samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon under investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). The key idea behind purposeful sampling in qualitative research is to find value in participants' meanings (Creswell, 2014:186). Therefore, the research was conducted in three secondary schools in Mount Fletcher, Eastern Cape. Five teachers were interviewed. Chapter 3 will give details on how the schools as well as the teachers were chosen.

1.7.2.2   Data collection

Multiple sources of data collection such as observations and interviews were used in this research to help explore and explain the complexities of real-life situations (Zainal, 2006:4).

Observations

Observation is a social science method for collecting data about people, processes and cultures (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:150). As Wagner *et al.* (2012:151) further explain, types of observations, for this particular study included an overt observation which is a data collection technique that entails observing where participants are aware of being observed, and the researcher was not, in any way, hiding the fact that observation was

done for research purposes. Again, this type could be considered as direct observation which in principle is done without interacting with objects or people under study in the setting (Wagner *et al*., 2012:151). An observation schedule (Appendix G) with aspects to be observed was prepared. The aim was to explore how the participants addressed oral communication proficiency of progressed learners and also observe how the participant teachers applied the concepts of the ZPD and scaffolding in teaching EFAL. Observations were planned to assist the researcher in collecting primary data from the field and participants, and allow the observer to access and instantly record even unusual and uncomfortable information that could not be easily discussed by participants (Creswell, 2014:191). Field notes were also planned to be taken during the observations.

Interviews

An interview is a two-way conversation and a purposive interaction in which the interviewer asks the participant questions in order to collect data about the ideas, experiences, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant (Wagner *et al*., 2012:133). Although Wagner *et al.* (2012:134-135) distinguish three types of interviews, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted where an interview schedule guides the process (Appendix H) as this was thought to yield significant amounts of information from individual's perspective in contrast to group interviews which would run the risk of not fully capturing all participants' viewpoints (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:39). The other reason for conducting semi-structured interviews was to follow up and corroborate data that would emerge from observations. Face-to-face interviews would be useful even when participants were not observed because they allow the researcher's control over the process and therefore, even historical information can be probed (Creswell, 2014:191). In this endeavour, interviews were planned to take place in the third school term, being conducted after school hours at a convenient participant's free time in order to obtain quality of data. Approximately 30-45 minutes were planned for each participant interview. The researcher recorded all interviews to ease data transcription and analysis. The researcher created an interview file saved on a laptop with a password only known by the researcher.

1.7.2.3 Data analysis and presentation

Analysing data involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships in order to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data (Mouton, 2015:108). Thematic analysis was used as is considered a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:2). Six steps of data analysis, as outline by Creswell, (2014:197-200), were followed. Step 1 consisted of organising and preparing data for analysis. Step 2 entailed reading all data. Step 3 reviewed the research questions in order to identify themes that were used to code data. Step 4 identified emerging sub- themes and descriptions were given. Step 5 continued the data analysis process in which themes from analysed data were compared in order to reduce the themes or develop categories. Step 6, the final step, was the meanings of themes. Themes were interpreted and conclusions drawn and presented in a narrative report.

1.8 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the results of a study approximate reality and thus are judged to be trustworthy and reasonable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:471). In order to ensure trustworthiness of data in the study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria, that includes credibility (believability), transferability, dependability and conformability, was used.

Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings, establishes whether or not the research findings and interpretation are drawn from original data (Anney, 2014:276). To enhance credibility, the research questions were first piloted at the researcher's work place to ensure that they were understandable, correct and relevant to the research topic. Piloting the research questions at the work place also gave the researcher a chance to be familiar with the questions and make amendments where necessary.

Transferability refers to demonstrating that the findings of the work at hand can be applied to other contexts (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:5749). To enhance transferability,

detailed descriptions of the context of this research as well as dense descriptions of the research sites were given. Dependability refers to the stability of findings over time (Anney, 2014:278). To establish dependability, an audit trail allowed for the examination of the research process and to validate data.

According to Anney (2014:278), confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. Apart from the audit trail, a reflexive journal was provided to enhance confirmability. A reflexive journal refers to personal accounts about how the researcher's role in the study and personal

background, culture and experiences may shape the direction of the study (Creswell, 2014:186). This strategy also helps in identifying biases in data interpretations.

1.9   RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethics is a term that refers to the researcher's responsibility to safeguard the rights and welfare of the research participants (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2006:16). In other words, it refers to a code of conduct to be considered in social research as a researcher deals with people who bear rights. Commencement of this research relied solely on approval of the research proposal by the University of South Africa (UNISA). The researcher familiarised herself with the University of South Africa's Policy for Research Ethics and applied for ethical clearance certificate (Appendix A) from UNISA's College of Education, which granted a protocol sheet to obtain informed consent and signatures from teachers who participated in the research. Permission to use the research sites was requested from the Eastern Cape DoE Provincial office (Appendix B), District office and principals of participating schools through letters. The letters were accompanied by a signed confirmation that the school settings and an agreement that participants would not be identifiable in print of the research report, but that pseudonyms would be used in reference to the schools and participants.

1.10   LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Initially three limitations of this study are considered. The first limitation is based on the

concept of progressed learners which is a new concept in the South African FET education system. As a result, literature on the concept is limited. The second limitation is based on the research methodology. Qualitative research methodology is based on purposive sampling where a small sample size is selected with a view to developing an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised to other settings. Findings based on perspectives of only five EFAL teachers from Mount Fletcher cannot be used to describe what happens in other districts of the EC province or nationally because contexts are unique, and not all stakeholders' perspectives are included in the research. Finally, the exclusion of progressed learners in interviews delimits information that would provide more relevant data. However, future research may expand sampling and include progressed learners.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following concepts are essential to this study and should be understood in the way they are defined below.

Communication refers to sharing, verbally and non-verbally of experiences, happenings, knowledge, opinions and ideas effectively (Van Den Aardweg & Van Den Aardweg, 1993:48) while communication proficiency is the ability expressed in different ways. Through reading one picks up knowledge he/she needs in order to be able to communicate and how to express him/herself. Through talking, writing and listening to good communication, one learns how to structure logical arguments and through talking with one another, one thinks about how people communicate and how ideas link (Criticos *et al.*, 2002:138).

English First Additional Language (EFAL) is a term used in the South African education system to indicate English studied as the first language after a learner's home language. Learners use the first additional language for academic learning across the curriculum (DBE, 2011a:9).

Further Education and Training (FET) phase comprises Grades 10-12 in ordinary public schools in the South African education system. Further Education and Training

refers to all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications from Levels 2 to 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which levels are above the General Education and Training (GET) phase but below higher education (ELRC, 2003b). The table below shows curriculum allocation in grades in the GET and FET bands.

Table 1.1: South African school curriculum allocation in grades

School Phases		Grades
GET Phases	Foundation Phase	R, 1, 2 and 3
	Intermediate Phase	4,5 and 6
	Senior Phase	7, 8 and 9
FET Phase		10, 11 and 12

Grade is that part of an educational programme, which a learner may complete in one school year (ELRC, 2003b).

Grades 10 and 11 comprise the two first school years in the FET phase before the final year of matriculation.

Learner is any person receiving education or obliged to receive education (DBE, 2011b).

Progressed learners are learners who experience the progression legislature that grants an opportunity for advancement with his/her age cohort from one grade to the next, excluding Grade R. In the South African education context, this occurs in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements (DoE, 1998)

Progression is the advancement of a learner from one grade to the next, excluding Grade R, in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements. Progression can be used to prevent a learner from being retained in a phase of a period exceeding four years (DBE, 2011b).

Teacher is an educator or any person, excluding a person who is appointed to exclusively perform extra-curricular duties, but the one who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychology services at a school (ELRC, 2003b).

1.12   CHAPTER OUTLINE

Mouton (2015:122-125) gives guidelines on structuring the research product and this dissertation follows the following structure:

Chapter 1 provides an orientation to the study. It entails an introduction that lays the basis to the research problem, the problem of some phase progressed learners who lack communication proficiency in EFAL the LoLT. The introduction then raises concerns and provides rationale for the researcher's personal involvement and engagement in the study. Chapter 1 also presents the background to the study, introduces the theoretical framework that guides the study and defines key concepts. It also gives a statement of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the study. The research methodology and all it encompasses are introduced in this chapter. Measures of trustworthiness and ethical consideration are discussed. Limitations and delimitations of the study are presented. The chapter ends with closing remarks.

Chapter 2 begins with an introduction that briefly states the purpose of the study, what the chapter is about and then discusses the theoretical and contextual frameworks of progressed learning. The theory that underpins the study and discussed in the chapter is Vygotsky's SDT. In the contextual framework, existence of learner progression in other countries is reviewed. Policies on learner progression, teachers' experiences and perspectives of teaching in the era of learner progression, how progressed learners affect able learners, the concepts of EFAL as the LoLT, communication proficiency and strategies used by language teachers in the teaching of learners to learn EFAL are reviewed. The chapter ends with closing remarks.

Chapter 3 begins with a brief introduction, then offers the rationale for the empirical research. The significance of the results, relevance and value of the study are also

highlighted. A detailed account of the qualitative design and methodology that were followed during field work in preference to quantitative design and methodology is given. The research design which deals with the research paradigm, approach and research type is discussed in detail in this chapter. The research methods that were used in data collection including sampling, data collection instruments, and data analysis are given in detail. The last part of the chapter discusses measures for trustworthiness and ethical considerations as the study involved human participants that have rights. The chapter provides closing remarks.

After the introduction of the chapter, **Chapter 4** presents the findings of the fieldwork, presented thematically with reference to the research questions. The chapter ends with a summary.

The final chapter, **Chapter 5**, discusses the scholarly and current empirical study findings interchangeably. Themes derived from the research questions are used to categorise main findings and conclusions of the discussion. Recommendations are provided with regard to the findings and limitations of the study are highlighted. Gaps that determine avenues for further research are also identified in this chapter. After the concluding statement, the main research conclusion is given. The chapter summarises the whole study and lastly, a list of references and appendices are given.

1.13   CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 1 provided an orientation to the study by presenting the background of the phenomenon of progressed learners that prevail in the South African education system. The rationale that prompted desire to investigate the phenomenon, particularly focusing on progressed learners who are studying EFAL in Grades 10 and 11, in order to generate knowledge and skills to teach EFAL effectively even to learners with education support needs. The theoretical framework that guides this study was introduced and key concepts were defined. The chapter stated the research problem, research questions, the purpose of the research and the objectives. The chapter also introduced the qualitative research methodology and design chosen for this particular study. Measures for trustworthiness of the research findings and research ethics were discussed.

Limitations and delimitations of the study were discussed and the outline of the thesis was given. The next chapter deals in detail with the theoretical and contextual frameworks of progressed learners.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK OF
PROGRESSED LEARNING

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency. To achieve this purpose, this chapter first provided the theoretical framework and subsequently present the contextual framework of progressed learners in which educational policies and practices, relevant to the phenomenon of progressed learners, is reviewed. The fundamental concepts on teaching EFAL to progressed learners are also reviewed.

2.2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research concept of 'theoretical framework' is best understood in this study as a plan that serves to guide, build and support the study, and also provide the structure to define how one philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically, and analytically approaches the dissertation as a whole (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:13). In order to decide on the most appropriate theory to guide the study, the researcher considered a comparative review of teaching and learning theories, in particular Skinner and behaviourism, Piaget and cognitivism and Vygotsky and constructivism. In other words, what rings in the researcher's mind is, which theory is appropriate and what constitutes effective teaching and learning EFAL for underperforming progressed learners?

According to Moll, Gultig, Brandbury and Winkler (2001:9), Skinner's behaviourism theory of learning assumes that learners are passive in learning and their behaviour is shaped by either positive or negative reinforcement of their environment. In other words, effective teaching and learning is determined by learners' ability to demonstrate or apply knowledge. The theory focuses on behavioural change that is due to a stimulus such as environment and positive reinforcement of the learned behaviour and disregards crucial aspects. The theory neither emphasises assisted or scaffolded learning through

social interaction nor the role of mastered language in the process of learning. Therefore, it did not serve the purpose of this research.

Similarities are drawn between Piaget's cognitive theory of learning and Vygotsky's constructivist theory. They both consider that prior knowledge is a vital foundation for building new knowledge, that social interaction plays an important role in learning (although Piaget only considers interaction between peers while Vygotsky emphasises the importance of both peers and knowledgeable others), and that learners need to actively participate in learning (Moll *et al.*, 2001:9-40; Woolfolk, 2014:42-56). In short, much attention was paid in this research to the theory that takes stock of the importance of language in learning. In contrast, Vygotsky placed more emphasis than Piaget on the role of learning and language in cognitive development (Woolfolk, 2014: 58). Therefore, Piaget's theory too was not selected for this research.

Vygotsky's (1978) Social Development Theory (SDT) was selected to guide this research, firstly, for its vital regard for social interaction in learning which is well linked to the need for learners to master a language used for communication in the process of learning. Secondly, the theory was chosen for Vygotsky's regard for the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) – a phase at which a child can master a task if given appropriate help and support (Woolfolk, 2014:59).

2.2.1   Social interaction

Vygotsky's notion of social interaction is rooted in the idea that higher mental functions appear first on the inter-psychological (social) plane and only later on the intra-psychological (individual) plane (Wertsch, 1998:2). That is, every function in a child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and later on the individual level (Woolfolk, 2014: 55). Wertsch (1998:3) and Woolfolk (2014:58) concur that while the role of mastered language is important in easing communication, utterances or mutterings and gestures, not necessarily the linguistics, in social interaction play an important role in cognitive development. This is because they move children in stages toward self-regulation, the ability to plan, monitor and guide their own thinking and problem solving. In this study, social interaction suggests that a social context where

progressed learners actively interact with the more conversant (able) learners, is necessary. At times, teachers' explanations of concepts may be of a higher standard for learners, whereas in co-operation with other knowledgeable learners, using the level of the language the progressed learners can understand, the progressed learners are likely to internalise, remember their communication with more conversant learners and be in a stage to think of regulating their own actions in accordance with what they communicated with able learners. When progressed learners can still not do a task on their own, scaffolding by the teacher, teaching in the ZPD, can further guide learning.

2.2.2 The Zone of Proximal Development

With the ZPD, Vygotsky provides a resolution for a situation where some tasks are just beyond a learner's reach. This implies that a progressed learner is close to having the mental skills needed to do the task, but it is a little too complex for the learner to master it alone. However, learners working within this zone can make rapid progress if they receive guidance from a skilful partner (Coon, 2001:112).

Linked to the ZPD, Vygotsky emphasised 'scaffolding', which is assisted learning, or the process of adjusting instruction so that it is responsive to a learner and supports the efforts to understand a problem or gain a mental skill (Coon, 2001:112). Relatively, through the policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) (DBE, 2014) has seen the need for learners' learning needs to be identified early in the process of teaching and learning so that appropriate support can be offered by teachers and education facilitators.

However, it seems like there is lack of follow-up on dissemination and implementation of the like policies as many learners who reach Grades 10 and 11 lack proficiency in EFAL, and are automatically pushed through the system with their age cohort regardless of the policy stipulation against progression of learners who failed the LoLT (*cf.* 2.3.2.3). Progressing learners with regard for age norms only, may deny them an opportunity to get appropriate support as their actual learning needs may have not been identified and assessed.

In this study, teaching in the ZPD suggests the need for teachers to check learners' pre-existing knowledge on the topic to be taught so that differentiated teaching methods and support systems (scaffolding) may be utilised in accordance with learner diversity. Differentiation implies adjusting tasks to appeal to various interests, needs, aptitudes, experiences and previous achievements of individual learners (DBE, 2010:10). It is a philosophical way of teaching and learning based on a set of beliefs that:

- Learners who are the same age differ in their readiness to learn, their interests, their style of learning and their live circumstances;

- The differences in learners are significant enough to make the major impact on what learners need to learn, the pace at which they need to learn and the support they need from the teacher and others to learn it well.

- They will learn best when supportive adults push them slightly beyond where they can work without assistance, (DBE, 2010:22).

Figure 2.1, with ideas adapted from Criticos *et al.* (2002:127) and Woolfolk (2014:63), illustrates a model of a Vygotsky constructivist framework for teaching and learning in the ZPD adapted for the current education context where teachers are faced with the phenomenon of progressed learners.

Teaching below the ZPD
- Check pre-existing knowledge and recapitulate.
- Introduce new topic and make links between new and previous topic.

Teaching in the ZPD with learner diversity in mind - scaffolding learning
- Clarify purpose and objectives; teach key vocabulary, show differences and provide examples.
- Use differentiated teaching methods; involve learners actively in co-operation with others, giving and encouraging practise.

Teaching above the ZPD with learner diversity in mind - scaffolding learning
- Assess learning by giving hints, cues and doing part of the problem.
- Analyse results and give constructive feedback.
- Identify need for remedial teaching, simplify the task and give clearer instructions considering differentiated assessment tools informally and formally.

Figure 2.1: Framework for teaching and learning (Criticos et al., 2002: 127; Woolfolk,

Figure 2.1 is divided into three connected teaching steps considering the ZPD. Step 1 involves teaching below the ZPD and assumes that learners have pre-existing knowledge from previous grade(s) or experience. It suggests that a teacher should first check the pre-existing knowledge on the intended lesson topic so that he/she can be well informed about the extent of learners' curriculum acquisition, and be able to prepare them for new knowledge. The connection is that by recapitulating on previously taught lessons (Step 1), learners will be taken from what they know to what they do not know through scaffolding (Step 2). When teaching is done in a differentiated manner, in accordance with diverse learners' needs, the teacher will want to know if it was effective and engage in Step 3, which suggests using differentiated tools to assess if learners can do tasks on their own. The process should be reflective and continuous depending on diverse learners' needs. It tries to achieve an effective instruction associated with Vygotsky, where learners are put in situations where they have to reach to understand, but with support from other learners or the teacher (Woolfolk, 2014:63).

24

2.3   CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK OF LEARNER PROGRESSION

This section begins by reviewing existence of learner progression in other parts of the world. Review of relevant literature to teaching EFAL to progressed learners develops from various notions: policies on learner progression, phase progression in FET, teachers' experiences and perspectives about progressed learners, challenges EFAL teachers experience when teaching progressed learners, communication proficiency in EFAL and strategies offered to help learners learn EFAL. The concepts summarised in Figure 2.2 are selected for review as their relatedness portrays and explains the research problem and are basic concepts that are to be considered in the process of data collection. In other words, the research questions and interview questions were based on these particular concepts. Therefore, reviewing them in their relatedness may lead to better understanding of the research problem and eventually achieving the research aim of exploring the lived experiences of teachers in teaching EFAL to progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency.

2.3.1   Learner progression in other parts of the world

Although recent publications are reticent about the current situation or the practice of learner progression in other countries, it is an existing controversial issue versus grade retention, the practice of requiring learners to repeat a grade (Kika & Kotze, 2018:1). In other parts of the world, it is referred to as 'social promotion' (Roberts, 2017; Stott *et al.*, 2015). Progressing learners who have not met promotion requirements in the learning process happens in countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom (Stott *et al.*, 2015:94). Kika and Kotze (2018:4) add that the USA as well as Canada have also adopted the practice. However, in this era that emphasises inclusive equitable education for all, evident intervention strategies for learners with learning needs and accountability for learner performance, research indicates that neither grade retention nor social promotion (phase progression) is a successful strategy for improving educational success (Jimerson *et al.,* 2006:85). Hence, nine states of America and other cities adopted mandates intended to end social promotion, as proponents of the policies on social promotion claimed that learners must possess basic skills in order to succeed in higher grades (Greene & Winters, 2004:1). This

implies that even when other countries consider phase progression as a strategy to help learners with learning needs, others found the strategy ineffective.

Nevertheless, the UN have deemed the role of education as a catalyst for building a better and more sustainable future for all (UNESCO, 2014:3). Therefore, they have persuaded all countries to fulfil the SDG 4 for education 2030, that all nations should ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2018:3). Kasalathi and Vayrynen (2013:10) indicate that as a leading international organisation for inclusive education, UNESCO's global goal to ensure sustainable development by creating inclusive schools for all, features strongly in transformed education systems of countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Russia and Finland. This mention is of importance in this research as the notion of inclusive education is a portrayal of phase progression in the South African education.

2.3.2 Policies on learner/phase progression in South Africa

The practice of learner or phase progression in the South African education system is rooted in the DoE's (2001) White Paper 6 on inclusive education. White Paper 6 specifies the intention of the DoE to implement inclusive education at all levels of the system by 2020. Such an inclusive system will facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable learners and reduce barriers to learning through targeted support structures and mechanisms that will improve the performance of learners retained in the education system particularly learners who are prone to dropping out (DBE, 2015:11).

White Paper 6 led to revision of the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (ELRC, 2003a) which stipulates that learners should progress with their age cohort but should have repetition of only one year per school phase where necessary. Although this revision of policies was done in order to redress the apartheid social injustices, it was also in line with the world's goal to eliminate all factors including discrimination, which impedes the fulfilment of the right to education (UNESCO, 2018:3). The practice of learner progression was then introduced in the GET phase, Grades R-9 after being gazetted in 1998 (Kika & Kotze, 2018:1). This action resulted in a large number of learners in the academic stream of the FET phase without having been promoted to this

point through their own academic achievement (Stott *et al.*, 2015:91). A huge number of progressed learners, lacking academic achievement and the necessary foundational skills from the GET phase, depicts a great challenge for teachers in the FET phase.

2.3.2.1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for English First Additional Language – FET Phase, Grades 10-12

In the preamble of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), the Further Education and Training (FET) Act 98 of 1998 (ELRC, 2003b) is cited as aiming to redress past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access to further education and training in the work-place by persons who have been marginalised in the past (apartheid regime), such as women, the disabled and the disadvantaged. The CAPS document is a policy document that focuses on the content that must be taught per term and the required number and type of assessment tasks each term for each subject (Moodley, 2013:16) and has guided the FET phase since it came into effect in January 2012 (DBE, 2011a:3). It is learner-centred, not a teacher-dominated content- based curriculum that puts more emphasis on teaching the basic content knowledge and skills (Moodley, 2013:92).

At the FET stage, the DBE expects learners to be reasonably proficient in their First Additional Language (FAL). However, DBE further states that in reality many learners still cannot communicate well in their FAL at this stage. Grades 10-12 teachers have a challenge to provide support for these learners at the same time as providing a curriculum that enables learners to use their additional language at a high level of proficiency to prepare them for completion of the final exit examination, the National Senior Certificate, and then further or higher education or the world of work (DBE, 2011a:8-9).

Additionally, with education reform and curriculum changes from Outcome-Based Education (OBE), National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to the current CAPS in post-apartheid South Africa, the biggest challenge in the overall education system is that learners are given overly long course outlines to read (Gumede & Biyase, 2016:73).

Moodley (2013:92) also indicated that the pace of CAPS is too fast as teachers rush through the syllabus in order to complete the content, in so doing do not spend the much-needed time with slow learners. Language teachers who participated in Moodley's research expressed concerns that they spent more time assessing and marking in the language subjects than teaching (Moodley, 2013:92). Phasha, Bipath and Beckmann (2016:70) and Moodley (2013) asserted that teachers welcomed CAPS for its clarity, structure, clear guidelines and time frames, but experienced challenges related to the quality and amount of training, inadequate resources, increased workload and the rapid pace of teaching required in order to cover the curriculum.

2.3.2.2   The National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion requirements (NPPPPR)

Phase progression was endorsed in the FET phase in 2013, once it was promulgated in the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 in December 2012 (Kika & Kotze, 2018:1-2). In 2015, the DBE provided the Guideline for Implementation of Promotion and Progression Requirements for Grades 10-12 (DBE, 2015), which emphasises the stipulation that a learner cannot spend more than four years in a phase, implying that a learner can only repeat either Grade 10 or Grade 11 once (DBE, 2015:2).

The Guideline for Implementation of Promotion and Progression Requirements for Grade 10-12 (DBE, 2015), an amendment of the NPPPPR, is linked to the previously reviewed polices which all emphasise that duration in the FET phase should be four years, with allowance for the learner to repeat a grade once unless the learner's parent or guardian decides that the learner should be retained in the same phase, deemed to be in the best interest of the learner.

The guideline asserts that the progression legislation in Grades 10-11 is intended to uphold the best interest of the learner and to minimise unnecessary school dropout in the schooling system so that every learner has the opportunity to achieve an exit qualification such as the NSC. The guideline also highlights that learner progression

does not guarantee certification of the NSC unless the requirements of obtaining the certificate are met (DBE, 2015).

Interestingly, section 5 of the guideline instructs districts and schools to have clearly articulated intervention strategies that include an early identification of low achievers or at-risk learners so that the school, district and province can develop and implement additional learning opportunities through meaningful extended day/year-long

programmes outside of regular school hours. In all these interventions, parents of progressed learners should be involved (DBE, 2015).

2.3.2.3   Assessment instruction 64 of 2017

In 2017, Assessment Instruction 64 of 2017 (ECDoE, 2017) was released, which clarifies the criteria to allow a learner to be progressed from either Grade 10 to Grade 11, or from Grade 11 to Grade 12. Among other restrictions, the criteria stipulate that the learner must have passed the LoLT and any other three of the seven subjects offered, Life Orientation included. If the Home Language is the LoLT, then a 30% mark will be accepted (ECDoE, 2017:4). An implication is that before and possibly after the implementation of the 2015 guideline for the promotion and progression of learners and Assessment Instruction 64 of 2017, only age cohort norms were considered in learner progression in some schools, and not the LoLT. Research confirms that several challenges have been highlighted in relation to the implementation of the progression policy, which include different interpretations of the policy across the system, resulting in varied implementation across the schools (Kika & Kotze, 2018:4).

2.3.3   Experiences and perspectives of teaching in the era of learner progression

Teaching 'progressed learners' may be a new term in the FET phase but in essence, it is an inclusive aspect in the current but rapidly changing South African education system due to politics and policy changes. It means teaching learners with barriers to learning or disabilities in the same classroom with their same-age typically developing peers

using appropriate support to facilitate their social and intellectual education (Donohue & Bornman, 2015:2). This research focuses not on experiences and perspectives of teaching learners with barriers to learning due to physical disability but interweaves other causes listed in the Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (DBE, 2010:12; DoE, 2001:19), which include contextual, socio-economic, curriculum and attitudinal factors. As such, research by Spaull (2013:3) has revealed that with the exception of a minority, most South African learners' literacy and numeracy levels do not apt the grades they are in. Spaull (2015:34) asserts that the strong legacy of social injustices including segregation and inequality in providing education during apartheid have meant that generally, poorer learners in South Africa perform worse academically in the vast majority of those schools which served black learners as the schools remain disadvantaged and unable to impart the necessary literacy skills to learners.

Learner progression is envisioned to minimise unnecessary school dropout so that every learner has the opportunity to achieve an exit qualification such as the NSC (DBE, 2015:2). However, implementation of the progression policy (evident as ECDoE Assessment Instruction 65 of 2017 for the GET band) that let to upward manipulation (adjustment) of Grade 9 marks in the GET phase, has resulted in a large number of learners being enrolled in the FET phase without having been promoted to this point through their own academic achievement (Stott *et al.*, 2015:91). The presence of large numbers of unmotivated, ill-disciplined and ill-prepared progressed learners places an immense emotional burden and increased work-load on teachers who are working in the already difficult low quintile South African schools (Stott *et al.*, 2015:103).

According to Marais (2016:1), it is evident that in some schools in the Eastern Cape, three or four learners are sitting at a desk meant for two, thus obstructing traffic flow in the classroom. Research on overcrowded classrooms reported that such classrooms are unfortunately part of the South African education system, and will remain so perhaps for the long-term future as this challenge and the management thereof is still largely unaddressed in schools and teacher training institutions (Marais, 2016:1). Kika and Kotze (2018:4) assert that with the misinterpreted progression policy in the FET Phase, teachers are unable to provide differentiated support to progressed learners due to the workload. Regardless of the evident circumstances of overcrowded classrooms and

underlying challenges to this overcrowding, there is a perspective that the implementation of inclusive education is hampered by a combination of a lack of resources and the attitudes and actions of teachers in classrooms (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015:1). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2008:304) indicates that reviews of national policies for education in South Africa, with lack of fit between the policy expectations of teachers and the daunting circumstances in which many teachers find themselves, cause significant attitudinal and health problems for teachers. Donohue and Bornman (2015:3) argue that teachers' attitudes towards implementation of inclusive education evolve from various factors, one of them being the prior approach to teacher training. Teachers were trained to teach typically or atypically developing learners, but not both. Yet, currently, teachers find themselves in a position where they are expected to teach learners with various educational needs and barriers to learning without any relevant experience or training.

Literature highlights a few effects of teaching in overcrowded classrooms. Class size affects performance due to misbehaviour and other disciplinary problems; teachers devote less time to instruction and integrated reading and writing tasks because instruction time is often wasted by administrative tasks and consequently, teachers are required to work more hours outside the classroom (Marais, 2016:2).

Furthermore, overcrowded classrooms impact negatively on learners. They cannot pay attention or participate at the required level of intensity because classmates are noisy and restive and learners, who need extra-support, cannot rely on individual care from teachers and may lose motivation (Marais, 2016:3). Engelbrecht *et al.* (2015:6) agree that overcrowded classrooms of 40 plus, even up to 70 learners per classroom, pose challenges with regard to discipline problems, and that individual attention to learners' needs is an added stress for teachers dealing with a variety of contextual challenges in a classroom with a diversity of needs.

Other challenge teachers in rural schools of South Africa experience is lack of resources. It is opined that rural teachers have to work in conditions with fewer resources and have less control over the curriculum, which eventually leads to frustration (Khumalo & Mji, 2014:1522). The researchers further explain that this situation means that learning may

rely solely on what teachers tell learners and as a result, learners are left disadvantaged because they remain ignorant of everything they are not directly told (Khumalo & Mji, 2014:1522). Inadequate provisioning of resources has a major influence on effective teaching and learning (DBE, 2016/17:10). Hence, the researchers point out that significantly, a school context should reflect values and philosophy the society aspire to through consideration of human resources and physical structures (Khumalo & Mji, 2014:1522). However, research conducted in 2014, highlighted contextual factors that affect education negatively in the rural provinces of the country like the Eastern Cape. These factors include dealing with learner transport, school nutrition as well as teacher shortages (Msila, 2014:262). Recently, the Eastern Cape Member of the Executive Council (MEC) reported that some districts in the Eastern Cape were poorly capacitated and there was a shortage of appropriately qualified and skilled teachers in certain phases, subjects and locations (ECDoE, 2016/17:10). Research conducted by Francis et al. (2015:92) pointed out that low morale of teachers, poor quality of teachers, and/or lack of satisfactory professional provision for teachers in an organisation, has an adverse effect on literacy development. Additionally, the non-availability of suitably qualified teachers may have its ramifications – learners being taught subjects by individuals who have no experience in teaching those subjects, consequently impacting negatively on learning (Khumalo & Mji, 2014:1523).

Another experience with regard to teaching in this era of learner progression is that some of the progressed learners are academically lazy. Stott *et al*. (2015:98) attest that progressed learners are unmotivated, disinterested, ill-disciplined and often play truant from classes and extra classes and do not complete their class and homework. Mentors who were research participants in the Motheo district of the Free State Province posited that there was burn-out among teachers due to having to give extra classes in the afternoons and weekends. They were demoralised due to poor performance of the progressed learners and pressure from the DBE to get learners to perform better (Stott *et al.*, 2015:98). The research participants further stated that there were reports of teachers resigning, threatening to resign or refusing to teach classes containing progressed learners as a result of the difficulties caused by the progression law (Stott *et al.*, 2015:98). However, when reflecting on research findings that progressed learners are stigmatised and carry the label throughout their schooling years (Kika & Kotze,

2018:4), the truant behaviour may be seen as escapism from the stigma and to have confidence that the progression policy is in their favour.

Roberts (2017) states that when learners only advance to the next grade because of social promotion, they risk repeating bad habits and falling behind even more. In addition, being placed in a succeeding grade without being required to complete the necessary amount of homework or study, learners could lose the value in work ethic, which could be damaging for them even into their futures. Roberts (2017) adds that it is not fair to progress people who do not do their work as they will continue this pattern of behaviour even in future work –they will not work hard at their jobs because they do not know the value of hard work. The American Federation of Teachers regards social promotion or learner progression as an insidious practice that hides school failure and creates problems for everybody, (among mentioned others) for teachers who must face learners who know that teachers wield no credible authority to demand hard work (Stott *et al.*, 2015:92).

2.3.4 Challenges EFAL teachers experience when teaching progressed learners

The issue of challenges EFAL teachers, specifically, experience when teaching progressed learners is not given adequate and direct attention in research. However, as far as literacy in the LoLT is concerned, implications are made that progressed learners' low literacy skills are not suitable for the level of the grades they are progressed to as they do not understand the medium of instruction (Spaull, 2013:34; Mukhathi, 2017:135 & Letshwene, 2019:157). Progressed learners are ill-disciplined, and slow, making it difficult for a teacher to keep up with the CAPS pace setter which is fast and has long course outlines to read for languages in generic terms (Stott *et al.*, 2015:98 & Moodley, 2013:92). This implies that the progressed learners' slow pace in grasping concepts delays and frustrates not only teachers to cover the syllabus but also able learners who are placed with their peer group. Since the progressed learners do not know the value of hard work, they may have an impact on their counterparts: there is little or no need to study hard when the progression law is there to carry them through the system if they underperform (Roberts, 2017). Research has identified that with fear that matric

results might drop because of progressed learners, and fear to account for underperformance in Grade12, teachers focus on Grade 12 at the expense of lower grades, which is a contributory factor to learners performing poorly in the lower grades and making progression necessary (Stott *et al.*, 2015:102).

2.3.5   EFAL as the LoLT

Internationally, English as a medium of instruction is thought to be a passport to a global world as it creates opportunities for students to join a global academic and business community (Dearden, 2014:3). In South Africa, English is positioned as the language of business, politics, and the media and is regarded as the country's *lingua franca* Cekiso, Tshotso & Masha, 2015:326-327). English is mostly used in urban areas for economic purposes but for people living in rural areas, exposure to English is limited because the majority of people communicate with each other in local languages (Francis *et al.*, 2015:91). English is identified as a necessary resource for success by South African youth who want to be admitted to universities or get decent employment opportunities (Lloyd, 2014:1). In the school context, EFAL is the first language after a learner's home language (*cf.* Chapter 1, section 1.11).

Despite diverse learners' backgrounds or exposure to the language, the EFAL level assumes that learners do not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they arrive at school, although by the time they reach Grade 10, they should be reasonably proficient in the language (DBE, 2011a:8). However, researchers believe that because the majority of learners in South Africa do their schooling through a language that is not their home language, low proficiency in English is a factor for poor performance or difficulties in fully grasping the content and concepts of various subjects of the curriculum taught in EFAL (Cekiso *et al.*, 2015:326). Francis *et al.* (2015:91) and Magdaraog (2017:3) concur that inadequate exposure to English as well as support from home, results in learners in rural schools struggling to comprehend subjects communicated through the English medium hence, resulting in poor academic performance. According to Magdaraog (2017:3), Vygotsky's theory sees language as an essential component in the educational process but the use of a language that is almost foreign to the learners, does not seem to achieve this fully since there are

learners who are unable to effectively learn through English as a LoLT. The strong correlation between the LoLT and academic achievement suggests that English language proficiency is essential for South African learners who are expected to complete tasks in English and also in other subjects (Cekiso *et al.*, 2015:325-326). Hence, Vygotsky's SDT confirms that mastering a language is vital for many valid reasons such as developing advanced thinking and problem solving that could not be accomplished without mastering the language of learning (Woolfolk, 2014:57-58). Seemingly, the current CAPS curriculum design for EFAL was embedded in Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory as it considers that language is a tool for thought and communication and it is also a cultural and aesthetic means commonly shared among people to make better sense of the world in which they live (DBE, 2011a:8).

CAPS is, however, blamed for broadness in content so much so that teachers rush for syllabus coverage leaving learners with little grasp of the content while language teachers spend much time marking a variety of assessment tasks rather than on classroom instruction which affects learners' development in literacy skill negatively (*cf.* Chapter 2 section 2.3.3). Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:2-3) argue that it is only natural to posit language as a factor for poor academic performance, especially in South Africa, where the majority of learners learn in a language that is not their home language. Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016) attribute the causality to many factors among which the most important are socio-economic status, teaching methods and parental involvement.

2.3.6   Communication proficiency

Learners' communication ability of information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success is determined by language proficiency. In other words, through knowledge of a language and effective use of it, learners are likely to achieve academically. Language proficiency defines communication proficiency in this research and refers to the learners' ability to read, write, speak and comprehend EFAL within academic classroom settings (Cekiso *et al.*, 2015:326). Communication proficiency does not only refer to competence or knowledge of grammatical rules of a language and how to form grammatical sentences but also to know when, where and to whom to use these sentences in a speech community (Wan Yee, 1990:1). However, Cummins'

(1984) work cited by Bilas (2011) shows that communicative proficiency for additional language learning is understood in distinction of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) against Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS, describes social, conversational language used for oral communication that offers many cues to the listener; it is context-embedded and is acquired within two years of exposure to the language, whereas CALP describes proficiency in the context-reduced language of the academic classroom and it takes at least five to seven years of immersion to acquire. According to Bylund (2015:72-73), BICS only provides surface level of language skills as compared to CALP which is dependent upon both language development and cognitive development and implies a conceptual qualitative different use of language than BICS. The implication in this study is that the term 'communication proficiency' entails quite broader aspects than simply competence in language but rather the intersection of thought and language (Bylund, 2015:74).

Although communication proficiency encompasses broad aspects in language teaching, one of the main aspects in the lesson observation schedule in this study (*cf*. Appendix G) was to ascertain how much time was given to learners to orally practise speaking English in the course of a lesson, as social interaction is a crucial aspect in this study which is embedded in Vygotsky's constructivist view of learning. 'Talk' is seen as an important part of the process of learning and developing the abilities to read and write co-dependently (Criticos *et al.*, 2002:137). For this reason, oral communication is reviewed.

Importantly, developing learners' oral communication skill in the form of listening, speaking and reading is a component in EFAL CAPS (DBE, 2011a:19-27). Oral communication refers to fluency and accuracy of which accuracy focuses more on form and the production of grammatically correct linguistic structures. Fluency and accuracy are features of proficiency a learner needs to attain to communicate effectively (Pangket, 2019:43). National Council for State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) (2017: 2) indicate that in moving along the proficiency continuum at different speeds in listening, reading and viewing, learners bring prior skills and experience to the interpretive mode. According to Vygotsky (1978), these schemata (pre-existing understanding or

knowledge) are stepping stones to cognitive development and effective grasp of new concepts. In essence, the dichotomy of BICS and CALP (Bilas, 2011) suggest that learning a language in face-to-face contexts, where there are contextual cues and clues to support understanding the additional language, develops learners' basic communication skills. In other words, additional language learners achieve basic communicative proficiency in the BICS continuum, where learning the additional language is context-embedded; and achievement of these basic communication skills later enhances cognitive academic language learning in the CALP continuum where language is removed from its context, is in high order and requires critical thinking. For this study, the concept of BICS versus CALP suggested observing pedagogical and differentiated teaching of EFAL in grades 10 and 11 where more emphasis would be on context-based activities for progressed learners with low CALP.

2.3.7   EFAL teaching strategies

In teaching, strategies are support measures that are used to help learners perform well especially in situations where there are barriers to learning. According to Caro, Lenkeit and Kyriakides (2015:1), strategies are teacher's instructional practices and processes taking place in a classroom and are considered most significant effectiveness factors to explain academic outcomes and metacognitive skills of learners. Jimerson *et al.* (2006:90) caution that without appropriate instructional practices or teaching strategies, support and assistance, learners are likely to continue upon developmental pathways characterised by low-achievement, poor adjustment and further academic failure. By using the cultural or psychological tool of language, teaching should capacitate learners with mastery of this tool in the process of learning, scaffolded by the intellect of knowledgeable teachers because language helps in advanced cognitive development (Woolfolk, 2014:57).

According to Bylund (2015:72-74), there is a theoretical correspondence between Cummins (1981) and Vygotsky (1986) that the best way for learners to develop in their second or additional language is to first develop CALP in their primary language. Vygotsky (1986:195-196) whose SDT guides this study wrote:

'Success in learning a foreign language is contingent on a certain degree of maturity in the native language. The child can transfer to the new language the system of meanings he already possesses in his own. The reverse is also higher true – a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native language. The child learns to see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories, and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations.'

Research also indicates that communicative methodology which refers to the different ways of teaching language using the communicative approach is one of the different ways of teaching language (Wan Yee, 1990:2). Huang (2016:187) confirms that successful language learning experiences are created through interaction and meaningful communication, and that language learning happens through natural processes when real communication is achieved. In the communicative language teaching method, the teacher does not take the central role but facilitates in providing opportunities in which learners can participate more through interacting through speaking, listening and reading in a manner that fosters communication to acquire accuracy and fluency of the English language (Zulu, 2019:2). Lloyd (2014:48) also mentioned that language teaching strategies must be learner- centred in contrast to teacher-centred methods of teaching with dominating teacher talk as this approach denies learners the time to express their ideas in a classroom context and contributes to learners' lack of literacy skill. Research identifies that the communicative approach uses a variety of strategies and links additional language learning to learners' familiar (home) language in some of these techniques as a lead to effective language teaching (Huang,2016; Tavoosy & Jelvelh, 2019; Zulu, 2019). Among others, communicative strategies include scaffolding, questioning, vocabulary checks, modelling of target language and activities, incorporating small groups and pair work.

2.3.7.1   Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to support for learning and problem solving. According to Vygotsky's theory, scaffolding implies exchanges between learner and teacher that allow the

teacher to support the learners in part of the tasks they cannot do alone – the interactions of assisted learning (Woolfolk, 2014:62). Scaffolding could include elaborated input in which the language teacher tries to repeat key instructions or points, paraphrases, uses lower, clear speech and visual aids to help learners better comprehend what is being said (Tavoosy & Jelvelh, 2019:87). Additionally, the support would be clues, reminders, encouragement, breaking the problem down into steps, providing an example or anything else that allows the learner to grow in independence (Woolfolk, 2014:62; *cf.* Figure 2.1).

2.3.7.2 Questioning

While both closed and open questions are essential when teaching EFAL, Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019:12) recommend that more open-ended questions directed to specific individuals should be asked to ensure all learners have the opportunity to participate. Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019) observed that asking closed questions helped learners to identify what they knew whereas open questions are used to discuss a unit of enquiry. The researchers also suggest that after a teacher has asked a question, thinking time should be allowed to enable language learners to connect to what has been asked and have the opportunity to think of an appropriate answer (Tavoosy & Jelveh, 2019:87). Huang (2016:196) recommends that initiating a topic where learners respond even in short utterances of English or prefer to use their home language, using that response to elicit more interactions facilitates talk to build sensible sentences from a short utterance. Sun (2016:852) adds that for learners to achieve in different tasks, questioning should be done in four levels considering the concepts of BICS and CALP:

A -   a context-embedded task (easy questions with clues or much guidance)

B -   a cognitively undemanding contextual task (questions that need critical thinking but still with clues and guidance)

C -   context-reduced undemanding task (questions with no clues but not requiring critical thinking)

D -   cognitively demanding context-reduced task (high order question with no clues but requiring critical thinking).

Sun (2016:852) further explains that English teachers should avoid difficult frustrating questions beyond learners' language proficiency but should judge the appropriateness of teaching materials and apply cognitively-undemanding activities in the early stage of learning a foreign language in order to build confidence or as a lead to a more challenging activity. Considering that conceptual knowledge developed in learners' native language makes in put in the other language comprehension, Sun (2016:852) asserts, once learners are comfortable with the less challenging activities as explained in the four levels A-D above, they can gradually engage in tasks that are both cognitively-demanding and context-reduced. The implication here is that learners should be given time, motivation and support to develop proficiency in EFAL.

2.3.7.3 Vocabulary checks

Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019:83) define vocabulary checks as when the teachers take time during lessons to check that learners understand the meaning of key words or concepts. This could be done in different ways through showing a key word or a picture of the word or through using questions to check that learners understand the meaning of key words or concepts. Providing examples of words, their meanings, demonstrating how they might be used when learning a language may be more important than attention to the grammatical components, and spelling of vocabulary because this strategy enables individual to connect new vocabulary with words that learners already know from their first language (Tavoosy & Jelveh, 2019:83).

2.3.7.4 Modelling of target language and activities

Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019:83) and the DBE (2011a:11) suggest that language structure and form should be learned in authentic contexts rather than through contrived drill in language workbooks. Learners need opportunities to speak the additional language for interpersonal reasons, to develop their creativity, to develop academic skills and to prepare for the work place is such situations as a conversation, performing a poem, role playing, taking part in a debate or an interview (DBE, 2011a:11). Before giving activities, the use of live demonstrations and the presentation of examples of other learners' work may provide a more complete description of the standard of content and

presentation that is expected for a particular activity and possibly help to ease learner anxiety caused by not knowing what to do (Tavoosy & Jelveh, 2019:84). In this regard, the important role of the language teacher is to match the level of text to the level of the learner and provide high-quality feedback, which is at the heart of good assessment (DBE, 2011a:11). Honest and fair assessments give learners an idea of their developed proficiency, but pretending learners know what they do not (by progressing them with age cohort) is not helping them prepare for their futures (Roberts, 2017).

2.3.7.5   Incorporating small groups and pair work

In a constructivist view, learning is optimised in settings where social interaction, particularly between a leaner and more knowledgeable others is encouraged, and where success is co-operatively achieved through the medium of 'talk' is a major aim (Criticos *et al.*, 2002:127). Giving learners opportunities to work in small groups and with a partner, is considered a powerful tool for fostering language acquisition from a different source of input other than that of a teacher (Tavoosy & Jelveh, 2019:85). Small groups allow learners to talk for longer lengths of time and provide fewer threatening situations, thus encouraging less-confident learners to contribute their ideas rather than in whole class situations (Criticos *et al.*, 2002:215). Huang (2016:195) suggests that learners' home language should be allowed in class discussions and the teacher should translate in English or let learners who understand help in translation. The researcher (Huang, 2016:196) emphasises that learning together, learners scaffold one another's knowledge and push their home language and second language cognitive capability to an upper level and develop to be multi-component speakers rather than imitative English speakers.

Apart from the above strategies, researchers believe that implementation of a campaign to ensure that teachers provide quality teaching and sufficient contact time to lower grades throughout the year, could decrease the need for progression, as learners will qualify to be promoted, not be progressed (Roberts, 2017; Stott *et al.*, 2015:105).

In addition, a national reading campaign should be implemented with the slogan "Every child must read fluently in the LoLT by the end of Grade 3 (age 9)" should be well

advertised and articulated and must involve everyone from parents to the president (Spaull, 2015:39). Jimerson *et al.* (2006:91) suggested that to promote the social and academic competence of learners, it is important to respect developmental, cultural, linguistic and gender differences among learners when selecting and implementing interventions. The researchers further suggested that preschool interventions should emphasise the development of basic literacy skills (Jimerson *et al.*, 2006; Spaull, 2015).

Whatever intervention strategy is used to enhance academic success, it should be borne in mind that learners do not arbitrarily fail to meet academic standards. Rather, their lack of academic success typically reflects the failure of adults to provide appropriate support and to use scaffolding to facilitate their early developmental and academic trajectories (Jimerson *et al.*, 2006:94).

2.4   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the theoretical framework. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of learning was chosen to guide this research. The contextual framework of progressed learners is discussed particularly in the South African context; however, there seems to be a literature gap as to how learner progression is done in certain countries where the policy has been adopted. Policies are reviewed in order to enhance better understanding of the phenomenon of learner progression which has implications for learner competency where learners enter into the FET phase with barriers to learning due to low proficiency in the LoLT. Experiences of teaching in the era of phase progression and challenges EFAL teachers experience when teaching progressed learners was also presented in this chapter. Major concepts such as EFAL and communication proficiency in EFAL were reviewed. Lastly, the chapter reviewed strategies used to help learners learn EFAL. The review indicated that the negative situation of progressed learners does not revolve around their attitude only but that there are historical developmental contributory factors including inappropriate teaching strategies. Therefore, to rectify inappropriate interventions and ameliorate the problem practical strategies must be discovered and implemented. Chapter 3 presents a description of the qualitative design and methodology followed during the research process.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with the theoretical and contextual frameworks of progressed learners. This chapter describes the research design and methodology in order to seek answers to the following main research question and sub-questions:

What are the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

- What are the grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers' understanding of progressed learners?
- What are the challenges experienced by EFAL teachers when teaching progressed learners?
- What strategies do grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers use when teaching the progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

The exploratory nature of the research questions for this study, ensures that it is appropriate to select qualitative research – an inquiry in which researchers collect data via face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315). This research seeks to investigate that the challenge of having to close the curriculum gap between phase progressed learners, who come to FET phase lacking basic literacy skills in EFAL, and able learners who are in the grades through ordinary academic achievement, is not the researcher's problem alone. Hence the researcher was eager to explore counterpart's experiences and understanding of teaching EFAL to progressed learners in Grades 10 and 11 and learn through interaction how they deal with the challenge.

Since the researcher adopted Vygotsky's SDT to guide this research, the constructivist aspect of qualitative methods that are used to understand phenomena as experienced by others (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:55) match with the theory and the research purpose

stated in the previous sections (*cf.* Chapter 1 section 1.5.2 and Chapter 2 section 2.2). The qualitative methods of data collection allow the researcher to choose a variety of methods such as observing participants' consideration of teaching in the ZDP and discussing what support strategies the participants, as 'knowledgeable others', can use to help progressed learners learn EFAL, as these imply successful teaching and learning in Vygotsky's perspective. Basically, this exploratory qualitative research entails going beyond field work in order to better understand the new phenomenon of progressed learners. The research design used in the study is further discussed below.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a particular way that guides the researcher in conducting the research. It describes how the study is conducted and summarises the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data is obtained as well as what methods of data collection are to be used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:22). As a plan of action chosen amongst many to collect and analyse data, a research design chosen in consideration of the research problem and research questions, helps to answer such research questions (Flick, 2009:128). In the current study, the main research question is: What are the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL? This research question called for a design which is characterised by collecting data directly through observation and interaction with purposefully selected EFAL teachers who actually have taught or are currently teaching progressed learners and could therefore, offer relevant answers to the research questions. A qualitative case study research design was thus chosen for this study. Hancock and Algozzine (2006:15) describe a case study as conducting an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context, bounded by space and time, using multiple sources of evidence. The appropriateness of a case study research in this study was determined by its emphasis on gathering data on a naturally occurring phenomenon using theories and concepts (Vygotsky's SDT for this study) generated by many years of research to investigate a social issue (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:32).

A case study research is classified as an interactive or non- interactive method with a focus on individual lived experiences and society and culture (Creswell, 2014:185; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:26).

A research design helps the researcher to organise ideas in a form whereby it will be possible to look for flaws and inadequacies (Kothari, 2004:31). According to Kothari (2004:33) a good design is characterised by minimising bias and maximising the reliability of the data collected and analysed, giving the smallest experiential error and yielding maximal information and provides an opportunity for considering many different aspects of a problem. Figure 3.1 summarises the constituents of a research design employed in this empirical research process.

Paradigm

Constructivist research paradigm

Approach

Qualitative Research

Research type

Multiple-Case Study

Sampling Method

Sample – 3 public secondary schools

2 participants per school

(Grades 10 and 11 teachers)

Data Collection Methods	Data Collection Instruments
In-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews	Interview schedule Voice recorder Field notes
Observations	Observation schedule Field notes Photographs

Trustworthiness of the Study
Credibility
Transferability
Dependability
Confirmability

⬇

Data Analysis
Organization
Transcription
Data Coding
Develop categories
Develop themes
Compile report

Figure 3.1: Research design process flow chart

3.2.1 Constructivist research paradigm

Like a theory, a paradigm refers to views that guide thinking about society and ourselves (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:51). According to Schwandt (2001: 183-184), these views that guide thinking are shared by the world to represents the beliefs and values in a particular discipline and guides how research is conducted and problems are solved.

This qualitative perspective was embedded in a constructivist paradigm, which is also referred to as an interpretivist paradigm. Constructivists/interpretivists engage in qualitative research because it is an approach that aims to understand people in a natural setting through social interchange and they believe that social reality is subjective and nuanced because it is shaped by the perceptions of the participants (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:56; Flick, 2001:71). Wagner *et al.* (2012:56) further affirm that constructivists believe that *ontology* and *epistemology* are socially constructed and that there are as many intangible realities as there are individuals constructing them. To elaborate, ontology relates to whether we believe there is one verifiable reality or whether there exist multiple, socially constructed realities. Epistemology enquires into the nature of knowledge and truth (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:51) and this implies that what

people believe is true and the source of that knowledge is derived from human experiences and interaction with others (Woolfolk, 2014:321).

Locating this study in an interpretive/constructivist paradigm was to seek value in EFAL teachers' lived experiences and understanding of progressed learners. As mentioned previously, for interpretivists, people assign important meanings to their social environment and experiences, meanings that could be slightly different due to unique contexts. Therefore, interaction with EFAL teachers from different school contexts informed this study about their different perspectives concerning progressed learners. The participants' responses revealed how in their view progressed learners affect able learners in teaching and learning EFAL.

Holding a constructivist view that effective learning happens in a social context, Vygotsky also emphasises that success children achieve through co-operation or social interaction with more knowledgeable others in learning, is through mastery of the 'cultural or psychological tool', language. Mastering the use of language helps to accomplish advanced thinking (cognitive development) and problem solving (Woolfolk, 2014:57). Through lesson observations as well as interviews, strategies the participants use to create opportunities for learners to talk and practise English, and help them master the intended language are to be explored.

3.2.2   Qualitative research approach

This study follows a qualitative research approach that takes place in a natural social context. Wagner *et al.* (2012:125) explain the reasons for using a qualitative research approach as to discover new insights into a topic (phenomenon) about which very little is known, to explore or seek to understand the reason why people have certain perceptions or act in the way that they do, to explore processes or systems that are best understood through interacting with those involved in the process and to describe the lived experiences of participants in a certain situation.

Qualitative research is subjective in that it focuses on individual lived experience and uses various face-to-face techniques to collect data in the form of words, in contrast to

quantitative research, which is objective and deals with numerical data McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:26). In the qualitative process, a wide range of typical data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, documents and audio-visual information are used rather than relying on a single method (Creswell, 2014:185). Using different methods of data collection allows the researcher to understand the social situation from participants' perspectives while a quantitative research approach, based on a single reality, would be measured by a single instrument. Qualitative research is associated with interpretivism. As such, it holds a belief that there are as many intangible realities as there are people constructing their realities (Wagner *et al.* 2012:56).

The advantage of qualitative methods is flexibility in providing different design types such as ethnography, action research, grounded theory, case study, as presented in Wagner *et al.* (2012) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006). However, the disadvantage is that qualitative research is context-bound. The researcher cannot understand human behaviour without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:13).This implies that research findings from unique contexts cannot be generalised or applied to other contexts.

A qualitative research approach was chosen for this study in order to explore the educational practice of learner progression. In particular, the purpose was to explore how EFAL teachers address the oral communication proficiency barriers of progressed learners through observations and interactions (interviews) with them in their natural settings. Conducting social research in face-to-face natural setting(s) is exclusive to qualitative research unless it is employed in mixed-method research. The desire to engage in face-to-face interactions with participants and learn from their experiences and thoughts about the phenomenon of progressed learners explains why this study was not quantitative. It was embedded in a constructivist paradigm that believes in existence of multiple realities about a situation and that people construct meaning and make sense of their unique situations (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:56). This means that the researcher would have to interpret the participants' verbal responses and observed actions, draw conclusions and descriptions in creation of knowledge about the phenomenon under study, therefore, words, not numbers were expedient for this study.

3.2.3   Research type

For the purpose of this study, an interactive method that was deemed appropriate is a multiple case study. A case study means conducting an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context, bounded by space and time, using multiple sources of evidence (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:15). If a study contains more than a single case, for instance, if the study is conducted in different contexts and at different times then a multiple case study is required. A multiple case study allows several cases to be examined to understand similarities and differences between the cases with the goal to replicate findings across cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008:550).

A multiple case study was employed to explore the following bounds. Teaching EFAL to progressed learners in Grades 10 and 11 was a complex phenomenon but bounded in this study by the fact that the research was conducted in only three Mount Fletcher public secondary schools. In each case, an EFAL teacher was observed while teaching the subject live to a complex class of progressed and able learners. According to the South African Admission Policy (ELRC, 2003a), progressed learners should not be separated from other learners, but they should be admitted in the grade of their age cohort and be afforded special educational support in that same ordinary grade. Hancock and Algozzine (2006:16) show that a multiple-case study involves collecting and analysing data from multiple sources such as interviews, observations and document analysis. Data from multiple sources allow detailed qualitative accounts to be produced and these accounts do not only help to explore or describe the data in real-life environments, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations (Zainal, 2006:4). This suggested that, in concluding this research process, EFAL teachers' experiences, their understanding of progressed learners and intervention strategies they used to help progressed learners to learn and master the language should be described through comparing and contrasting analysed data from interviews and observations conducted during the research process. One disadvantage is that qualitative research is time consuming and expensive to conduct (Baxter & Jack 2008:550).

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods are steps taken in collecting data and ways in which these procedures are followed. These steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured observations and interviews, documents and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information (Creswell, 2015:18). All issues involving data collection and analysis are described subsequently.

3.3.1 Selection of participants

In this study, purposive sampling, referring to identifying the purposively selected sites or individuals for the proposed study (Creswell, 2014:189), was employed. The key idea behind purposive sampling in qualitative research is to find value in participants' meanings by selecting participants or sites that will best help the researcher to understand the problem and the research question (Creswell, 2014:189). Furthermore, Wagner *et al.* (2012:93) assert that purposive sampling allows the researcher to rely on his/her own experience, previous research or ingenuity to find the participants in such a manner that they can be considered representative of the population. Specific selection criteria are typically used to identify the most suitable individuals.

For the purpose of exploring how EFAL teachers addressed oral communication proficiency barriers of progressed learners in Mount Fletcher, three rural secondary schools with progressed learners were targeted for their typical features reflecting in the research problem (*cf.* Chapter 1, section 1.4). Guided by the NSC School Performance Report (DBE, 2017:42-43) and the researcher's basic knowledge of the schools, the researcher chose schools that implied differences for this research due to their unique geographic rural locations in the vicinity of the town of Mount Fletcher. Features like class size, existence of progressed learners and school performance were taken into consideration.

The sample frame was initially comprised of six EFAL teachers, meaning three Grade 10 teachers and three Grade 11 teachers (one Grade 10 teacher and one Grade 11

teacher from each of the three schools). However, only five teachers participated because in one small school both Grades 10 and 11 were taught by the same teacher. The five EFAL teachers were chosen because they were deemed appropriate for this research as they taught EFAL, the subject of concern in this study, to progressed learners as a real-life occurrence in their daily duties in schools which implement phase progression, as per policy. As such, the participants were considered 'information rich' and able to provide relevant information to answer the research questions.

3.3.2   Data collection

Multiple-case study involves collecting and analysing data from multiple sources such as interviews, observations and documents (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:16). Creswell (2014:185-186) justifies that as key instruments, researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behaviour or interviewing participants, making sense of it, and establishing a holistic account reporting multiple perspectives, identifying many factors involved in a situation and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges. Data was collected through observations and interviews during the third quarter of the 2018 school year as scheduled in Appendix F. That was considered a convenient time for data collection as teaching and learning was intensively conducted in preparation for the fourth term which was dominated by final assessments.

3.3.2.1   Observations

Direct and overt observation, which refers to observing without interacting with objects or people under study in the setting but with the participants made aware that they are being observed for study purpose (Wagner *et al.* 2012:151), was the initial technique of intensive data collection for this research. The advantage with observations is that the observer can instantly record even unusual and uncomfortable information that could not be discussed by participants (Creswell, 2014:191). According to Wagner *et al.* (2012:150-152) observation is a primary tool to help a researcher to document what is going on in a setting. Observation is associated with research designs in the interpretive paradigm as it offers the researcher the opportunity to view others as they carry out their daily lives, or experience their lives along with them in order to interpret what those

experiences mean to them. An observation protocol was used during the observations (*cf.* Appendix G). The aspects in the observation schedule were extracted from Figure 2.1 (*cf.* Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). Observations were conducted in relation to the research problem, research questions and the SDT that guides this study and took into consideration pre-existing knowledge in order to make links between the known and the unknown, strategies used, for example, scaffolding, teaching methods differentiated for learner diversity, learners being active and involved in the lesson allowing 'talk'- to practice the target language and enhance communication proficiency, assessment tools differentiated for learner diversity and remedial work or extra support offered.

The disadvantage with observations is that they limit data collection in that the researcher may not want to be considered too intrusive, however collected information through this method helped in validating data from interviews. Wagner *et al.* (2012:152) support that the idea that observations may be used to triangulate data – to verify the findings derived from one source of data with those from another method. Before lesson observations, it was important to build good relationships with each participant. The researcher's designation was explained as being an EFAL teacher and a student at University of South Africa (UNISA) who was conducting the research for the purpose of exploring the lived experiences of Grades 10 and 11 teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL. Participants were given chance to read the information letter (Appendix D) before observations and interviews so that free and informed decisions to participate could be made. The participants were aware of the general principles concerning informed consent that participation was voluntary and noted that they could withdraw from the research at any time (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:68).

Even in a situation where it was challenging to get consent to participate, the researcher avoided in all means of direct or indirect coercion or inducement that would make participants feel compelled to participate in the research. Before participation, participants were requested to sign the consent form to participate (Appendix E). The researcher requested permission to take photographs of the settings as she felt that it would help during data analysis in describing the research contexts. A confidentiality agreement form (Appendix I) for photographing was signed by both the researcher and

participants. During observations, photographs of the settings were carefully taken to avoid exposing the identity of participants. In addition, field notes were also taken. Lesson observations were conducted during the CAPS stipulated conduct time for an EFAL lesson, which was 54 minutes per lesson.

3.3.2.2 Interviews

In order to obtain qualitative data from interactions with participants in their natural settings, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted in the third quarter of the school term (*cf*. Appendix F). The interviews with individual participants were conducted in English after school hours, but on the same day of the lesson observation. The interviews lasted for approximately 30 to 45 minutes with each participant. This was a convenient time for both the participant(s) and researcher to recall the observed lesson rather than setting another date and time for interviews only. Conducting interviews after observations developed a strong link between these methods of data collection.

Questions that could not be asked during direct observations were raised in the interviews.

One-on-one interviews yield significant amounts of information from the individual's perspective in contrast to group interviews, which run the risk of not fully capturing all participants' viewpoints (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:39). McMillan and Schumacher (2006:351) confirm that semi-structured interviews are defined as predetermined questions used to guide the interview. Before the actual interview session, the prepared questions (*cf*. Appendix H) were piloted at the researcher's work place. Two EFAL colleagues were chosen to respond to the prepared questions and give a comment in order to ensure clarity, correct use of language and to avoid asking leading questions that may limit open-ended responses by participants. Piloting the interview questions also helped to familiarise the researcher with and evaluate the potential value of the questions.

Before the interviews started, the researcher welcomed each participant to the second session of data collection. The purpose of the study was restated as it was first stated in

lesson observations. The participants were requested permission to use a voice-recorder as it would be easier for the researcher to capture the exact words of the participants. It was explained that all data would be confidential and voluntarily, a confidentiality agreement form (*cf.* Appendix J) to use a voice-recorder was signed by both the researcher and the participant. During the interviews, the research participants were required to describe in detail their personal experiences and understanding based on teaching EFAL to progressed learners. They were asked to explain the challenges they experienced when teaching EFAL to progressed learners and what effective strategies they used to help progressed learners learn and master EFAL, considering that progressed learners were in a complex class with able learners. Probing follow-up questions were asked and included how learners were progressed in the research sites and what role of the participants played in working with progressed learners. Data was also collected by taking field notes and to ensure that all responses were captured accurately and add anything else that the researcher had noted of thought of at the time.

3.3.3   Data analysis

Analysing data involves breaking up data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships in order to understand the various constitutive elements of one's data (Mouton, 2015:108). Wagner *et al.* (2012:231) refer to the process of identifying themes or patterns in qualitative data as thematic analysis. Nowell *et al.* (2017:1) state that to be accepted as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must demonstrate that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent and exhaustive manner through recording, systematising, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible. Hence, the thematic analysis process was done through interweaving the six steps outlined by Creswell (2014:197-200) and Nowell *et al.* (2017:4).

Step 1: Organising and preparing raw data for analysis

Firstly, voice-recorded material that was already in English, was transcribed verbatim. In very few instances where the participants code-switched to Sesotho, their mother tongue, the words were translated to English, the language used in the study and the

research supervisor confirmed accuracy in the transcription. Field notes were typed. Data was arranged into different types, as data collected through observations and interviews.

Step 2: Reading through all data

At this stage, all data was read several times in order to get a general sense of what participants said and the tone portrayed in what they said. General thoughts were then recorded in a reflexive journal.

Step 3: Coding the data

At this point, research questions were reviewed in order to identify topics that would be used to code data. Participants' responses to interview questions were then coded in accordance with predetermined codes or initial themes derived from the research questions. For example, four initial themes consequent to the research questions, used to code data were:

1.   Experiences of teaching EFAL to progressed learners
2.   Teachers' perspectives about progressed learners
3.   Challenges experienced by EFAL teachers when teaching progressed learners and
4.   Strategies used in teaching progressed learners to learn EFAL.

To ease the process of collating data into the four predetermined codes, participants' responses to the same interview question were read consecutively and collated in the code or theme dealt with before moving on to responses to the next question. Dealing with responses (data) to one research question at a time was done to allow critical analysis of data so that similarities and differences in the responses were able to be highlighted. In cases where responses were ambiguous, member-checks were considered to enhance credibility of data analysis.

Step 4: Identifying themes

Relatedness in participants' views and differences in each data category were identified and reviewed through triangulation. That is, field notes taken during lesson observations were considered to determine meanings of participants. Keeping field notes, transcripts and a reflexive journal can help researchers systemise, relate and cross reference data (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:3). Emerging themes due to identification of similar and different content per category were further categorised into sub-themes.

Step 5: Interrelating themes and describing

Concurrence and contrast in data was identified in order to reduce the themes. A detailed description was written. Triangulation or reference to observations and theoretical issues was done. The research partner, the supervisor, audited the data analysis process.

Step 6: Interpreting the meaning of themes

The final step was to interpret the meaning of themes. For each individual theme, researchers conduct and write a detailed analysis, identifying the story that each them tells (Nowell *et al.* (2017:10). Finally, conclusions were drawn and the report was compiled.

3.4   MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the results of a study approximate reality and thus judged to be trustworthy and reasonable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:471). To ensure trustworthiness of data in this study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness criteria that includes credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, were used as presented by Tuckett (2005:1).

3.4.1 Credibility

Credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. It establishes whether or not the research findings and interpretation are drawn from the original data (Anney, 2014:276). To enhance credibility, two strategies were used, namely triangulation and member-checks. Triangulation refers to a number of strategies employed to ensure that what is presented as research findings is credible and authentic (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:138). In this study, data collected from observations was compared with data from interviews in order to find regularity in the data. The supervisor in the study was also requested to check whether the transcriptions, which were taken verbatim from voice-recorded interviews, tally with the findings. This was done to eliminate the researcher's biases but ensure accuracy in transcribing and analysing the data.

Member-checks means that the data and interpretations are continuously tested as they are derived from members of various audiences from which data are solicited (Anney, 2014:277). The analysed data were sent to the participants to verify whether what had been analysed, reflected their responses.

3.4.2 Transferability

Transferability is a concept in qualitative inquiry that refers to demonstrating that the findings of the work at hand can be applied to other contexts (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:5749). To enhance transferability, detailed descriptions of the unique research contexts were given with reference to the photographs of the settings as an indication that in qualitative research, context consideration is vital. An explanation was given that only a small sample size in purposive sampling was used in data collection. As a result, the findings of this research cannot be generalised to other contexts but can only be referred to in similar contextual situations.

3.4.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of findings over time (Anney, 2014:278). It involves a

description of how data were collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:5750). Audit trails were used to establish dependability. The researcher requested the supervisor to check that the process of data collection and analysis to ensure that the process was according to expectations about qualitative research and then with expertise, provide important feedback on whether or not interpretations and conclusions were derived from original data.

3.4.4   Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of an inquiry can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Anney, 2014:278). Auditing ensured overall trustworthiness of the research findings. Triangulation in which data from interviews was related to data from observations and sending transcripts to the participants before publication of the research report, was done as a way of enhancing confirmability in this research.

3.5   ETHICAL ISSUES

Research ethics involves a sense of caring, fairness and personal morality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:335). UNISA's Policy on Research Ethics (UNISA, 2016) stipulates a procedure that researchers may only undertake research that contributes to knowledge on the subject and that a research undertaking should be approved by an appropriate Ethics Review Committee. The commencement of field work was based on the approval by UNISA Ethics Review Committee. To get the approval, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from UNISA. Wagner *et al.* (2012:64) indicate that evidence from authorities is needed in order to gain permission to conduct research. A letter of request to use sites (*cf.* Appendix B) was written to the ECDoE, namely the Strategic Planning Policy, Research and Secretariat Services that gave response granting permission to use sites (*cf.* Appendix C).

After obtaining an ethics clearance certificate from UNISA (Ref: 2018/07/18/40917800/21/MC; *cf.* Appendix A), the researcher submitted all the

application forms together with the ethics clearance certificate to the District Director, Circuit Managers, the school principals, and through the principals, EFAL teachers of sampled schools. As the researcher, I intended to voice-record the interviews in order to ease data analysis and interpretation. Thereafter, letters requesting permission to use sites were accompanied by confirmation that the settings and participants would not be identifiable in print of the research report, but that pseudonyms would carefully be used in reference to the schools and participants.

3.5.1   Informed consent and voluntary participation

Informed consent means that participants agree to participate without feeling coerced, and that they are fully informed about the purpose, duration, method and potential uses of the research (Wagner *et al.* 2012:64). In addition, Wagner *et al.* (2012:68) emphasise that consent involves much more than just the simple signature on a form but that the guiding principle of informed consent is an individual's personal right to agree (or not) to participate in a research process and consequences. In this research, personal information of participants was collected in adherence to the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013, which emphasises the Republic of South Africa Constitution (1996) where everyone has the right to privacy. The right to privacy includes the right to protection against the unlawful collection, retention, dissemination and use of personal information. Like any other person, the participants in this study had the right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. The Protection of Personal Information Act, section 13 (1) commands that personal information must be collected for a specific, explicitly defined and lawful purpose related to a function or activity of the responsible party. Steps must be taken to ensure that the data subject (participant) is aware of the purpose of the collection of the information. The researcher adhered to this Act and made it clear to all participants in this study that collection of personal information was only for the purpose of the study. It was then the researcher's responsibility to respect and protect participants' personal information from loss, damage and unauthorised access. As participants had to give their consent in writing, a letter that contained research principles (*cf.* Appendix D) was thoroughly explained before the participants signed the consent form.

3.5.2 Protection from harm

Wagner *et al*. (2012:65) indicates that participants should be assured that in no way they will be physically, psychologically and emotionally be harmed as a result of their participation in the research study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:335) add that a sense of caring and fairness must be part of the researcher's thinking, actions and personal morality in protecting participants from experiencing humiliation and loss of trust. To avoid harm, the researcher was conscious and careful about the well-being of participants by not disclosing their identity as well as any information that may affect them negatively and assured them that their confidence will be protected from other persons. the researcher abided by the UNISA principle that a researcher should ensure that the participants are subjected only to those assessed, minimised and obviously communicated risks that are clearly necessary for the conduct of the research (UNISA, 2016:12).

3.5.3 Privacy and confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality involve hiding the identity of participants and research location and not disclosing any information that may embarrass or otherwise harm participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:334; Wagner *et al*., 2012:64). The researcher assured the teachers who participated in the research that their privacy and confidentiality, as emphasised in the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013, would be applied. In writing the research report, pseudonyms were used in reference to participants and schools. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:334-335) support that using pseudonyms protects the participants' identity even if and when the findings of the research are published. Since the sample frame was finally five teachers from three schools, Table 4.1 in Chapter 4 gives details on how the schools and participants were referred to in this study as well as the participants' profiles.

3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher explained the qualitative design and methodology that was followed during field work. Purposive sampling was presented as the method was

used in the research to select participants. Details of data collection, capturing, analysis was discussed in depth. The chapter discussed how ensuring trustworthiness was done and finally, it presented ethical issues that were considered in this study. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents research findings.

CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the qualitative methodology and multiple-case study research design that were deemed appropriate to conduct this particular study. This chapter presents findings of collected data in response to the following research questions:

What are the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

With the following sub questions:

- What are the grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers' understanding of progressed learners?
- What are the challenges experienced by EFAL teachers when teaching progressed learners?
- What strategies do grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers use when teaching the progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

4.2   DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section begins with presenting the profiles of the research participants sampled from three rural secondary schools with progressed learners in Mount Fletcher, the now called Joe Gqabi district, and compiled from data collected through observations and interviews.

Table 4.1: Research participants' profiles

Schools	Participants	Age range	Qualifications	Grade taught	Teaching experience in years	No. of progressed learners	Total no. of learners in grade
A	Participant 1	25-30	BEd. student-teacher	10	3	19	86
				11		1 (withdrawn)	40
B	Participant 2	45-50	BEd. Honours	11	22	4	112
B	Participant 3	25-30	PGCE	10	2	8 2 (withdrawn)	76
C	Participant 4	50-55	PGCE	11	24	26	82
C	Participant 5	25-30	BEd.	10	2	15	78

Letters A to C represent schools and the order of the visits. Participant numbers refer to the participants and the chronology of interactions during data collection. Ages, qualifications and teaching experience are important determiners of how and why people do things, which provided reliable information and guided the decision-making process for participation in the research and in the course of data collection.

Demographically, School A was a small school. It had two FET phase EFAL teachers with between 40 to 86 learners per class, except Grade 12 which had only 18 learners. Participant 1, from School A was a male teacher in the age range of between 25 and 30 years. He was a student-teacher studying for a Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed.) through distance learning. The teacher taught EFAL and Life Orientation in the FET phase with 86 Grade 10s (19 of them were progressed learners) and 40 Grade 11s (1 of them was progressed but withdrawn). He was in his third year of teaching experience teaching both Grades 10 and 11. He claimed that his role as an English teacher was to ensure that learners knew English properly due to the fact that almost every subject was taught in English. The observations revealed that the teacher seemed to be passionate about communication as public speaking such as speeches and debates were predominant in his lessons. However, he seemed to be challenged in managing a large class of unmotivated learners to participate in debate and be obliged to speak in English.

The atmosphere was not encouraging as the audience in the debate class cheered and jeered those who could not speak correct English even though the language proficiency seemed to be a problem for most of the learners.

School B had three FET EFAL teachers, with between 35 and 112 learners per class. Participant 2 from School B was a female teacher between the age of 45 and 50 years. She was a qualified teacher with B.Ed. Honours degree and was a newly appointed EFAL Head of the Department (HOD) who taught EFAL and Geography in Grades 11 and 12. What was impressive about Participant 2 was her effective classroom management style, despite the fact that her class was the biggest of all the observed, with 112 Grade 11 learners (4 were progressed). The researcher speculated that her age and teaching experience (22 years of teaching) were a contributory factor to effective classroom management, although the researcher also felt that her observed lesson was dominated by a 'chalk and talk' method of teaching that denied learners the opportunity of practising speaking English in that class. As an experienced teacher, Participant 2 claimed that her role was to teach learners irrespective of their diversity and said she was aware that she had to make learning participative and come to the level of her learners no matter what the content of her lesson demanded.

Participant 3, also from School B, was a female teacher between 25 and 30 years of age. She said she had completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) with Teach South Africa, which she described as an independent institution that supplies rural schools with teaching personnel to ensure quality and equitable education in disadvantage areas of the country. She taught EFAL in Grade 10 to 76 learners (8 were progressed but 2 withdrawn). Young as she was, she impressively managed her class. Classroom management seemed to be a successful culture in School B even for Participant 3 who was only in her second year of teaching. Participant 3's desire was to see her learners being able to write English tasks like essays and letters independently as this would prepare them for tertiary encounter with longer and critical writing.

School C was the biggest with five FET EFAL teachers teaching 40 to 82 learners per class. Participant 4 from School C was a female teacher of between 50 and 55 years of age. She had 24 years of teaching experienced with PGCE qualification. She was an

EFAL teacher of the observed Grade 11 class of 82 learners (26 of them were progressed). Surprisingly, she seemed to be a very shy and panic-stricken teacher with very short responses in interviews and was very brief in posing questions to her class during teaching. Participant 4 claimed her role as being one to prepare her learners for the workplace as she emphasised that if learners do not know English, it will be hard for them to be employable.

Participant 5 from School C was a young male teacher ranging between 25 to 30 years of age. He had a B.Ed. degree and taught EFAL with enthusiasm to a Grade 10 class of 78 learners (15 of them were progressed). He had only two years of teaching experience and this showed when he could not explain language conventions clearly to learners (although he could write correctly on the board) on adjustments they needed to make when changing sentences from direct to reported speech. Although there was room for improvement, such as the need for thorough lesson preparation, Participant 5 was clear with his role as an English teacher to offer learners knowledge and skills that will be necessary in their independent world experiences.

The following section presents the findings emerging from the research data collection methods, lesson observations and interviews. In reference to the notes in the lesson observation tool (Appendix G), observation findings were presented in response to the research questions. As indicated initially (*cf*.3.3.2.2), observation data was collected in order to develop a strong link between the two methods of data collection in an attempt to answer the research questions which were asked mainly in interviews. Hence, to corroborate interview findings, observation findings were interwoven with interview findings through thematic analysis in Table 4.2 which summarises the main research findings with regard to the research questions. The observation findings were further entwined in detailed presentation of research findings in section 4.4 and in discussion thereof (section 5.3).

Table 4.2: Summary of themes and findings

Research questions	Themes derived from the research questions	Sub-themes derived from participants' responses	Findings per theme
Main question: What are the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?	**Theme 1:** Teaching EFAL to progressed learners	1.1 To develop learners' literacy skills 1.2 To develop the skill of independence 1.3 To develop leaners' confidence in their skills 1.4 To enhance learners' communication proficiency 1.5 To develop learners' ability to overcome socio-economic challenges	• Although EFAL teachers understood their roles, seemingly they were not exposed to teaching able and progressed learners with cumulative backlogs in EFAL.
Sub-question 1:	Theme 2: Understanding of progressed learners		• Participants understood progressed learners as learners who were not ready for Grades 10 and 11
Sub-question 2: What are the challenges experienced by EFAL teachers when teaching progressed learners?	Theme 3: Challenges of teaching progressed learners	3.1 Negative attitude towards learning EFAL 3.2 Slow earners with diverse learning needs 3.3 Overcrowded classrooms 3.4 Lack of study material	• Participants struggled to make attitudinal and underdeveloped learners in EFAL participate in lessons. • Broad CAPS content outlined for Grades 10 and 11, the fast pace set to complete the syllabus and diverse

		3.5 Lack of human resource	learners' needs pressurised teachers to use one-size-fits-all (undifferentiated) teaching method.
		3.6 Over-aged learners	
		3.7 Domineering and being ill-disciplined	• Overcrowded classrooms that implied workload were seemingly the cause of stress for some participants.
		3.8 Delay of syllabus completion	
			• Lack of physical resources to aid teaching and learning EFAL caused frustration to participants.
			• Teacher shortages in School A meant that the unqualified and inexperienced teacher had to teach subjects he was not qualified to teach.
			• Some learners lacked foundation in EFAL and could not meet Grades 10 and 11 requirements. As a result, they disrupted teaching when forced to do oral tasks.
			• Against NPPPPR and guidelines thereof, some learners progressed having failed EFAL.
			• Some learners showed dominance over others and were ill-discipline. In

			Schools A and C, some learners disrupted teaching by making discouraging comments at others, coming late to lessons and making noise in the presence of Participants 1 and 4. • Prolonged explanation delayed syllabus completion and denied learners in-depth assessment of new skills and knowledge. • Oral activities were delayed by learners who preferred to use their home language not EFAL. • Negative effects of teaching both able and progressed learners together were vice versa.
Sub-question 3: What strategies do grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers use when teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?	**Theme 4:** Strategies used to help progressed learners to learn EFAL	4.1 Conducting extra classes 4.2 Giving written and remedial work regularly 4.3 Engaging learners in oral activities 4.4 Scaffolding	• Scaffolding occurred through teacher talk in explanations, but all learners were taught at the same pace and time (undifferentiated). • In some cases where questioning strategy was used, learners seemed to

68

| | | 4.5 Questioning
4.6 Vocabulary checks
4.7 Modelling of target language and activities
4.8 Incorporating small groups and pair work | regard the strategy as a form of punishment, therefore, they could not respond but mumbled.
• Through questioning, vocabulary checks were done but only few learners were offered opportunities to talk. Lessons were dominated by teacher talk.
• In some lessons, CAPS stipulated oral activities were considered in modelling of EFAL. Some teachers role-played oral activities, spoke English with the learners and engaged few learners in the activities.
• The deep rural locations denied learners access to profound information to improve communication proficiency in EFAL.
• In lessons where small groups were used, learners seemed encouraged to do tasks with their peers. |

4.3 THEMES

Since there were four questions in this study, therefore, each theme answered the relevant question. The questions were answered through interviews and observations.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Teaching of EFAL to progressed learners

In all three schools, participants concurred that as EFAL teachers, their role is to develop learners' literacy skills, independence skills, communication skills and confidence in their skills ability to overcome socio-economic challenges.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1: To develop learners' literacy skill

Participants 3 (School B), 4 and 5 (School C) and Participant 1(School A) concurred that their role is to help learners acquire and develop an understanding of English so that they can firstly communicate with confidence. Then building on this foundation, develop a variety of skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing and thus develop the skill of thinking and reasoning. It is vital to develop these interpersonal communication and cognitive academic skills for use in the learning of other subjects. Participant 1 said:

> *Now that every subject is done in English, it is my duty to make sure that they know English properly; they understand each and every concept. If ever they can understand English, it is easier for them to understand other subjects.* (Participant 1, School A)

> *My role is to make it a point that learners can be able to construct sentences in a form of writing. Sometimes when we are going to write essays just like letters … they can be able to write using their own minds. They can be able to narrate, tell their own stories.* (Participant 3, School B)

> *As you know that English is international, to me it is crucial to teach these learners because sometimes they will struggle to get jobs.* (Participant 4, School C)

4.3.1.2   Sub-theme 1.2: To develop independence skill

Participant 5 (School C) made it clear that knowledge and skills that learners acquire through learning English and developing a high level of proficiency, are going to help them become independent as preparation for their experience in contexts other than school, such as the community, socially and later in further or higher education and training and the workplace.

> *My role as an English teacher, I offer them with knowledge and skills that will be necessary for them to be independent in the out-world experiences* (post-schooling experiences) (Participant 5, School C)

4.3.1.3   Sub-theme 1.3: To develop learners' confidence in their skills

According to Participant 3 (School B), knowledge of the English language will give learners the self-assurance and confidence to speak the language and communicate with others, not only in the school context but beyond.

> *With orals, they can be able to… have some sort of courage because it is not going to end here; at some stage they are going to find themselves outside the high school, meaning that they must be able to construct (express) themselves in English.* (Participant 3, School B)

4.3.1.4   Sub-theme 1.4: To enhance learners' communicative proficiency

Participant 3 (School B) felt that English teachers have a major role to play to ensure that learners acquire and develop proficient communication skills and through reading improve their vocabulary and confidence in using the language. According to the CAPS

document, "research shows that the best way to develop a wide vocabulary is through extensive reading" (DBE, 2011a:11).

> *Reading also, is going to form part of their communication, the way they are going to communicate with others, because what I have observed is that a lot of learners are normally scared to speak English especially at tertiary levels so being able to speak maybe one or two sentences inside the classroom some way somehow, at some time, they will see that English is not a ghost; it's just a language they can speak even though it is not their mother tongue.* (Participant 3, School B)

4.3.1.5 Sub-theme 1.5: To develop learners' ability to overcome socio-economic challenges

It was found that there is a link between Participant 5 (School C) idea that the EFAL teacher's role is to offer knowledge and skills that will be necessary for learners to be independent. Participant 4 (School C) pointed out that English is considered the *lingua franca*, an international language used in the world of business. Therefore, learners must acquire and develop the language so that they are equipped for further and higher education and training and thus allowing them to find better positions in the workplace.

> *That is why it is a must to know English, to speak English so that it can help them to get jobs.* (Participant 4, School C)

Participant 2 (School B) referred to the development of learners' personal and social skills. The participant felt that the role of an EFAL teacher is to create an inclusive learning environment to allow learners to become actively involved in the process of teaching and learning irrespective of their differences such as physical ability or intellectual ability.

My role is to teach learners irrespective of their diversity in class. I am quite aware that I must make learning participative. I also have to come to the level of the learners no matter what the content demands of me. (Participant 2, School B)

Participants understood that they had a vital role in assisting progressed learners acquire and develop the necessary knowledge and skills.

4.3.2   Theme 2: Understanding of progressed learners

In all three schools, progressed learners were identified as learners who were not ready for the grades to which they had progressed, with EFAL, the LoLT, being considered as a barrier to learning. Participant 1 (School A) first criticised the NPPPPR as it seems to disregard the fact that some of these learners' lack readiness to leave their current grade due to failure to meet minimum requirements for promotion to the next grade. Participant 1 described progressed learners as learners who were promoted to the next grade without being ready and indicated that:

I think (laughing), I think that one (the issue of phase progression) is here to terminate the whole nation because I fail to understand; how do we take kids to the next level, to the next grade when they are not even ready for the one they are currently doing? That's where I find it problematic and we are not building the nation by so doing. If a kid is not ready for the next grade, he is not. We just need to accept and then let them be… We know they were not ready, now, how are they going to be ready for the next level? Yet they are missing out those grades they have been progressed from? They missed out! (Participant 1, School A)

In a question on why and how learners were progressed in School A, Participant 1 continued:

I think it's due to the fact that there is this rule that says a child does not have to be in one phase for more than four to five years, so I don't understand, if ever he or she is failing, how are we taking him to the next class to begin with? I think those kids are those who…, I don't know if ever I can say they missed a lot in primary or they have a problem at home or they have a problem… at large 'ba na le' (they have) problem of understanding. We know some kids have problems, Mathematical problems, language problems, speaking problems; we know we have different kids but then if ever we're going to promote them with the same problem, I think that's the problem…I'm not so certain how it is done. (Participant 1, School A)

Although Participant 1 speculated that progressed learners may have language problems which could lead to not being ready for the next grade, this very speculation correlates with perspectives of Participants 2, 3 and 4.

Progressed learners are learners who due to various reasons might not have performed and reached the expected percentages or levels to pass the language, per se. I will talk about English as my subject and you will find that maybe a learner is having a problem here and there. They are different. Others are very good in the language but they can speak but when it comes to writing, it is a different story altogether so because we are no more using those words, we simply say they are having barriers, so I am tracking with them because we say they are progressed learners because they are having learning barriers that are different from each other. (Participant 2, School B)

Participant 3 (School B) also concurred with both Participants 1 (School A) and 2 (School B) in the idea that progressed learners tend to have a problem with language which has an effect on all subjects. In the follow-up question on how learners were progressed particularly in School B, the participant replied:

The main reason that they were progressed is they failed a lot of subjects… then having failed a lot of subjects, the main reason was also this department. The Department of Education says that when a learner has already spent maybe five years in a phase, four years… I'm not sure about the years, then they have to go to another grade, so that is the main reason… you may find that some of them have failed all the subjects, but you are told, 'This learners is going.' Something of which we don't really understand. We just… (Exclaiming) yuu! How come? I'm still new in the field, having to see a learner going having failed all subjects. I just ask myself, what is going to happen? What is going to happen by the time the learner reaches Grade 12? Is it a matter of just…? Yeah, those are some of questions we normally ask ourselves. (Participant 3, School B)

Progressed learners are those learners that are struggling eeh… to catch up my lesson, but I tried. I tried by all means to help them.
(Participant 4, School C)

In response to a follow-up question on whether the twenty-six progressed learners that Participant 4 (School C) taught, were progressed due to failure of EFAL or other subjects, the participant said, '*Even other subjects.*'

Participant 5 (School C) briefly explained that progressed learners did not meet minimum requirements to be promoted to another grade and even though they did not seem to have the motivation nor the potential to succeed, they were progressed to the next level.

My understanding of progressed learners is that they do have that little potential, neh, but then they didn't meet that minimum requirements of fully progressing to another grade.
(Participant 5, School C)

With regard to age, in partial despair, Participant 3 expressed understanding of progressed learners as:

> *My understanding about progressed learners is that those learners whereby with these systems that we have nowadays,…maybe they are doing seven subjects, they have passed only home language, English and Life Orientation then just because there are certain things that are going to be looked at, their age; they are already old at that age meaning they need to be progressed to the next grade, learners of which we still need to help even though some of them it is too late for us to help them, but we are still trying our best just for them to get it there and there. Even though they may struggle with other subjects, we need to make it a point that with languages they just try their best.* (Participant 3, School B)

During EFAL lessons, it was observed that all participants taught both progressed and able learners alike but in interviews all the participants perceived progressed learners as learners who were not ready for Grades 10 and 11, implying a need for extra support. For the reason that there was no teaching method differentiation in all observed lessons, but all learners were taught in the same way, at the same time and pace regardless of possible diversity, this occurrence implied that the EFAL teachers probably perceived progressed learners to be needing the same instruction and support given to able learners. It was only in some instances where teachers deemed important to emphasise concepts that they repeated (through explanation to the whole class) the same concepts but giving different examples to scaffold learning. Although the participants did not seem to implement differentiated teaching for progressed learners, it puzzled some teachers (Participants 1 and 3) how these learners were going to cope with learning in the grades for which they were not ready. It was assumed that the participants were against learner progression.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Challenges of teaching progressed learners

During the data anlysis from the interviews and observations, the following sub-themes

emerged: Negative attitude towards learning EFAL, slow learners with diverse learning needs, overcrowded classrooms, lack of physical and human resources, lack of readiness for grades 10 and 11, over-aged learners, domineering and ill-disciplined, and delay of syllabus completion.

4.3.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1: Negative attitude towards learning EFAL

In Schools A and B some progressed learners only participated positively in easy EFAL tasks. When expressing experiences of teaching EFAL to progressed leaners, Participant 1 who taught both grades (10 and 11) in School A indicated that progressed learners enjoyed and participated actively in the lessons on concepts they understood. However, they displayed a negative attitude towards challenging concepts and became offended and disruptive during teaching if they did not understand what was taught. Participant 3 (School B) encountered a similar experience. Participant 3 complained that progressed learners did not want to express themselves in English, not because they always did not know what to say, but because they were scared to use the language.

> *I think they happen to enjoy the lesson to things they understand. They happen to be participating actively to what they know. But when they come to those which they find difficult, they start having negative attitude. They start disrupting and let us not forget that they happen to be old for the fact that they repeated maybe a class twice or three times and they are being progressed to the next class. They are old and they feel offended if all the time they do not get what they learn right while the others get them right. So, I think that's the problem* (Participant 1, School A).

> *My experience is that a lot of them do not want to express themselves in English. Normally, when we try to speak EFAL with them, some of them will just keep quiet, not answering you not because they do not understand but because they are scared to express themselves in EFAL due to lack of confidence.* (Participant 3, School B)

Participants 1 and 3 viewed progressed learners as having a negative attitude towards learning challenging aspects in EFAL. In Participant 1(School A) lessons that were observed, Grade 11 learners had to deliver their prepared speeches and Grade 10s were debating while Participant 3 (School B) was asking questions following up on learners' understanding of the literary text that was read during the lesson. For both participants, learners participated but with a very high level of difficulty in speaking in English. The other learners in Participant 1's classes could not hold their amusement when the presenters made mistakes or ran short of words when trying to express themselves in EFAL.

4.3.3.2   Sub-theme 3.2: Slow learners with diverse learning needs

During the interview session in School A, Participant 1's experienced that progressed learners were slow and have diverse learning needs showed later in the participant's response to what challenges the participant experienced when teaching EFAL to progressed learners. Participant 2 (School B) pointed out that teaching progressed learners was challenging in that the teacher had to use all sorts of teaching methods including peer activities and allocate extra time for progressed learners. According to the participant, progressed learners demonstrated a curriculum gap evident in the lack of a primary school foundation, but the learners also had individual learning problems concerning the LoLT. Some learners were not good at speaking the language, others could not write in English while there were those who did not understand the language because they lacked adequate vocabulary.

Participant 2 (School B) concurred with Participant 3 (School B) by complaining about learners' inability to write sensible essays due to influence of mother tongue. They spelled English words in their Sesotho or IsiXhosa home language. Participant 4, School C briefly added that she needed extra time and love (patience) in order to meet progressed learners' needs when teaching. Participant 5 (School C) concurred with Participant 3 (School B) by mentioning that progressed learners struggled to learn because they lacked a primary school foundation in basic English language skills. The participants described their experiences of teaching EFAL to progressed learners who are slow:

(Exclaiming) Yooh! It's rather… challenging in fact because other than commanding with words, you still have to use gestures, use all sorts of skills to make them understand and some of them do learn better in peer exercises or in peer work or peer activities. You might be there as a teacher but you find that there are certain areas that they do not understand, so as a teacher you collaborate all those skills to make them to be… it makes life challenging but we do cope because really dealing with them as I said, when you are dealing with listening, some they do… in fact they have different problems; the other one is not good in speech, the other one is not good in writing and the other one does not even have an understanding of words, so you have to go an extra mile. It's rather challenging really but I am enjoying it now. It was difficult when I started doing it but at this point in time, I am tracking well with them because they are promising really. (Participant 2, School B)*

Another thing that I have experienced is that there are still other learners that still struggle to write essays in English. The way they write English is the same as writing home language though two or three sentences are going to be of English but you can tell that a learner doesn't have a good foundation of writing in English. Though what they are writing maybe is straight to the topic that you have given them, but the sentences themselves do not make sense. (Participant
3, School B)

I experience that these learners are slow learners. It will take time… you must have time, you must have love for them, you must have extra time for them like morning classes. You must give them every day, a homework. (Participant 4, School C)

My experience to these progressed learners pertaining to EFAL is that those learners seems to be very hard for them, such that they

lack some of the information from the previous grades. (Participant
5, School C)

During the observations, only Participants 2 and 3 (School B) and 4(School C) seemed to slightly consider the ZPD as they tried to check learners' pre-existing knowledge of the topic through some questioning. Only few learners were given the chance to respond to questions about the particular topic the teacher was about to teach. Participants 2 and 3 (School B) and 4 struggled to encourage a few learners who were not confident to speak. Superficial checking of pre-existing knowledge denied the teachers the crucial opportunity to authentically verify the extent of individual learners' competency of knowledge and skills learned in the previous grades. Even though learners had been taught at a higher level, there were deficits in their learning.

Participants 2 (School B) mentioned that when teaching progressed learners, one had to use a variety of teaching methods such as using gestures and grouping learners with their peers to help progressed learners understand concepts. Observations revealed a contradiction to what Participant 2 (School B) mentioned. During teaching, there was no teaching method differentiation for diversity in Participant 2 (School B) observed class. All learners, progressed and able, were taught in the same overcrowded classroom, at the same time and pace with the same teaching methods and teaching aids. It was assumed that failure to implement differentiated teaching methods for diverse learners meant that the 'one-size-fits-all' teaching method would possibly leave struggling learners with cumulative barriers to learn.

4.3.3.3   Sub-theme 3.3: Overcrowded classrooms

The other contributory factor emerging from observations, which influenced teaching of EFAL, was that with an exception of enough teaching space for 40 Grade 11s (School A), all classes observed were overcrowded leaving participants with little choice to create learning space. Due to overcrowding, Participant 1 (School A) and Participant 4 (School C) battled with classroom management.

4.3.3.4   Sub-theme 3.4: Lack of study material

It was observed that schools were inadequately resourced. For instance, there was no school which had a library or easy access to the internet. Learners shared desks and textbooks. In response to a follow-up question on how Grade 11 learners (School A) were helped to find relevant information to the speeches which the learners delivered with great difficulty, and whether there was a library anywhere near the school, it was clear that learners struggled on their own in that remote area to access information:

> *They find it (relevant information to the speeches) themselves. I*
> *do not help them. The only ones I help are Grade 8s though I am*
> *not teaching them but most of the time when they are given tasks*
> *they come to me. I help them how to find, not to find the answers*
> *for them, but for Grade 11s, we, I just give them a topic and they*
> *just go get search as a matter from internet, from…*
> *We don't have a library. We do not.* (Participant 1, School A)

4.3.3.5   Sub-theme 3.5: Lack of qualified teachers

Of concern in this study is that in some rural Eastern Cape schools, teachers are often neither qualified nor experienced; the EFAL teacher for both grades 10 and 11 (School A) was unqualified, as evidenced in Table 4.1.

4.3.3.6   Sub-theme 3.6: Over-aged learners

In Schools A and B, participants raised the concern that progressed learners were over-aged for the classes. Participants 1 and 3 concurred that over-aged progressed learners exacerbated problems in the classes and suggested that a solution would be to admit them in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres. Participants disagreed with phase progression according to age cohort:

> *If ever we feel like 'bana ba baholo' (children are old), and then*
> *why don't we take them to ABET if we see that they don't qualify for*

FET? In ABET they also have these subjects that we have here, but then it is only for people who are older, but then the fact of progressing learners 'aa!' (No!). That one seriously, it is just a ticking bomb waiting to explode. (Participant 1, School A)

Participant 1 continued to emphasise the idea that phase progression is problematic and feels that ABET centres are 'a mistake', therefore the policy should be revised:

*… I think something should be done with that (*phase progression*). As much as I love and believe that the Department of Education is doing quite right but with that one it was a mistake for the fact that they invented ABET. I don't see any reason of keeping them if ever a child is failing, failing and failing. That shows that the child is not ready for the next class. Pushing them forward is giving us more problems. You don't know one then you are given two. You don't know one and you don't know two and you are given three… (Laughing) You see it's a problem. I don't get it but maybe some have got a different view.* (Participant 1, School A)

It was surprising that in School C where there was a large number of progressed learners in Grade 11, Participant 4 (School C) did not mention any concern about their age yet in observation one could tell that there were older learners in the class. One was even given more attention by the teacher as he came late to the class. Every time when a question was asked, he was the first one chosen to answer it and in response, other learners laughed and cheered at him even though he could only smile and murmur.

Though it was motivating to observe a large, organised yet a well-managed class in School B (Figure 4.1) with the advantage of only a few progressed learners, it was alarming to observe the frustration of Participants 1 (School A) and 4 (School C) in managing their noisy classes with the inclusion of larger numbers of progressed learners. Participants 1 and 4 spent much of the teaching time reprimanding learners who made it very difficult for the lessons to continue. Due to noise level of the class,

Participant 1 (School A) w a r n e d the learners about pushing him cross 'the limits', which was assumed to say he would punish the learners. It was assumed that learners' uncontrollable behaviour was a defence mechanism to being forced to do what they did not know. The learners who seemed to take advantage of their age were boys, especially in Participant 1's class where there were more boys than girls. It seemed that they disrespected the male teacher (Participant 1, School A) because he was young. Participant 1 seemed to have expectations that were too high for that particular class and was a bit harsh as compared to Participant 4 who was an older female teacher.

The figure below illustrates a classroom setting (Figure 4.1) consisting of a large number of learners (108), as well as four progressed learners. This classroom seemed better set out and managed.

Figure 4.1: Participant 2 (School B) classroom

Figure 4.2 shows the classroom setting which was not well organised, of 86 progressed and able learners who were not quite manageable.

Figure 4.2: Participant 1 (School A) classroom

The observations revealed that although each classroom was equipped with some desks, tables and chairs and a chalkboard, concern arose about the provision of educational charts, samples of texts or anything on the walls to provide resources and a range of materials to scaffold learners. It is assumed that equipping the classroom with educational posters attracts learners' attention, offers some English texts and gets learners thinking as well as providing a framework to scaffold their construction of knowledge.

4.3.3.7 Sub-theme 3.7: Domineering and being ill-disciplined

Although participants in School B did not discuss progressed learners' behaviour, Participant 1 (School A) complained that progressed learners tended to domineer in the class while Participant 4 mentioned that they were ill-disciplined, and as such, had a negative effect on the other learners in the class.

> *Firstly, I've been complaining about progressed learners because*
> *they happen to take charge and control the class. If ever the teacher*
> *is not around, the able ones are not going to study unless the*

progressed are outside. That is the first thing that I hate with progressed learners. (Participant 1, School A)

Yooh! They affect able learners so much. First of all, the able learners know the time of getting into class but the progressed learners, you will get that some entered the class after 30 or after 25 minutes, the teacher is in the class. They make a hell of a noise. Sometimes they are so chaotic; you don't know what happened to them. Even the able learners now tried to scrutinize themselves, to adjust themselves to them now that they know, they are above them. (Participant 4, School C)

It was observed that some of the learners Participants 1 and 4 indicated in follow up questions during interviews that were progressed learners, showed dominance and/or unacceptable behaviour during the lessons. In Participant 1 (School A) class, seemingly dominant learners stood on chairs shouting and discouraging those who were supposed to debate as if there was no teacher present in the class. In Participant 4 (School C) class, learners who came late walked slowly and noisily into the class and seemed unconcerned that the lesson had started. Participants 1 (School A) and 4 spent some teaching time reprimanding misbehaving learners.

In School A, it was found that progressed learners who may have repeated a number of grades several times tend to dominate over younger learners who had never been retained in their previous grades. They disrupt able learners' studies if the teacher was absent which causes frustration not only to the able learners but also the teacher who has to deal with ill behaviour so that teaching and learning can happen.

4.3.3.8 Sub-theme 3.8: Delay of syllabus completion

All participants indicated that progressed learners were academically slow. Participant 1's statement below also reveals the challenge that when the teacher tried to assist progressed learners regarding their slow learning, they felt like they were not favoured.

They delay a lesson to an extent that I decided to… though they feel like I don't like them, I give a lesson but they delay because they are being progressed; they missed a lot, so I end up giving, dividing my class into two, not really in the classroom but then by…by giving them different tasks. The tasks that I am giving them, I am trying to give them maybe the tasks from their previous class to try to close that gap. I try by all means to get them the piece I think they missed for these chapters that we are doing so every time when we do a task, when I see that they don't understand that one, I give them the task that will build them to come and catch up with the rest of the class but then they normally delay the class. (Participant 1, School A)

Although Participant 1 indicated a challenge that progressed learners affected able learners negatively as they were slow, Participant 2 witnessed the challenge but also saw a positive side in that able learners helped progressed learners.

They (progressed learners) *are slow, in simpler words. They affect able learners in such that those that are very good, they tend to be bored when you tend to repeat several times what you are saying but what is quite amazing is that because they are challenging as I am saying, you find that they have pulled them to their level. As much as we think that they don't have problems, but to my surprise, even those that we think that they are progressed they are competing well with others in terms of written work with all the efforts that we are. Yes, in class here and there they might feel that they are threatened but as they perform now in the task they have actually helped them to uplift their levels. They have really affected them and at the same time they have promoted their performance because they are really progressing from where I took them.* (Participant 2, School C)

It seems that in this particular class, the participant has managed to get learners to work together where the able learners help the progressed learners, and as a result there was learning from both sides. However, Participant 3 (School B) highlighted with frustration, the issue of learners not understanding basic instructions in English which forces code-switching to the learners' home language. In addition, the teacher confirmed that progressed learners were slow and were challenging as they were not completing written work:

> *When it comes to these progressed learners, normally they affect the ones who have passed because sometimes when you are in the classroom, you are forced to code-switch because they don't really understand what you are trying to say. No matter how hard you try to simplify it in simple English, they won't even understand it, so normally we quote-switch and when you quote-switch you are disadvantaging those learners who can understand you because they become bored…and sometimes when it comes to writing of class works, these progressed learners they are normally slow. Even if you have got the time frame that by 15 minutes 'you need to be done,' what they are going to say to you, you may find that by the end of that fifteen minutes, a learner has just written the heading, 'classwork', today's date, they are done; meaning you can't continue marking (emphasising), you are going to…stop!... You can't do corrections hence other learners have not written their work meaning sometimes, instead of going forward with the syllabus you are normally behind trying to wait for those ones to follow though some learners are fast, which is in a way disadvantaging those who have passed.* (Participant 3, School B)

According to Participant 5 (School C), academic progress was affected as able learners tended to lose focus due to boredom particularly when progressed learners delayed lessons because the teacher needed to repeat the same concepts that had been previously explained, which rendered teaching ineffective.

These progressed learners affect those able ones in such a way
that these able ones get bored when I always repeat, maybe some
of the things that I have already done and they don't put that much
focus in class such that now the class now cannot be effective
because now they take that advantage that they already know this
thing so they affect these ones because they don't pay much
attention and now the class cannot be very effective now that they
tell themselves that or they think that they already know this thing
so they don't have any focus in class. (Participant 5, School C)

As it was found that progressed learners were ill-disciplined and disruptive in classes, especially in Schools A and C, the findings reveal that in all research sites the presence of progressed learners in classes tends to challenge, frustrate EFAL teachers and impact on curriculum coverage.

4.3.4   Theme 4: Strategies used to help progressed learners to learn EFAL

The policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014:7) reports that every learner may need support, but some may need more than others. In addition, this support may be short-term or in other cases, long-term but should ensure that learning contexts and lessons are accessible to all learners (DBE, 2014:14). Strategies to support and help progressed learners to learn EFAL emerged from the findings of this study.

4.3.4.1   Sub-theme 4.1: Conducting extra classes

Participant 1 (School A) stated that it was challenging to attempt to finish the syllabus when learners were unable to construct basic sentences. Therefore, in extra classes, teachers focused on the skill of constructing sentences by writing essays.

The fact ya (of) morning and afternoon classes, those are only
there to help us to cover syllabus because by so doing it
sometimes delays the syllabus. For me, I find it pointless to try

> *finish the syllabus only to find that the kids cannot even write a sentence; they cannot construct their own sentences, so, most of the time I make sure that they construct their own sentences, write essays and we exchange them trying to mark, see the mistakes they did as the class, not the essays that we are going to record but just see if ever they are going to understand.* (Participant 1, School A)

It was however uncertain whether Participant 1 actually conducted extra classes or considered syllabus coverage as another way to help learners learn English. In contrast, Participant 2 (School B) considered extra classes important because progressed learners were given more attention than when they were being taught with able learners.

> *I always have a class with them specifically from three to five o'clock, Monday to Thursday. Even if I have taught them in class but I still* have *to have that class with them because during the learning and teaching time… I'm… to be honest with, at times I tend to ignore them because I know that if I can concentrate on that I might even lose concentration on the ones that are the majority of them that are there, so I made that arrangement with them that they know that they are here from 3 to 5 o'clock Monday to Thursday. I deal with them specifically. I know that it is something not very good and I'm isolating them from others, but I have to do it because of specific reasons that I have already highlighted.* (Participant 2, School B)

Participant 2 realised that she needed to give both able and progressed learners the opportunity to learn at their own pace. To ensure that this occurred, extra lessons were scheduled for progressed learners so that during class time, focus could be given to able learners. In contrast, Participant 3 (School B) who taught in the same school as Participant 2, claimed to have previously held extra classes but stopped conducting them due to certain constraints.

I once did it at some time but it never really worked because a lot of these learners are coming from deep rural areas of which a lot of them they use scholar transport so them having to come here… and some of them have already given up, so 2 or 3 may come but it's not. Even if you come but it doesn't normally work because of the environment that we live in because normally we do need them to come maybe Saturdays and Sundays but it's not possible because of the environment that we live at. If maybe there were a chance, whereby they stay maybe inside the school premises, it was going to be possible for us to take them and I know it was going to be helpful having them here. (Participant 3, School B)

As a common practice, Participant 5 (School C) also conducted extra classes for progressed learners in order to cover content that learners missed in previous classes or found challenging and needed repetition.

The support that I offer for those progressed learners, I make sure that I do have some extra time for them and also, I personally attend such learners whom I see they are lacking somewhere somehow especially to some of the information they need. (Participant 5, School C)

4.3.4.2   Sub-theme 4.2: Giving written and remedial work regularly

Although it was not observed during the lessons, all the teachers from three research sites mentioned that they give written and remedial work regularly as a strategy that helped progressed learners learn EFAL better. Participant 1 (School A) said that his learners had a problem with spelling and mentioned that when notes were written, learners just copied them. So, verbal notes were given first and then learners wrote what they heard which helped them with both listening and vocabulary skills.

When it comes to writing, because they have a problem with spelling, it's very rare for me to write them notes on the board.

Normally, I give them verbally so that they can try on their own to write the words that they didn't understand, every word, themselves but the ones they find too difficult for them to write normally they ask me, but I think that is the only way because writing the notes on the board, it makes no difference. They are just copying it. They are not going to know it but if ever you give them verbally, on that case you help them with listening skills; you prepare them with spelling because they are going to write those notes in the way they understand them and later on I will go and check if ever they wrote what they were supposed to write. (Participant 1, School A)

Participant 2's approach in engaging learners in written activities differed from other participants as during teaching, she divided the tasks into manageable sections for progressed learners to understand with a clear explanation. The classwork was then reinforced with an extra assessment to be completed independently at home. However, during lesson observation, Participant 2 (School B) claims indicated below were not implemented particularly to progressed learners who probably needed particular and differentiated attention during formal teaching time.

Most of the time I always really come to their level because the advantage I am having is that I know each one's problem so to assist them is just to give them bits and bits of work. I don't treat them as other learners. I am very sorry to do that. I know it is not allowed but I have to make bits of work. That is to portion the work so that they understand it. I have to talk about, for example, in the lesson that I was deliberating on, I had to make features and then I had to break them down for them because if I hadn't done that they would just mix all the issues at the same time. So, I have to break down the work but at the end of the day I make sure that the objective of the day is achieved. That's basically how I assist them, and secondly, I always do remedial work with them and I always give them a lot of homework even if I repeat the same things but

differently in terms of wording so that they do not see that I actually
make them repeat the work. That's how I normally assist them.
(Participant 2, School B)

On the other hand, Participant 3 (School B) engaged progressed learners in writing a variety of texts in order to be able to express themselves and then used the text for working on aspects that needed improvement such as spelling, grammar, syntax and punctuation.

> *When it comes to writing, those who are progressed, I normally*
> *give them letters to write because I know with writing, that is when*
> *they are going to be able to express themselves more and learn*
> *the spelling. They are not answering short questions there. They*
> *will just write. That is an easy way of knowing whether a learner*
> *can write or not, so I normally give them letters, longer*
> *transactional essays so that they express, daily entries and tell me*
> *what they feel. I ask them questions like: How did you feel about*
> *that particular situation? Write it as it is. Don't wait for a perfect*
> *word. Whatever that is coming just write it, then we take it from*
> *there.* (Participant 3, School B)

During the lesson observation, it was impressive to see how well the teacher (Participant 3, School B) integrated EFAL learning skills. Although the methods of teaching and assessment were the same for both progressed and able learners, homework given was based on the literary text read in the class but required learners to produce a creative writing text, a component in EFAL. It was assumed that if the teaching of the written text is not done in isolation but linked to the content of the text and to what learners already read in literature, makes engagement in the written text much easier.

Participant 4 commented that progressed learners needed to be given homework every day in order to help them learn English and ensure that what was learned in class, was reinforced by homework. Although Participant 5 (School C) did not elaborate on how

remedial work was done, it was revealed that the participants understood that progressed learners needed to have the foundation laid in previous grades in order to confidently progress to the next levels.

All participants indicated that they conducted extra classes and others mentioned that they gave remedial work and homework every day to progressed learners, but there was no evidence during the observations. Assessment was done orally except in School B where only Participant 3 gave homework which did not provide immediate feedback for the researcher to observe.

4.3.4.3   Sub-theme 4.3: Engaging learners in oral activities

Participants 1 and 3 (Schools A and B) indicated that to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL, learners participated in oral activities. Participant 1 explained that the learners who found the LoLT as a barrier to learning did not have confidence. Therefore, to help them learn English and develop their interpersonal communication proficiency, they were engaged in debates and speech activities.

> *One thing I learned is majority of them I think they lack confidence.*
> *But the ones who are having a problem with the language itself to*
> *the extend that they were under the expression that English is*
> *supposed to be a subject to them. The first thing I tried to raise to*
> *them is that English is a language; it's more like Xhosa, Sotho; it's*
> *another language that you can learn to speak. Most of the time we*
> *have the debates, we have the prepared speech whereby we have*
> *to ask them questions trying to check if ever they can answer, they*
> *can understand a question in the English context. That's how I try*
> *to help them.* (Participant 1, School A)

Observations in School A revealed that Grade 11 learners experienced difficulty in their oral speeches and doing prepared reading. The learners in this particular class were able learners with no progressed learners in the grade, as the only learner who was progressed had dropped out of school. To avoid speculations that learners were not

adequately assisted to prepare for the oral presentations, a follow-up question was asked as to how the teacher had helped the learner who delivered a speech to find relevant information and whether the learners had access to a library where they could find relevant information on their speech topics.

> *Before they started with the activity, I gave them different tasks. I said others are going to do debate, others discussions, unprepared speech, prepared and prepared reading. I arrange them into groups. When I asked them "Which one do you prefer?" one learner said, "I have done them all. I would love to have an unprepared. I just want to see what I can say." I think he likes the challenge; that is why he chose to do unprepared, so I just gave him something that is basic… I just wanted to give him something so that I can see if ever he is ready for it, if ever something happens. I do not help those who are doing unprepared. They chose, themselves and they find relevant information themselves. I do not help them. They search from internet, from…(Interrupted with the question on whether they have a library)…No, we don't have a library. We do not.* (Participant 1, School A)

Participant 3 concurred with Participant 1's use of CAPS stipulated orals to help learners learn English. Furthermore, the participant found that openly communicating with the learners on a friendly social basis, let to more confidence being developed.

> *Normally, with progressed learners I become their friend and speak English with them whenever we communicate. I can just call them even for five minutes and just say, can you please go and take that thing for me there? Then some of them will just answer in English. Even though it is broken, I will just smile back at them then they know that we haven't done anything wrong and normally when I am in the classroom, I tell them that even myself*

> *I attended the same schools as 'you'. We come from the same*
> *page but the more you speak, the more you learn.* (Participant 3,
> School B)

It was observed that Participants 2 (School B), Participants 4 and 5 (School C) lessons were dominated by teacher talk as they explained features of a text and language structure and conventions. This type of teacher-centred lesson denied learners the opportunity to talk during the lesson and develop their English language skills.

4.3.4.4   Sub-theme 4.4: Scaffolding

Scaffolding appeared to be used by all participants to help learners to learn EFAL. Before the start of oral presentations comprising of a debate scheduled for Grade 10 learners, Participant 1 (School A) gave guidance on how many speakers would participate and outlined each of the different roles of the speakers. In the course of the debate, the teacher assisted the learners by emphasising or clarifying what debate speakers were trying to argue as some of the speakers mumbled English words and were not audible enough to be heard. During interviews, the participant gave evidence that scaffolding – assisting learners to learn skills they could not master on their own was crucial in teaching EFAL.

> *I always give progressed learners some passages to read. They*
> *start to read them with me so that I can help them with words that*
> *they cannot pronounce. I describe or try to unpack the passage*
> *for them so that they understand. I let them go home and re-read*
> *it again and tomorrow I ask them… they narrate to me what it is*
> *going on in that passage.* (Participant 1, School A)

In a lesson of features of a text, Participant 2 (School B) used scaffolding by bringing in samples of a text that was going to be taught in order for the class to view and identify them. Through questioning and writing learners' responses on the chalk board, the teacher helped learners become acquainted with the features of the text. In interviews the participant revealed her consideration of scaffolding.

95

> *To assist them* (progressed learners) *is just to give bits and bits of work. I don't treat them as other learners. I am very sorry to do that. I know it is not allowed but I have to do that. I have to make bits of work. That is to portion the work so that they understand it. For example, in the lesson that I was deliberating on, I had to make features and then I had to break them down for them because if I hadn't done that they would just mix all the issues at the same time so you will have to break down the work but at the end of the day you make sure that all those constitute to one objective of the day.* (Participant 2, School B)

Participant 3 (School B) whose lesson topic was reading a literary text, assisted learners by reading some parts but also encouraged them to take part. Her integration of reading and writing was an example of scaffolding as with this foundation, the teacher continued with the theme that was dealt with during reading to teach a written text. After highlighting features of the text, learners were required to complete a writing task. However, the teacher worked with the learners on the first part of the task and then explained how they should complete the task.

Both Participants 4 and 5 (School C) lessons were based on language skills and conventions. The participants assisted learning of EFAL by explaining language aspects and rules to consider in relation to the language aspects covered in the lesson. Although assessment was only done orally, the participants checked learners' understanding of the lessons by allowing the learners to instruct the teacher what to write on the chalk board when doing tasks based on the lesson.

4.3.4.5   Sub-theme 4.5: Questioning

It was observed that all five participants used closed questions to check whether the learners were following and were focused on the lessons. Open ended questions directed to specific learners were used by Participants 2 (School B) to check understanding and Participant 4 (School C) to make learners concentrate and participate in the lessons. In interviews, some participants confirmed the use of

questioning to help learners learn EFAL and to differentiate between able learners and progressed learners who understood the lesson and those who did not.

> *Most of the time we have the debates; we have the prepared speech whereby we have to ask them questions trying to check if they an answer and understand a question in the English context.* (Participant 1, School A)

> *I ask some questions and most of the questions are for me to identify them. I ask questions from previous grades or the questions which I think they know already. Therefore, that is whereby now I will identify that, no, this learner has to know this thing, but now lacks some of the information.* (Participant 5, School C)

4.3.4.6   Sub-theme 4.6: Vocabulary checks

It was observed that all participants used questions and wrote examples of key words on the chalk board to check learners' understanding of the words used predominantly in the lessons. A vocabulary check was done through questioning mostly in Participants 2, 3, 4 and 5's lessons. In Participant 1 (School A) lessons (oral presentations) the teacher explained key words relevant to the lesson, for instance, debaters' roles at the beginning of the presentations and only when clarifying what some debaters were saying. There were observed situations where Participant 2 (School B) and Participants 4 and 5 (School C) asked questions to check learners' understanding of key words. However, the participants themselves answered some questions in instances where learners did not answer satisfactorily. It was assumed that the schools needed more relevant resources to help in improving learners' vocabulary. In response to what challenges the participants experienced and what strategies they used when teaching EFAL to progressed learners, implications were made during interviews that some participants used vocabulary checks as a strategy to teach EFAL.

Progressed learners have different problems; one is not good in speech, the other one is not good in writing and the other one does not even have an understanding of words, per se, so you

have to go an extra mile of actually having other than a dictionary but demonstrate. (Participant 2, School B)

Normally I give progressed learners verbal notes so that they can try on their own to write the words that they didn't understand, but the ones they find too difficult for them to write, they ask me. If ever you give them (notes) verbally, you help them with listening skills; you prepare them with spelling because they are going to write those notes in the way they understand them and later on I will go and check if ever they wrote what they were supposed to write. (Participant 1, School A)

4.3.4.7   Sub-theme 4.7: Modelling of target language and activities

All participants demonstrated speaking English with the learners throughout the lessons. In particular, Participant 1 (School A) opportunities created for learners to speak and demonstrated being one of the debaters while he also played his role as a teacher when there was a need to explain in the course of the oral presentations. Participant 2 (School B) presented samples of the text she taught to develop learners' creativity when presenting their own texts. Participant 3 (School B) too, demonstrated reading parts of the literary text which helped in the easy flow of the lesson. However, in some cases learners read with stammers and were stuck with pronouncing difficult words which tended to affect understanding and the story line. Modelling of EFAL was mentioned in interviews.

It's rather diff… challenging in fact because other than commanding with words, you still have to use gestures, use all sorts of skills to make them to understand. (Participant 2, School B)

Normally, with progressed learners I become their friend and when I become their friend, I speak English with them whenever I communicate with them I can just call them even for five minutes,

'Can you please go and take that thing for me there?' Then some of them will be like…

She will just answer in English. Even though it is broken, I will just smile back at them then they know that we haven't done anything wrong. (Participant 3, School B)

4.3.4.8   Sub-theme 4.8: Incorporating small groups and pair work

Incorporating small groups and dividing learners into pairs was not common practice with some participants. However, it was evident with Participant 1(School A) Grade 11 learners who delivered speeches. They worked in pairs for prepared speeches except one learner who presented an unprepared speech. In the Grade 10 debates, (Participant 1's other class) learners were grouped and given different topics although the lesson duration did not allow all groups to be observed. It appeared that grouping learners gave them some sense of security, an opportunity to help each other when the need arose and encouraged individuals to engage in tasks knowing that their peer group would help them when necessary. Although it was not evident that Participant 2 (School B) used pair work as a strategy to help learners learn EFAL, the participant mentioned that sometimes she used peers to teach others as often this helped the learners gain a better understanding.

Some of them (progressed learners) do learn better in peer exercises or in peer work or peer activities. You might be there as a teacher but you find that there are certain areas that they do not understand, so as a teacher you collaborate all those skills. (Participant 2, School B)

Participant 2 (School B) also mentioned in interviews that during extra classes with progressed learners, teaching was conducted in smaller groups than when both able

and progressed learners are in a combined class. Small group teaching is likely to enable teachers to reach and support individual learners better than in large classes.

Through the interviews, this study revealed that participants conducted extra classes, gave written and remedial work regularly and involved learners in CAPS stipulated oral activities to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL. However, in the short duration of observations, no evidence was gathered on conducting extra classes, written work and remedial work. Observations revealed that the participants also considered scaffolding, questioning, vocabulary checks, modelling the target language and incorporating small group and pair work to develop learners' proficiency in EFAL. However, in some lessons, teacher talk dominated, denying learners the opportunity to speak and practise the target language. The SDT was inadequately considered yet as the theory suggests, learning happens through interaction with more knowledgeable others using language.

4.4   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented findings emerging from observations and interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Themes that were used in data presentation were derived from the research questions while sub- themes emerged from participants' responses. Findings from observations were interwoven to verify interview findings. The study revealed that regardless of the policy stipulation that learners should only progress to the next grade having passed the LoLT, in two research sites learners were progressed with age cohort which presented challenges for teachers who had to work with large classes, few resources, difficult behaviour in order to ensure proficiency in EFAL.

The next chapter summarises the main findings with reference to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework that guided this study. Chapter 5 also presents conclusions and recommendations with regard to the main findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presents the findings of the study which have emerged from observations and interviews. This last chapter begins with a summary of chapters, and then goes on to a discussion of the main findings of this empirical study with which the researcher attempted to answer all the research questions. This chapter also makes recommendations with regard to the main research findings. Limitations and delimitations of the study and aspects for further research are also explained.

5.2   SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 offered an orientation to the study which comprised background for the study, introduction of the theoretical framework, the rationale for this empirical study, the statement of the problem, research questions, as well as the purpose for and objectives of the study. Measures for trustworthiness, research ethics, study limitations and delimitations were discussed ending with a definition of key concepts used in the study.

Chapter 2 presented the theoretical and contextual frameworks of progressed learners. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory that guided the study. In order to understand the phenomenon of learner progression and the issue of learners entering the FET phase lacking proficiency in EFAL, policies on learner progression were reviewed. Scholarship review was done on teachers' experiences and perspectives of teaching in the era of learner progression. Review was also done on challenges EFAL teachers experience when teaching progressed learners. Literature on EFAL as the LoLT as well as the concept of communication proficiency were further reviewed.

Chapter 3 presented the methodology followed in this study. The qualitative research approach was underpinned by a constructivist research paradigm, guided by a multiple-

case study research type using observations and interviews as data collection techniques, all of which were discussed in detail.

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the study from the observations and interviews analysed data. Themes and sub-themes emerged supported by observations and verbatim quotes elicited from the interviews.

Chapter 5 summarises key scholarship review findings and the main findings of the empirical study. Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings were made. Limitations and delimitations of the study are discussed, and the chapter concludes with an outline of aspects for further research.

5.3   DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The following themes are discussed:

Theme 1: Teaching of EFAL to progressed learners
Theme 2: Understanding of progressed learners
Theme 3: Challenges of teaching progressed learners
Theme 4: Strategies used to help progressed learner to learn EFAL

5.3.1   Discussion of Theme 1: Teaching of EFAL to progressed learners

In Chapter 2, teaching progressed learners was viewed in a broad perspective of inclusive education although this study was limited to teaching EFAL to progressed learners with barriers to learning but with no physical disability. Donohue and Bornman (2015:2) describe inclusive education as teaching learners with disabilities in the same classroom as their same age typically developing peers using appropriate supports to facilitate their social and intellectual education. Stott *et al.* (2015:103) state that due to implementation of the progression policy in primary and lower secondary schools, large numbers of unmotivated, ill-disciplined progressed learners place an immense emotional burden and increased workload on teachers working in the already difficult

low quintile South African schools – non-fee-paying schools that serve the poorest communities (*cf.* Chapter 1, section 1.2).

The participants in the current study expressed their understanding of their roles towards progressed learners. It was found that the participants had to develop learners' literacy skills, to develop the skill of independence, to develop leaners' confidence in their skills, to develop learners' communication skills and to develop learners' ability to overcome socio-economic challenges. Regardless of perceptions participants had about progressed learners, their roles were in line with CAPS identification of the important role of language in cognitive development or learning (*cf.* Chapter 2, section 2.3.5). Kim (2016:40) affirms that English is an essential tool for academic and career advancement around the world while Cekiso *et al.* (2015) proclaim that English language proficiency is essential for South African learners who are expected to complete tasks in English and also in other subjects.

5.3.2   Discussion of Theme 2: Understanding of progressed learners

According to Spaull (2013:3; 2015:34), the strong legacy of apartheid and consequent correlation between education and wealth have meant that generally, poorer learners in South Africa perform worse academically in the vast majority of schools which serve black learners. The schools remain dysfunctional and unable to impart the necessary skills to learners who cannot read, write and compute at grade appropriate levels. In the current study, in all three schools, progressed learners were considered as learners who were not ready for Grades 10 and 11 as they lacked foundation in EFAL (*cf.* Chapter 4, Theme 2). The DBE (2011a:8-9) confirms that at FET stage, grades 10 to 12, many learners still cannot communicate well in their first additional language (FAL), therefore, teachers have to provide support and a curriculum that enables learners to use their additional language at a high level of proficiency to prepare them for further or higher education or the world of work.

As stated in Chapter 3 (section 3.2.1), this qualitative study was embedded in a constructivist paradigm that believes in the existence of multiple realities. To understand how progressed learners were admitted to the FET phase being unprepared for grades 10 and 11 and having a backlog in EFAL, a follow-up question was asked during

interviews as to how progression was done in the research schools. Participants 2 in School B and Participant 4 in School C confirmed a discrepancy in NPPPPR and the ECDoE Assessment instruction 64 of 2017 for FET phase (*cf*. Chapter 2, section 2.3.2.3). The participants revealed that some learners were progressed to FET phase, grades 10 and 11 having failed EFAL. The discrepancy of progressing learners who failed EFAL correlates with the findings of Stott *et al*. (2015:91) that through upward manipulation (adjustment) of Grade 9 marks, many learners proceed to higher grades without having acquired foundational skills in numeracy and literacy. The ECDoE Assessment Instruction 65 of 2017 for GET band gives evidence that the DBE allows adjustment of learners' marks, a practice that gives learners false confidence about their performance.

As an FET EFAL teacher, the researcher experienced that the policy on mark adjustment created many discrepancies in the education system. After adjustment of marks, which is very common in School Based Assessment (SBA) moderations, moderations that follow over emphasised leniency in marking learners' scripts, many learners qualify for progression or promotion when in reality they had failed to meet the minimum requirements for either progression or promotion. In addition, during promotion meetings, mark adjustment principles are sometimes manipulated so that a reasonable number of learners progresses to the next grade. Age norms and the fact that many learners reach FET phase with huge backlogs in different subjects usually force exceeding mark adjustment range to mask progression or promotion, according to Stott *et al*. (2015). Learners are given marks they do not deserve for the sake of quantity, not quality. Thus, Participants 3 and 4 confirm the discrepancy that even learners who failed EFAL are progressed, and in so doing, challenges teachers to bridge the accumulating curriculum gap between progressed and able learners.

In discussion of Vygotsky's SDT, Woolfolk (2014:57) affirms that it is a major mistake to overlook the need for learners to master English as the LoLT as language provides a way to express ideas and ask questions and helps to develop advanced thinking and problem solving. It was deduced that the participants were against phase progression as Participants 1 in School A and Participant 3 in School C were concerned as to how the progressed learners would cope with learning in the grades for which they were not

ready and not equipped with language proficiency (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-theme 2.1). It was concluded that lack of follow-up on implementation of policies on phase progression was one of the contributory factors to progressed learners' lack of readiness for the grades to which they were progressed.

A further concern with progressed learners raised by participants was that they were over-aged for the grades. Associated with over-age was misbehaviour and backlogs in learning. This finding concurred with the finding by Stott *et al.* (2015:98) that among other difficulties experienced with progression, progressed learners were unmotivated, disinterested, ill-equipped, ill-disciplined, unable to cope, often truant and did not do classwork and homework. Roberts (2017) warns that when learners only advance to the next grade for social promotion, they are at risk of repeating their bad habits. Hence the researcher felt that it was important to repeat the words of Participant 1, School A recorded in the interview about the contradiction that prevails in the Department of Education:

> *As much as I love and believe that the Department of Education is doing quite right but with that one* (phase progression with age cohort), *it was a mistake for the fact that they invented ABET. I don't see any reason of keeping them* (over-aged progressed learners) *if ever a child is failing, failing and failing. That shows that the child is not ready for the next class. Pushing them forward is giving us more problems. You don't know one, then you are given two. You don't know one, and you don't know two, and you are given three… (Laughing) You see it's a problem. I don't get it but maybe some have got a different view* (Participant 1, School A).

During the observation, it was found that because learners were progressed with cumulative backlogs in EFAL, they could not meet the higher grades requirements particularly with oral activities. In School A, learners with low English language proficiency had to complete oral activities, as per the requirements of the curriculum, regardless of their deficit. As a result, due to lack of knowledge of and proficiency in EFAL, and assumedly the stigma of the class knowing that they had been progressed

to the grades not because they had passed but because the system favoured them due to over-age, they disrupted learning and teaching as a defence mechanism. Kika and Kotze (2018:4) affirmed that progressed learners are stigmatised and carry the label throughout their schooling years. It was concluded that what was perceived as misbehaviour, laziness and playing truant with over-aged progressed learners was escapism from the progression stigma. In order to settle the reasons for negative perspectives towards progressed learners, Donohue and Bornman (2015) state that teachers find themselves in a position where they are expected to teach learners with various educational needs and barriers to learning without any relevant experience or training. Therefore, it is not only learners who are unprepared for phase progression in FET phase, but also the teachers who have not been exposed to or trained to teaching typical (able) and atypical learners (progressed with barriers to learning) (Donohue & Bornman, 2015:3).

5.3.3 Discussion of Theme 3: Challenges of teaching progressed learners

One of the objectives of this study was to investigate challenges EFAL teachers experience when teaching progressed learners. The nature of this qualitative enquiry allowed face-to- face interactions with EFAL teachers who dealt with both able and progressed learners on daily basis to explain their lived experiences and challenges they encountered when teaching EFAL to progressed learners. According to the DBE (2011b), progression means the advancement of a learner from one grade to the next (excluding Grade R) in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements (*cf.* Chapter 1, section 1.11). According to Moll *et al.* (2001), Vygotsky's notion of social interaction suggests that learning should happen in a specific social environment conducive to learning due to the availability of more knowledgeable or well conversant others (*cf.* Chapter 2, section 2.2.1). Although the issue of the challenges EFAL teachers experience when teaching progressed learners has not been given attention by scholars. Stott *et al.* (2015:98) implies that ill-disciplined progressed learners may have an impact on the learning and teaching process.

It was found that progressed learners manifested with diverse learning needs in EFAL, had a negative attitude towards learning EFAL and were slow to work. As a result of

lack of language proficiency in EFAL, participants struggle to make progressed learners participate in lessons as the learners seemed ill at ease and insecure with speaking in EFAL especially in classroom environments where there was no support. For instance, there were observed situations in Participant 1 and 4's lessons where teachers did not seem to support learners enough in their presentation of oral activities and in other cases, where aspects were not well explained in English. Because the learners could not speak English fluently, other learners laughed at their failure to use English which they called 'George' in Participant 1's class, (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-theme 1.1). It was concluded that what was interpreted as a negative attitude towards learning challenging aspects in EFAL, was in fact a lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes in the language in which they were not as yet adequately proficient.

It was also found that teaching was not differentiated to cater for both able and progressed learners. As suggested in the literature, pre-existing knowledge was checked but only through superficial questioning. Only a few learners were given the opportunity to present their content knowledge in preparation for the lesson that was going to be taught. As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2, according to Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD, prior knowledge forms the basis of learning and learners make links with prior knowledge in the process of learning (Criticos *et al.*, 2002:126-127). Checking prior knowledge would guide the teachers with their lesson plans about where and when to begin a new related topic. It would suggest which learners needed extra assistance (scaffolding) but teaching both able and progressed learners at the same time, pace and using non-differentiated teaching methods meant that the 'one- size-fits all' method contributed to leaners' accumulative deficits in EFAL. By not thoroughly checking and reviewing prior knowledge probably led participants to feel that progressed learners were slow and had a negative attitude towards learning EFAL. It was concluded that the extensive EFAL curriculum was a challenge to complete effectively. In addition, the pace set to complete the Grades 10 and 11 content outlined in CAPS and the diverse needs of individual learners exerted much pressure and confusion not only for progressed learners but also the teachers who worked in complex classes of able and progressed learners.

The fact that phase progression in primary and lower secondary schools has led to large numbers of progressed learners being admitted into the FET phase (Stott *et al.*,2015:103), confirms the dire situation of overcrowded classrooms in the Eastern Cape Province (Marais, 2016:1). Hence Engelbrecht *et al.* (2016:6) agree that overcrowded classrooms pose challenges with regard to discipline problems and that individual attention to learners' needs is an added stress to teachers dealing with a variety of contextual challenges in a classroom with a diversity of needs. This study found that in the research sites of three rural schools of Mount Fletcher, teachers taught in overcrowded classes (*cf.* Chapter 4, Table 4.1). Overcrowded classrooms implied workload and stress for EFAL teachers whose responsibility was to develop literacy skills in Grades 10 and 11 progressed learners who demonstrated low proficiency in EFAL.

Another finding with regard to EFAL teachers' experiences was that all participating schools had no facilities such as a library or access to the internet for teachers to source suitable reading material to enhance learners' language proficiency in EFAL. Participant 1, whose learners had to debate and deliver prepared speeches, confirmed that there was no library anywhere near the school, therefore, learners in that remote and deep rural environment were challenged in finding suitable materials to do well in their oral tasks. According to Khumalo and Mji (2014:1522), teachers in rural areas, work in conditions with fewer resources and have less control over the curriculum, which eventually leads to frustration.

It was also found that in School A, Grades 10 and 11 EFAL was taught by an unqualified and inexperienced student-teacher who was still completing a B.Ed. through distance learning. The student-teacher had to face the challenge of teaching in complex classes of able and progressed learners with diverse needs to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL. The finding confirms a concern that there are contextual factors including teacher shortages that affect education negatively in the rural provinces of South Africa like the Eastern Cape (Msila, 2014:262). The researchers, Khumalo and Mji, (2014:1523) are in alignment with Francis *et al* (2015: 92) that the unavailability of suitably qualified teachers may have ramifications such as an adverse effect on literacy development due to learners being taught subjects by individuals who have no

experience in teaching those subjects (*cf*. Chapter 2, section 2.3.3). Khumalo and Mji (2014: 1522) assert that provision of human resources and physical structures in a school context reflect the priorities, values and philosophy of the school.

During the observations, it emerged that progressed learners did not affect teaching able learners with their negative behaviour in School B. In Schools A and C, it was a challenge to teachers that progressed learners dominated able learners and were ill-disciplined. Due to assumed inferiority complex and stigmatisation indicated by Kika and Kotze (2018), some learners, clarified in interviews as progressed learners, delayed the start of orals by requesting Participant 1 to allow them to debate in Sesotho (their home language) while others were making noises and shouting at the debaters' inability to speak English fluently, delaying and disrupting the oral presentations. As indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.2, this finding concurred with proclamation by Francis *et al*. (2015) that learners' limited exposure to the LoLT and communication is only home languages in the rural communities of the EC province has a negative impact on learning and teaching EFAL. It was revealed in the interviews that in Participant 4's class progressed learners had the habit of coming late to the class, wasting teaching time as the teacher spent time reprimanding them (*cf*. Chapter 4, theme 3). It was concluded that labelling learners as 'progressed,' and the practice of progressing them to the next grade with everyone around progressed learners knowing, makes these learners feel insecure, unaccepted and only left with a defence mechanism against the progression stigma, and against being expected to participate in activities of a higher level when they were not fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.

With phase progression, it seems progressed learners have been given much attention, yet a frustrating workload for teachers. Programmes like extra classes and vacation programmes, conducted by the Department of Education and schools, aimed at underperforming learners sometimes frustrate, label and stigmatise these learners. A typical example of stigmatisation of progressed learners confirmed by Kika and Kotze (2018:4) was presented in Chapter 4 (sub-theme 3.2). Participant 1's progressed learners felt like they were not liked and accepted when the teacher conducted extra classes with them, separated from able learners and given different tasks from the able learners. The participant attempted this to make sure they had basic skill to do tasks for

the grades they are progressed to. This was a challenge for the EFAL teachers to find other ways to motivate progressed learners to take part in EFAL activities. No matter how good the intentions, some of these attempts to make progressed learners perform effectively, have resulted in frustrations and desperation with learners dropping out of school as seen in the three research sites (*cf.* Chapter 4 Table 4.1). Kika and Kotze (2018:4) confirm that lack of the pre-requisite knowledge and skills to enable progressed learners to cope with the subject matter of the grade to which they have been progressed, results in learners becoming despondent, frustrated, and possibly dropping out of the schooling system. Some teachers too become frustrated, have burn-out and are attitudinal towards teaching classes with progressed learners as they have to account to DBE for poor performance even after toiling in vain in extra classes (*cf.* Chapter 2, section 2.3.3).

Stott *et al.* (2015) found that progressed learners are slow, making it difficult for a teacher to keep up with the pace setter. All participants in this study agreed that academically, progressed learners progressed slowly through the set work often requiring teachers to repeat concepts and/or reteach sections, which delayed the completion of the curriculum. Previous grades tasks are given instead of working with the set tasks of the present grade in order to ensure that the foundation is laid for more advanced tasks. Participant 3 in School B mentioned that as a teacher you are sometimes forced to code-switch from EFAL to the learners' home language when progressed learners do not understand basic instruction, by so doing disadvantaging those who could understand. However, theorists (Cummins, 1981; Vygotsky, 1986) affirm that effective learning of the second language is due to input from mastery of common concepts in home language. The implication is that although Participant 3 felt like code-switching to learners' home language was improper during English teaching, learners would understand the concepts in English better when they were explained in their native language. The challenge was for EFAL teachers to develop BICS (*cf.* Chapter 2, section 2.3.6) for progressed learners who could not understand basic instruction so that they could gradually deal with abstracted texts that test their critical thinking.

Participant 5, School C confirmed that while a teacher repeated concepts and retaught sections, able learners got bored, lost focus and sometimes misbehaved making the process of teaching and learning ineffective. As indicated in Section 5.3.2 of this chapter, this finding confirms that the participants were not exposed to teaching both typical and atypical learners together (Donohue & Bornman, 2015:2). In order to avoid affecting able learners negatively in curriculum completion, Participant 2 in School B mentioned that she sometimes ignored progressed learners during class time and only clarified concepts in extra classes specifically arranged for progressed learners. It was also observed that explanations of concepts were prolonged and repeated thus denying able learners' immediate in-depth assessment of new concepts. In accordance with the framework for teaching and learning (Chapter 2, Figure 2.1), assessment is a very important activity in the process of learning and teaching. Assessment depicts teaching above the ZPD where learners' assessment results are analysed; constructive feedback is given, and the teacher identifies the need for scaffolding remedial teaching. Nevertheless, in the research sites assessment was quite shallow. It was concluded that teaching learners who were not at the same level together needed further investigation. It was found that it was a mammoth challenge for EFAL teachers as it compromised advancing the education of able learners and dealing with progressed learners' curriculum backlogs. When teaching at the pace of progressed learners, teachers delayed completing the curriculum with able learners. The challenge was to provide support for learners who still could not communicate well in their EFAL while at the same time teachers had to provide a curriculum that enabled learners to use their EFAL at a high level of proficiency (DBE, 2011a:8-9). On the other hand, Moodley (2013:92) argues that if the teachers kept pace with the directives of CAPS, there would be no much- needed time spent with slow learners. Regardless of the negative impact that teaching progressed learners together with able learners had, it was found that in School B academic competition between able and progressed learners helped in uplifting both able and progressed learners' performance in EFAL. This resonates with Vygotsky's (1978) idea that every function in a child's cultural development appears twice: on the social level and later on the individual level (Woolfolk, 2014:55). The finding suggests that when a social environment is conducive to learning due to availability of more knowledgeable or well conversant and inspirational others, both able and progressed learners can learn effectively. Moll *et al.* (2001:53) show that human

learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which learners grow into the intellectual life of those around them.

5.3.4   Discussion of Theme 4: Strategies used to help progressed learner to learn EFAL

The EFAL teachers used a number of strategies to help learners learn EFAL effectively. Conducting extra classes, giving written and remedial work regularly and engaging learners in oral activities were the main strategies used to support the progressed learners. All schools claimed to assist progressed learners to understand concepts better by conducting extra classes for progressed learners so that teachers could clarify what they had taught during official conduct time. As the data collection for this study took place during the contact time, no time was spared to observe teaching during extra classes. Participant did however, discussed that they gave written and remedial work to assist progressed learners develop their language proficiency in English.

During official class time, the researcher observed that the participants assisted learning by explaining, emphasising, discussing features of samples of texts they taught. In other words, scaffolding occurred through teacher talk. Although Lloyd (2014) discourages extensive domination of teacher talk that limits learners' opportunity to practice the target language, Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019:82) reiterate that teacher talk is of crucial importance for acquisition of language because it is probably the major source of comprehensible EFAL input a learner is likely to receive. Through talk, a teacher is able to elaborate, repeat key instructions and use clear speech to help learners better comprehend what is being said. The participants seemed to have difficulty in offering differentiated learning when learners were combined because the same teaching method was used in each of the classes.

It was found that in most lessons, except in School A where learners were doing orals, some teachers asked questions, but learners would hardly respond and seemed to regard questioning as some kind of punishment, therefore, they mumbled until the teachers themselves gave answers to the questions (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-theme 4.6). According to Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019:12), questions directed to specific individuals

ensure that all learners have participated. Questioning was a strategy also used for vocabulary checks.

In all schools, vocabulary checks were done but only a few learners in all schools were afforded the opportunity to reveal how much they knew. The vocabulary checks were only done orally denying shy or weak learners a chance to participate. Lessons were dominated by teacher talk but it was felt that having tools like dictionaries would help in improving learners' vocabulary. Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019:83) believe that checking understanding of key words in a lesson enables individual learners to connect new vocabulary with words they know from their home language.

The findings of this study reveal that participants considered modelling of the target language and activities as an effective strategy to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL. This study found that all three schools used CAPS as a guideline as it stipulates the use of orals to help learners to learn English (DBE, 2011a:19-23). Certain teachers even role-played some of the oral activities, thus setting example of how learners should perform; for instance, in debating or reading literary texts. Engaging learners in oral activities meant that teachers believed that learners need to learn language structure and form in authentic contexts (DBE, 2011a; Tavoosy & Jelveh, 2019), especially South African learners who need English language proficiency to complete different subject tasks in EFAL (Cekiso *et al.*, 2015:325-326). Drawing from the observation, School A is located in a very deep remote rural area. In this type of environment, it is rare to see the printed word, even English written on the packet of snacks which children enjoy eating. None of the schools had libraries and so accessing the prescribed textbooks or texts for learners and teachers was challenging, however as per policy, learners are required work with a range of texts and these texts increase in difficulty as they move through the grades (DBE, 2011a:12). In order to access the internet, one needs a strong signal, and in rural areas this is also a challenge. Concern arose about the lack of educational charts on the walls which would provide a resource for learners and scaffold their learning. However, in compliance with the CAPS document, learners engaged in oral activities although what transpired from the interview responses (*cf.* Chapter 4, sub-theme 4.3) was that in that an under-resourced school environment, learners were given no vital support to find relevant information for

the activities. Constructivist theorists also believe in active learning, that learners actively develop their knowledge, rather than passively receive it in a package form, from teachers or outside sources (Woolfolk, 2014:322).

During the observation, School A debaters stood in front of a less encouraging audience (*cf*. Chapter 4, theme 3) but relied on each other as presenters. This study found that small groups give learners a sense of security and encourages individuals to participate in tasks knowing that their peers will support them where they falter or find difficulty in completing the task. Tavoosy and Jelveh (2019:85) also found that small group work allows for greater interaction and provide less threatening but encouraging situations for less confident learners. It did not seem to be common practice in Schools A and B to group or pair leaners, but the strategy could still be effective in extra classes which all participants indicated that they conducted for progressed learners. Criticos *et al*. (2002:127) show that learning is optimised in settings where social interaction is encouraged and where success is co-operatively achieved through talk.

5.4   LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As specified in Chapter 1, the first limitation was that progressing learners is a new concept in the South African FET education system and as a result, there was a paucity of literature exacerbated with poor access to the internet and relevant sources. Living in rural areas with inadequate internet access limited the researcher's exposure to literature relevant to the study especially literature on the phenomenon of progressed learners.

Specific limitations were encountered in this study and ranged from time constraints and lack of knowledge to handle unexpected situations during data collection. Firstly, engagement in this study required much more time for one to come to grips with and understand all relevant concepts to research. Having my teaching responsibility to do satisfactorily and fairly while keeping up with my studies was really daunting.

Secondly, the process of data collection in School C was challenging. EFAL teachers seemed to feel that collecting data from their school was an attempt to spy on them on

behalf of DBE. It was very difficult to find participants, and once two participants volunteered, it was no longer easy for the researcher to probe for clarity during interviews as was done in the other two schools. In addition, the exclusion of progressed learners in interviews delimits information that would provide more relevant data. However, future research may expand sampling and include progressed learners.

Finally, as indicated in Chapter 3, this study had a small sample size, comprising five EFAL teachers, therefore, the results cannot be generalised to other settings.

5.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this case study was to explore the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency. The study employed the constructivist/interpretivist approach which allowed the researcher to collect data through direct observations and face-to-face interaction with EFAL teachers in selected rural schools. Revelations of this study depict broad contribution thereof.

The study revealed that although the policy on learner progression is implemented in the South African FET band, it is challenging for teachers to teach complex classes of both able and progressed learners with curriculum backlogs without compromising educational needs of individual learners. This challenge is rooted in that CAPS for EFAL is not aligned with the needs of diverse learners. The pace setter for the syllabus as well as various assessment components to complete is too fast for teachers to close the curriculum gap of progressed learners while on the other hand the teachers have to cover the curriculum for the current grade the learners are progressed to. This study further revealed the discrepancy against NPPPPR. In some schools, learners are progressed with failure in EFAL and lacking foundation literacy in this LoLT. Being labelled 'progressed', learners carry the stigma and develop defence mechanisms that are not conducive to learning. The value of this study is, therefore, in its contribution in generating knowledge with regard to the challenge of teaching EFAL to progressed learners in grades 10 and 11 which has been given less attention in research. Insights

from this study contribute to the body of knowledge by raising awareness to policy makers as well as the DBE on the impact of the phase progression policy as well as CAPS. In particular, direct contribution of this study goes to the provincial ECDoE and schools that participated in the study. When issuing the permission to conduct the study in the selected schools, the department mandated the researcher to inform it of the findings of the study, therefore, through due compliance, the department as well as the participant schools will receive a copy of this report.

The study also revealed that in this era where inclusive education policies suggest differentiated teaching methods to suit learner diversity, EFAL teachers that were observed still used the 'one-size-fits-all' teaching methods that underestimate learner diversity and individual learners' needs. The schools were under resourced for EFAL teaching and learning as there were no sufficient textbooks and displayable teaching aids such as visual literacy pictures, charts or anything to keep learners critically thinking. Through literature review and presentation of findings, the study offered feasible strategies for EFAL teachers to enhance communication proficiency and to teach EFAL effectively even to progressed learners who have the language as a barrier to learning. In particular, EFAL teachers who participated in the study will have direct benefit from insights of the study as the copy of this final report will be given to the schools.

Contribution of this study is extended to the researcher's school. As an EFAL teacher who experienced the challenge of teaching progressed learners who often prefer using their home languages (Sesotho and IsiXhosa) during EFAL lessons, the researcher shared with colleagues, ideas like advancing learners' BICS in their native language to enhance CALP in common concepts taught in EFAL.

5.6   RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are made in consideration of the findings of this study.

Recommendations for policy makers

- NPPPPR needs revision to ensure that learners are not progressed without foundation literacy skills in EFAL. There should be a follow-up with dissemination and implementation of education policies and amendments to avoid discrepancies.

- The national DBE should reconsider the best way the education sector can be inclusive without labelling learners as 'progressed'. This labelling portrays a stigma that makes learners feel inferior and not accepted. As a result, progressed learners develop defence mechanisms that affect the teaching and learning process negatively.

- CAPS for EFAL should be revised, reduced in content and assessment components so that it is aligned with the needs of diverse learners. The foundation and intermediate phases should focus on ensuring proficiency in EFAL as specified in CAPS, for creative use of the language in the FET phase.

Recommendations for the EFAL teachers

- It should be in EFAL teachers' culture to r e a d a n d engage in lifelong learning to empower themselves professionally in order to be able to overcome inclusive teaching challenges of teaching diverse learners including progressed learners who have barriers in EFAL. EFAL teachers should also encourage progressed learners to read extensively even in their native language to acquire common conceptual knowledge between the languages as development in home language makes input in the second language comprehension.

- EFAL teachers should create lively classroom environments that encourage reading by displaying educational posters, motivational words or phrases and visual texts.

- To help learners comprehend what is being taught, teacher talk should be balanced with sparing opportunities for learners to actively develop their

knowledge of EFAL through communication rather than passively receive that knowledge.

5.7   SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research portrays experiences and perspectives of only five EFAL teachers and strategies used in teaching EFAL to progressed learners. Further research is needed to find how progressed learners perceive phase progression, what their experiences are in the teaching and learning process and how they think they should be helped to learn better. Investigation on how best parents can participate in the education of their children could also be important.

Effective teaching can be strengthened by comparing ideas and practices, therefore, further investigation on how other countries effectively implement phase progression and teach EFAL is needed to bring success to education policies in the South African context.

5.8   CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, the purpose of this case study was to explore the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 EFAL teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency. The study held interpretivist/constructivist perspective grounded in social development theory by Vygotsky (1978). A multiple-case study was conducted with three rural secondary schools. The findings revealed that although EFAL teachers understood their roles, seemingly they were not exposed to teaching able and progressed learners with cumulative backlogs in EFAL. Progressed learners were considered as learners who were not ready for Grades 10 and 11 as they lacked foundation in EFAL. It was also found that though there were challenges in teaching EFAL to progressed learners, teachers tried multiple strategies to assist them to learn the language. Through the process of this research journey the researcher has come to understand the challenges faced by EFAL teachers and learners and hope that the findings and the recommendations from this study, in this era where learner diversity requires differentiated teaching that appeals to the

needs of diverse learners, are able to have some influence with making changes to the current policy of progression and its practice.

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Appendix A : Ethical clearance Certificate

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/07/18

Dear Mrs Ditshego

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2018/07/18 to 2021/07/18

Ref: **2018/07/18/40917800/21/MC**
Name: Mrs NJ Ditshego
Student: 40917800

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs NJ Ditshego
E-mail address: 40917800@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 82 263 9939

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr MM Maja
E-mail address: majam@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 12 429 6201

Title of research:

Teaching English First Additional Language to progressed learners in Grade 10 and 11 in Mount Fletcher District

Qualification: M. Ed. in Curriculum and Instructional Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/07/18 to 2021/07/18.

The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/07/18 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures

set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2021/07/18**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.
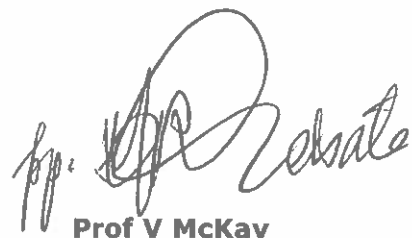
Note:

The reference number **2018/07/18/40917800/21/MC** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Prof V McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za

128

Appendix B

A letter to the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education -requesting permission to conduct research

![UNISA college of education logo]

P.O.BOX 309

Matatiele

4730

The Director

Strategic Planning Policy and Research

Eastern Cape Department of Education

Bhisho

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT:

SCHOOL A (Circuit 2, Joe Gqabi District, Mt Fletcher)

SCHOOL B (Circuit 1, Joe Gqabi District, Mt Fletcher)

SCHOOL C (Circuit 8, Joe Gqabi District, Mt Fletcher)

I, Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego am doing research under supervision of Dr Margaret Marewaneng Maja, a lecturer in Curriculum and Instructional Studies (UNISA College of Education) towards M Ed at the University of South Africa. We request two English First Additional Language teachers from each school who give instruction in Grade 10 and 11 to participate in a study entitled 'Teaching English First Additional Language to progressed learners in Grade 10 and 11 in Mount Fletcher District,' the now called Joe Gqabi District. Although our request is to have teachers participating in the research, participation is voluntary. Participants have the right to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason as they are under no obligation to participate.

The aim of the study is to explore how English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers address oral communication proficiency barriers of progressed learners in Mt Fletcher District (Joe Gqabi District) of the Eastern Cape Province.

The schools have been selected because they practice the phase progression policy and offer English First Additional Language which are the main focus in this study.

The study will entail direct lesson observations in which there will be no interaction with participants. There will also be one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. Field notes and photographs of each classroom setting will be taken and a voice-recorder will be used to capture interview responses. After data collection, all data will be used and kept confidentially for the purpose of study only and personal information will not be shared with unauthorised persons.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. The benefits of this study are: knowledge and appropriate skills will be generated to teach EFAL effectively even to progressed learners who have EFAL as a barrier to learning. The research report which will be given to participating schools on completion of the study will help to develop EFAL teachers professionally.

The potential risk is of inconvenience as observations will be done while participants are teaching and interviews will take place after the participants have taken their lessons. No other risks are expected as the research sites (schools) and participants will not be identifiable in report writing. Pseudonyms will be used.

Feedback procedure will entail member-checks during data analysis to confirm that transcribed data reflects the exact words of participants. On completion of the dissertation, a meeting with participants will be requested. Feedback on important findings and recommendations will be presented in the meeting and a hard copy of the research report will be given to each school that participated in the research.

Yours sincerely

Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego

M Ed student-researcher (UNISA)

Appendix C

Response granting permission to conduct research

Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES
Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape
Private Bag X0032 • Bhisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4773/4035/4537 • Fax: +27 (0)40 808 4574 • Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Enquiries: B Pamla   Email: buhahve.pamla@ecdoe.gov.za   Date: 11 June 2018

Mrs. Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego

P.O. Box 309

Matatiele

4730

Dear Mrs. Ditshego

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS THESIS: TEACHING ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 10 AND 11 IN MOUNT FLETCHER

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.

2. Your application to conduct the above mentioned research from three (3) selected secondary schools in Mt Fletcher of Joe Gqabi District under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:

   a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;

   b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;

   c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;

   d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;

   e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;

   f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;

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PGDP
EASTERN CAPE

Bettera eliqayambileyo!

Page 1 of 2

g. your research will be limited to those institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;

h. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis.

i. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.

j. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research.

k. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.

l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).

m. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation

3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.

4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.

5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email nelisa.kanjana@ecdoe.gov.za should you need any assistance.

NY KANJANA
DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES

FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION

133

Appendix D

Letter of consent to participants

UNISA | college of education

P O Box 309

Matatiele

4730

8 August 2018

Dear prospective participant

My name is Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego. I am studying towards a Master's degree in education. Currently I am doing research under the supervision of Dr Margaret Marewaneng Maja, a lecturer in Curriculum and Instructional Studies at UNISA College of Education. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Teaching English First Additional Language to progressed learners in Grade 10 and 11 in Mount Fletcher District**.

This study is expected to collect important information that could generate knowledge and appropriate skills to teach EFAL effectively even to progressed learners and develop EFAL teachers professionally.

You are invited because you teach EFAL and your school practices the learner progression policy; therefore, you are one of the relevant participants in this study. I believe you will be able to answer the research questions as outlined in this information sheet. As I believe that people have different experiences due to contextual factors in their workplace, you will not be the only participant in this research. The research will be conducted in three different schools in Mt Fletcher District (the now called Joe Gqabi District) including your school. There will be two participants from each school, one teacher who teaches EFAL in Grade 10 and the other one teaching in Grade 11.

The purpose of this study is to explore how you address the oral communication proficiency of progressed learners. The study involves a direct lesson observation in which there will be no interaction between the researcher and participant. After the lesson observation, your lesson plan will be requested

for document analysis which will enhance validity of data collected through observation. A face-to-face semi-structured interview that is intended not to exceed 40 minutes will be conducted after the lesson observation. Hand-written notes and a voice-recorder will be used to tape your responses to the research questions. A voice-recorder will only be used to ensure that your exact words are captured accurately.

There will be low level of inconvenience to you as the lesson observation will take place while you teach English and the semi-structured interview will be conducted after the lesson observation. There are no expected risks due to participation in this study. All data will only be used for the study and pseudonyms will be used in report writing. No personal information will be shared with unauthorized persons. All raw data will be kept safely in a personal computer that uses a password to restrict access to unauthorized persons. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you will have given. Hard copies of your answers will be stored safely for a period of five years until it is used for future research or academic purposes and conference proceedings. After five years when data is no longer needed, hard copies will be burned and the computerized data will be deleted permanently from the drive. The supervisor of this research and members of the Research Ethics Committee will be the only authorized persons to access data to validate that the research is done properly. Your school will be given a copy of the final report as an indication that data is treated confidentially.

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

You will not be reimbursed or receive incentives for participating in this research. To ensure that you and your school benefit from participating in this study, on completion of the final report, a feedback meeting in which important findings and recommendations will be presented will be requested and your school will be given a copy of the final report.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

 If you require any further information please contact Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego on 0822639939 or email jacinthalebofa@gmail.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact the supervisor of this study, Dr Margaret Marewaneng Maja at +27 12 429 62 01 or majam@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours faithfully

Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego

Appendix E

Consent form to participate in research (Return slip)

<div align="right">

Ref. No.: 2018/07/18/40917800/21/MC

</div>

I, _____ (participant's name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview responses on a voice-recorder.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) :

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

Researcher's Name & Surname: Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego

_____   _____
Researcher's signature   Date

Appendix F

Fieldwork schedule

Activity	Time frame
Sent requests to use sites (ethical clearance attached to letters to the District Director (DoE), Circuit Managers and school Principals) - Introduced the study (through letters and oral explanation) - Requested participation and confirmed voluntary willingness to participate on dates between 29 August-10 September 2018	7- 28 /08/ 2018
1st school visits: - basic data collection on who would participate- - Established rapport with participants and further explained the purpose of the study - Made arrangements on dates of site visits for observations and interviews - Explained the procedure of observations and interviews - Participants signed consent forms	27-29/08/ 2018
2nd school visits: - intensive data collection through observations and interviews - Signing consent forms	29th August - 10th September 2018
3rd school visits & closure of data collection: verifying collected data (phoning)	25-30th November 2018

Appendix G

Observation protocol

Study: Teaching English First Additional Language to progressed learners in grades 10 and 11 to enhance communication proficiency

Setting: Classroom   Observer: Ditshego N.J

Role of observer: English class and lesson observation   Time: 08:30

Length of observation: 54 minutes

What to observe	Description of	Reflective notes (insights, hunches, themes)
Activities		
Strategies employed to teach EFAL to diverse learners		
Classroom environment		
Setting		
Learner exposure to 'talk'- Interaction between teacher and		
Interaction between learners Group		
Teaching pace regarding learners diversity		
Assessment and feedback		

Appendix H

Interview schedule and transcript samples

Study: Teaching English First Additional Language to grades 10 and 11 progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency

Time of interview: 14:30   Date: 29/08/2018

Place: School A and School B   Interviewer: Ditshego N.J

Interviewee: Participant 1, School A; Participant 1 (teaches both Grades 10 and 11)

Description of the study, telling the interviewees about:

(a)   The purpose of this case study was to explore the lived experiences of grades 10 and 11 teachers in teaching progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency in EFAL.

(b)   The aim is to interview grade 10 and 11 EFAL teachers

(c)   Pseudonyms will be used to protect your confidentiality.

(d)   The interview will last for 45 minutes

(e)   The researcher asked the interviewee to read and sign the consent form.

(f)   The researcher turned on the recorder and tested it.

Questions

1.   What is your role as an English teacher?

Participant 1:
I think now that, the fact that almost every subject is done in English, it is my duty to make sure that they know English properly, they understand each and every concept. That's my role. I have to because I believe only one paper is written in 'vernac' which can be Sesotho or Xhosa it depends on which subject they do as their home language, but then I believe it's my duty to make sure they understand English. If ever they can understand English, it is easier for them to understand other subjects. Maybe let's say it's Physical Sciences and project time, something you make is being drawn upwards then it comes down and then it bounces again; it's a bit confusing and tricky even to those people who know English but then if ever you can try to make sure that they understand English, they understand. I don't know how I can put it but as long as they understand English, they are able to identify the main keys. For instance, let's say they are going to do a summary, I give them a passage, a short story to say, then I ask them to analyse the way they think, the way they understand it, to try to check, to evaluate the understanding that they have; if ever we can; I thought school is about having good grades. I think it's only a matter of understanding and resolving problems. If ever they can understand those and then we are good to go. That's how I feel.

2.   What is your understanding of progressed learners?

Participant 1:
I think (laughing), I think that one, I think that one is here to terminate the whole nation because I fail to understand, how do we take kids to the next level, to the next grade whom they are not even ready for the one they are currently doing? That's where I find it problematic and we are not building the nation by so doing. If a kid is not ready for the next grade, he is not. We just need to accept and then let them be. That is why we have the ABET schools. If ever we feel like 'bana ba baholo' (children are old), and then why don't we take them to ABET if we see that they don't qualify for FET? In ABET they also have these subjects that we have here, but then it is only for people who are older, but then the fact of progressing learners 'aa! (No!). *That one seriously, it is just a ticking bomb waiting to explode. We know they were not ready now, how are they going to be ready for the next level? How are they going to be ready for the other level yet they are missing out those grades they have been progressed from? They missed out!*

3.   Why are learners progressed?

Participant 1:
(Checking-out) The way of progressing them? ... I think it's due to the fact that there is this rule that says a child does not have to be in one phase for more than four to five years, so I don't understand, if ever he or she is failing, how are we taking him to the next class to begin with? I think those kids are those who…,

I don't know if ever I can say they missed a lot in primary or they have a problem at home or they have a problem… at large 'ba na le' (they have) problem of understanding. We know some kids have problems, Mathematical problems, language problems, speaking problems; we know we have different kids but then if ever we're going to promote them with the same problem, I think that's the problem, so they only take them…

4.   What is the criteria for progressing learners in Grade 10 or 11?

Participant 1:

I don't know if ever… I'm not so certain if ever how is it done but what I know is that a kid does not have to be in one phase, let's say GET for more than four years. That kid is supposed to be in FET. Even when he gets to FET they are not allowed to be there for more than four years which I don't know, how are they going to survive Grade 12. This is why they do Grade 12 twice, for this year they are doing six subjects, three subjects, the following year they are going to do another three subjects trying to off-load them.

5.   How does progressing a learner affect the individual learner and other learners in his/her class?

Participant 1:

One thing I learned is I think they lack confidence which is majority of them but the ones who are having a problem with the language itself, English to the extend they were under the expression that English is supposed to be a subject to them. The first thing I tried to raise to them is that English is a language; it's more like Xhosa, Sotho; it's another language that you can learn to speak.

6.   How do progressed learners integrate with other learners in the same class?

Participant 1:

If ever the teacher is not around, the able ones are not going to study unless the progressed, the old ones are not aware or they are outside. That is the first thing that I hate with progressed learners.

7.   What are your experiences of teaching English First Additional Language to progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

Participant 1:

I think they happen to enjoy the lesson to things they understand. They happen to be participating active; you know that one they know it probably. That's the reason why seniors who promoted who progressed them feel like they have this potential because they did one two three four, but then when they come to those which they find difficult, they start having negative attitude. They start having attitude; they start disrupting, and let us not forget that they happen to be old for the fact that they repeated maybe a class twice or three times and they are being progressed to the next class and then they happen to be old and

they feel like they are being offended if ever all the time they do not get them right but then the other ones they normally get them right, so I think that's the problem.

What challenges do you experience when teaching EFAL to progressed learners?

Participant 1:

Firstly, I've been complaining about their age because they happen to take charge and control the class disrupting able learners from studying. They delay a lesson to an extent that I decided to… though they feel like I don't like them, I give a lesson but they delay because they are being progressed; they missed a lot, so I end up giving, dividing my class into two, not really in the classroom but then by…by giving them different tasks. The tasks that I am giving them, I am trying to give them maybe the tasks from their previous class to try to close that gap. You see, if ever we are going to solve for X in Maths, maybe we solve for quadratic equation, we need the linear equation first. If ever they missed the learner, there is no way they are going to understand the quadratic formula so I try by all means since they are left behind. I try by all means to get them the piece I think they missed for these chapters that we are doing so every time when we do a task, when I see that they don't understand that one, I give them the task that will build them to come and catch up with the rest of the class but then they normally delay the class. That's it.

8.   What strategies do you use to help progressed learners to learn English First Additional Language?

Participant 1:

Those ones, I always give them some passages to read. They start to read them with me so that I can help them with words that they cannot pronounce, but then I do describe or try to unpack the passage for them so that they understand. I let them go home and re-read it again and tomorrow I ask them, "Do you still remember what we were reading yesterday?"
"Yes."
"And then, what is it about?" and then they start, others they do it but others say, "E thata nthoane (That thing is difficult)" so they just… but normally I give them some passages to read and then they narrate to me how or what it is going on in that passage.
Most of the time we have the debates, we have the prepared speech whereby we have to ask them questions trying to check if ever they can answer, they can understand a question in the English context That's how I try to help them but when it comes to writing, because they have a problem with spelling, it's very rare for me to write them notes on the board. Normally I give them verbally so that they can try on their own to write the words that they didn't understand, every word, themselves but the ones they find too difficult for them to write normally they ask me, but I think that is the only way because writing the notes on the board, it makes no difference. They are just copying it. They are not going to know it but if ever you give them verbally, on that case you help them with listening skills; you prepare them with spelling because they are going to write those notes in the way they understand them and later on I will go and check if ever they wrote what they were supposed to write. I think those are the only ways that I use

because the fact ya (of) *morning and afternoon classes, those are only there to help us to cover syllabus because by so doing it sometimes delays the syllabus. For me I find it pointless to try finish the syllabus only to find that the kids cannot even write a sentence; they cannot construct their own sentences, so, most of the time I make sure that they construct their own sentences, write essays and we exchange them trying to mark, see the mistakes they did as the class, not the essays that we are going to record but just see if ever they are going to understand.*

Interviewer:
Checking on observation of Grade 11) I'm sorry to take you back to what I observed in Grade 11. You chose one learner to deliver a speech. How do you help such learners to get information?

Participant 1:
Before we go to that I gave them different tasks. I said others are going to do debate, others are going to do discussion, unprepared speech, prepared and prepared reading and then I said we have to group ourselves, "Which one do you prefer?" and the guy said, "I have done them all. I would love to have an unprepared. I just want to see what I can say." I think he likes the challenge; that is why he chose to do unprepared, so I just gave him something that is basic. I didn't want to give him something difficult like all the black tags or "What is your take in the growth of the country?" I just wanted to give him something so that I can see if ever he is ready for it, if ever something happens. I do not help those who are doing unprepared. They chose, themselves, that we want to do this, so unprepared there is no way that I can give them something.

Interviewer:
(*Follow-up question*) How do those who do prepared speech get information?

Participant 1:
No, they find it themselves. I do not help them. The only ones I help are Grade 8s though I am not teaching them but most of the time when they are given tasks they come to me. I help them how to find, not to find the answers for them, how to find them, but for Grade 11s, we, I just give them a topic and they just go get search as a matter from internet, from…

Interviewer:
(*Interrupting*) Do you have a library here?

Participant 1:
No, we don't have a library. We do not.

9.   Is there anything that should be done to equip EFAL teachers to teach progressed learners whilst keeping up to the demand of grade 10/11 curriculum?

Participant 1:

No, no. Thank you very much, Maám. I think I've said everything. It's the only problem I have with phase progressed and I think something should be done with that as much as I love and believe that the Department of Education is doing quite right but with that one it was a mistake for the fact that they invented ABET. I don't see any reason of keeping them if ever a child is failing, failing and failing, that shows that the child is not ready for the next class. Pushing them forward is giving us more problems. You don't know one then you are given two. You don't know one and you don't know two and you are given three…(Laughing) You see it's a problem.

Interviewee: Participant 3 (School B)   Interviewer: Ditshego N.J
Date: 31/08/2018

1.   Explain your role as an English teacher.

Participant 3:

My role is to make it a point that learners normally when it comes … they can be able to construct sentences in a form of writing. Sometimes when we are going to write like essays just like letters, the ones that we were writing there, they can be able to write using their own minds. They can be able to narrate when it comes to essay being able to tell their own stories. Then with orals, the oral part normally is there to help them so that they can be able… have some sort of courage because it is not going to end here; at some at some stage they are going to find themselves outside the high school meaning that they must be able to construct themselves in English. Then with reading also, it is also going to form part of their communication, the way they are going to communicate with other people because what I have observed is that a lot of learners they are normally scared to speak English, especially at tertiary levels so being able to speak maybe one or two sentences inside the classroom some way somehow, at some time, they will see that English is not a ghost; it's just a language of which they can speak even though it is not their mother tongue.

2.   What is your understanding of progressed learners?

Participant 3:

My understanding about progressed learners is that those learners whereby with these systems that we have nowadays, there are… maybe if a learner has failed some of the subjects… maybe they are doing seven subjects, they have passed only home language, English and Life Orientation then just because there are certain things that are going to be looked at, their age. They are already old at that age meaning they need to be progressed to the next grade, learners of which we still need to help them even though

some of them it is too late for us to help them, but we are still trying our best just for them to get it there and there. Even though they may struggle with other subjects but we need to make it a point that with languages they just try their best.

Interviewer:
(Follow-up question) Do you have them in your Grade ten class?

Participant 3:
Yes, I've got them.

Interviewer:
Do you know how many they are?

Participant 3: *I think they are eight if I am not mistake.*

3.   Why are learners progressed?

Participant 3:
The main reason that they were progressed, they failed a lot of subjects those ones then having failed a lot of subjects, the main reason was also this department, you know the Department of Education it says that when a learner has already spent maybe five years in a phase, four years… I'm not sure about the years, then they have to go to another grade so that is the main reason. Having failed, a learner has failed…you may find that some of them have failed all the subjects…

4.   What is the criteria of progressing learners in Grade 10 or 11?

Participant 3:   *You may find that all of them have failed all the subjects but you are told, 'This learner is going.' Something of which we don't really understand. We just… yuu! How come? I'm still new in the field having to see a learner going having failed all subjects. I just ask myself, what is it going to happen? What is it going to happen by the time the learner reaches Grade twelve? Is it a matter of just…? Yeah, those are some of questions we normally ask ourselves.*

5.   How does progressing a learner affect the individual learner and other learners in his/her class?

Normally, when we try to, like, speak English with them, some of them will just keep quiet, not answering you not because they do not understand but because they are scared to express themselves in English.

6. How do progressed learners integrate with other learners in the same class?

When it comes to these progressed learners, normally they affect the ones who have passed because sometimes when you are in the classroom, you are forced to quote-switch because they don't really understand what you are trying to say.

7. What are your experiences of teaching English First Additional Language to progressed learners to enhance communication proficiency?

Participant 3:

My experience is that a lot of them do not want to express themselves in English. Then another thing that I have experienced is that there are still other learners that still struggle to write essays in English. The way they are going to write English is the same as writing home language though two or three sentences are going to be of English but you can tell that a learner doesn't have a good foundation of writing in English. Though what they are writing maybe is straight to the topic that you have given them, but the sentences themselves do not make sense.

Interviewer:

Maybe their spelling or…

Participant 3:

(*Emphasizing*) *Spelling! Normally at vasity we are taught phonetic so to them it's as if they are using phonetic. The way that the word is coming out, they are just going to write it like that, of which you can't really understand which is which because they don't even know, they were not even taught phonetic which means there was something there. Then other ones they struggle with spelling, failing to such an extent that you can't even know, like, what is it that this learner is writing. I remember this other learner… I took a script; I was trying to read, what she wrote there! It's English! I tried to take the paper, get the meaning of what she was trying to say; whether it was English or Afrikaans… (laughing) I had to call another teacher and ask what it is that the learners is writing then the teacher said it's how she writes. I don't know it's English, it's… but the paper was English.*

8. What challenges do you experience when teaching EFAL to progressed learners?

Participant 3:

No matter how hard you try to simplify English, they won't even understand it, so normally we quote-switch and when you quote-switch you are disadvantaging those learners who can understand you because they become bored themselves; they can just be like, 'I can understand it,' but because there are those learners that you still have to reach to, you just need to quote-switch, and sometimes when it comes to writing of class works, these progressed learners they are normally slow. Even if you have got the time frame that by 15 minutes 'you need to be done,' what they are going to say to you, you may find that by the end of that fifteen minutes, a learner has just written 'classwork', today's date, they are done; meaning you can't

continue marking (emphasizing), you are going to…stop! until that… You can't do corrections hence other learners have not written their work meaning sometimes, instead of going forward with the syllabus you are normally behind trying to wait for those ones to follow though some learners are fast which is in a way disadvantaging those who have passed.

Interviewer:

(*Follow-up question*) Do you spare some time, extra time for progressed learners?

Participant 3:

I once did it at some time but it never really worked because a lot of these learners are coming from deep rural areas of which a lot of them they use scholar transport so them having to come here… and some of them have already given up, so 2 or 3 may come but it's not. Even if you come but it doesn't normally work because of the environment that we live in because normally we do need them to come maybe Saturdays and Sundays but it's not possible because of the environment that we live at.

9.   What strategies do you use to help progressed learners to learn English First Additional Language?

Participant 3:

Normally, with progressed learners I become their friend and when I become their friend, I speak English with them whenever I communicate with them I can just call them even for five minutes, 'Can you please go and take that thing for me there?' then some of them will be like, she or he will just answer in English. Even though it is broken, I will just smile back at them then they know that we haven't done anything wrong and normally when I am in the classroom I tell them that even myself I attended the same schools as 'you'. We come from the same page but the more you speak, the more you learn. When it comes to writing, those who are progressed I normally give them letters to write because I know with writing, that is when they are going to be able to express themselves more and the spelling themselves. They are not answering short questions there. They will just write. That is an easy way of knowing whether a learner can write or not, so I normally give them letters, longer transactional and essays so that they express, dairy entries, just tell me, what is it that you felt? How did you feel about that particular situation? Write it as it is; don't wait for a perfect word. Whatever that is coming just write it, then we take it from there.

10.   Is there anything that should be done to equip EFAL teachers to teach progressed learners whilst keeping up to the demand of grade 10/ 11 curriculum?

Participant 3:

If maybe there were a chance whereby they stay maybe inside the school premises, it was going to be possible for us to take them and I know it was going to be helpful having them here.

Appendix I

Confidentiality agreement on classroom photographing

Ref. No.: 2018/07/18/40917800/21/MC

I,_____am aware that during data collection the classroom photograph will be taken for research purposes. I give consent that Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego may take the classroom photograph if identity will be protected.

Teacher's name (print): _____

Teacher's signature: _____   Date:_____

Researcher's name (print):   Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego

Researcher's signature   Date: _____

Appendix J

Confidentiality agreement to use a voice-recorder during an interview

Ref. No.: 2018/07/18/40917800/21/MC

I,_____ am aware that a voice-recorder will be used to capture my interview responses. I grant consent that Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego may use the voice-recorder if my identity will be protected.

Participant's name (print):   _____

Participant's signature _____   Date:_____

Researcher's name (print):   Nthabiseng Jacintha Ditshego

Researcher's signature   Date: _____

………………………..

Proof of editing

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

NTHABISENG JACINTHA DITSHEGO

TEACHING ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TO GRADES 10 AND 11 PROGRESSED LEARNERS TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION PROFICIENCY

Magister Educationis in CURRICULUM STUDIES

Supervisor: Dr M.M. Maja

Cilla Dowse

15 February 2020

Cilla Dowse	Rosedale Farm
PhD in Assessment and Quality Assurance Education and Training	P.O. Box 48 Van Reenen
University of Pretoria 2014	Free State
Programme on Editing Principles and Practices:	cilla.dowse@gmail.com
University of Pretoria 2009	Cell: 084 900 7837

Appendix L
Turnitin Report

Teaching English First Additional Language to progressed learners in Grades 10 and 11 in selected rural secondary schools

ORIGINALITY REPORT

29%	23%	7%	22%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	6%
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3	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	2%
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