

EXPERIENCES OF GRADE 9 TEACHERS IN SUPPORTING PROGRESSED
LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

By

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At

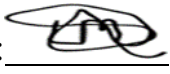
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30 November 2023

DECLARATION

I Luyanda Buti hereby declare that this dissertation titled “EXPERIENCES OF GRADE 9 TEACHERS IN SUPPORTING PROGRESSED LEARNERS’ WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE” is my original work and that I have not previously submitted it at any university for a degree. Wherever I have used the work of other scholars, I have acknowledged them in accordance with the University of South Africa University reference guidelines.

Signature : 

Date : 30/11/2024

LUYANDA BUTI

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my husband Ntsikelelo Samuel Buti. May it be a reminder that there is nothing we cannot overcome and may it always be an encouragement to working hard for a better life.

I also dedicate this study to my children Angel, Liyabona, Lukhanyo and Alungile. May it be an inspiration for you to do better and live a purposeful life.

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ABSTRACT

The progression policy states that progressed learners should be given academic support in the grade they have progressed to. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of grade 9 English FAL teachers in supporting progressed learners writing skills. This was a qualitative, phenomenological study that involved two schools in the Chris Hani East district in the Eastern Cape Province. Participants were five English teachers, purposefully drawn from these two schools. Data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and an open-ended questionnaire. The analysis of data were done through thematic analysis, where data were coded, categorized, and grouped into themes. The theoretical framework that underpins this study is Cummins' language acquisition theory and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. The findings suggest that stakeholders' understanding of roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the progression policy is key for successful implementation of the policy. Furthermore, progressed learners' language skills development needs to be enhanced as they are far below the expected grade 9 level of competency. This study recommends that the Department of Basic Education should train all stakeholders to understand their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the progression policy. Furthermore teachers should develop progressed learners' competency levels of their language skills current. All stakeholders should prioritize supporting grade 9 progressed learners and teachers should use collaborative teaching strategies to facilitate the inclusion of progressed learners in an English FAL classroom.

Key words: teachers' experiences, support, progressed learners, English First Additional Language and writing skills.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DOE – Department of Education

DBE – Department of Basic education

CAPS – Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

GET – General Education and Training

FET – Further Education and Training

LOLT – Language of learning and teaching

SBA – School Based Assessment

SBST – School Based Support Team

FAL – First Additional Language

BICS – Basic Interpersonal Language Skills

CALP – Communicative Academic Language Proficiency

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

CUP – Common Underlying Proficiency

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Wildsmith-Cromarty and Balfour (2019) assert that mastery of English is crucial for learners in South African schools, as it is the language of teaching and learning (LOLT) from Grade 4 onward. This means that all subjects are assessed in English, except for other languages, like IsiXhosa, Sesotho etc., depending in the context of a particular school. Learners who are able to write competently in English respond easily to questions and express themselves in a meaningful manner (Department of Basic Education (DBE) Strategy for Teaching English Across Curriculum 2014, p. 2). This implies that a learner who is unable to write competently in English may fail other subjects that are assessed in English not necessarily because of lack of intelligence or general ability but because of English Language ability. According to the English Grade 7 to 9 CAPS document (Department of Education (DOE), 2011), a learner is expected to move from the General Education and Training (GET) phase (Grades 7 to 9) having mastered the four domains of classroom English; these are: listening, reading, writing and language structures. Therefore, writing is an essential skill in the learning journey, not only for the subject of English but for progress and success in other content subjects (DOE, 2012). Rather than basing progress from one grade to the next on the basis of promotion on merit, which implies passing an examination, the South African education system has introduced the progression policy. According to this policy, learners who have not met the minimum requirements to pass the grade may be moved to the next grade with support (Government Gazette, No. 40472, 2016).

According to the progression policy issued by the Department of Basic Education (DBE Circular 0013, 2012), a progressed learner is one who moves to the next grade without having met the minimum passing requirements of the current grade. The learner is promoted based on their age and number of years in the current grade and phase. The 2016 National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 amended the 2012 policy, by removing reference to the progressed learner's age. The 2016 policy defines a progressed learner as one who has advanced from one grade to the next, excluding Grade R, regardless of the learner not meeting promotion requirements (DOE, 2016). The requirements for progression are regular school

attendance, at least three subjects passed and a completed school-based assessment (SBA). In addition, the learner must have failed in the phase once. No third year in a single grade is permitted; the learner is progressed instead. The policy asserts that a learner should be progressed with support to ensure that the content gap is bridged in the next grade. This means the learners should get assistance in their studies to ensure that there is no content gap.

Ramputla (2020) states that there has been much debate around the progression of learners. Criticisms of the progression policy include the fact that promoting learners who do not have reading skills is setting them up for failure as they continue to fall behind academically (Phala, 2022). Moreover, Aguilar, Cale and Nevenglosky (2019) argue that progression does not have the potential to fully support learners with learning challenges or supply appropriate answers to learning issues and low performance because the strategy has a number of disadvantages. Thus, learners who do not get the support stipulated by the progression policy become progressively more disadvantaged in their learning, which leads to learner dropouts. According to Ramputla (2020), the progression policy and associated procedures have resulted in greater disruptions in the classroom, frustration among teachers, and uncertainty among parents about whether their children have been advanced on merit or not. Mbudhi (2022) argues that teachers are forced to support progressed learners at the expense of those who have been promoted on merit. This argument is based on the fact that progressed learners are not separated from other learners in the grade they are progressed to. Stott, Dreyer and Venter (2015) highlight loopholes in the implementation of the progression policy, as the policy gives little guidance on how and when support ought to be given. These critiques of the progression policy show that the progression policy cannot be assumed to be successful. The policy states that support should be provided, but little is known about the actual state of support for progressed learners.

As evident above scholars have conflicting views on the progression policy. Some are in favour and some against it. Current research, according to Brahmabhatt (2020, p. 31) states the importance of supporting progressed learners. However, to the best of my knowledge, there is a paucity of research on the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills in English FAL. In filling that gap this study therefore investigates the experiences of Grade 9 English first additional language (FAL) teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. The researcher argues that without the better

understanding of experiences of educators, the support that is advocated by the policy will remain a mystery.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Kika and Kotze (2018, p. 56), ‘South Africa has a high grade-repetition rate from Grade 9 up to Grade 11, with Grade 10 recording the highest levels, at 22% in 2017.’ The failure rate prompted an intervention in the education system, and so the progression policy was adopted in the FET phase in 2012. It had already been implemented in the primary and GET phases since 1998 (Department of Education (DOE), 1998). Stott, Dreyer and Venter (2015) affirm that the introduction of the progression policy in the GET phase was originally intended to be accompanied by a Grade 9 certificate, which would allow a learner to leave school at the end of Grade 9 and enroll at a TVET college for further skills development. However, this policy was never implemented instead the progression policy was introduced in the FET phase. This effectively kept learners in schools who might otherwise have left to enroll at skills-based colleges.

The first group of progressed learners reached Grade 12 in 2014. ‘It appears probable that this contributed to the decrease of 2, 6% in the pass rate in 2014 compared to 2013’ (Motshekga, 2015, p. 89). This decrease in the pass rate may have been a result of the fact that support to progressed learners is only given in Grade 12, which makes it difficult for these learners to bridge the content gap. Some learners drop out of the system because they cannot cope in the grade they have been progressed to (Brahmbhatt, 2020, p. 65). Robeyns (2017) asserts that consequences of progression without support cannot be reversed and are permanent. Hence the policy itself advocates support. Additionally, Muedi et al. (2021) affirm that progressing learners only is not enough, certain support strategies have to be in place. This is in line with the requirements of the progression policy which state that progressed learners should be supported.

It should be noted that South Africa adopted the progression policy from other countries such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom (Mail & Guardian, 2015). The progression policy is referred to by varying terms across different countries. In the United States, it is commonly known as social promotion, while in Korea, England, and America, it is referred to as the non-retention policy (Godwin, Suprayogi, Vackle and Godwin, 2017). It is again worth mentioning that all these countries are

developed, unlike South Africa, and have strong remedial systems in place. For example, in the United States (US), socially promoted learners are given support and resources according to the No Child Left Behind Act (U.S Education Department, 2001). It is not only the duty of the teacher to support progressed learners, but the No Child Left Behind Act ensures that learners get this support. In some instances, learners are provided technologies which give them remedial activities that are accessible everywhere.

Progressed learners encounter various challenges as well as not meeting promotion requirements, (Nyathi, 2022). Additionally, Brahmhatt's (2020) study, conducted in South Africa, reveals that the implementation of support by teachers is ineffective in the intermediate and senior phases. Aguilar-Parra et al. (2018, p. 44) concur with this finding by stating that problems with implementation are 'mainly instigated by teachers who do not understand the progression policy and are therefore unable to implement it correctly'. Furthermore, Stott, Dreyer and Venter (2015) found variation in the extent to which progression is practiced and the impact of progression among schools in different quintiles, with low quintile schools being intensely affected by progression-related problems. This implies that difficulties of learning in progressed learners were likely to escalate in the future. This situation partly arises because low quintile schools have fewer resources than higher quintile schools for implementing remedial support to progressed learners.

In my view progressed learners need all the support available, as they have gaps in their knowledge and skills. These gaps are visible in their inability to write English First Additional Language (FAL). According to Mpiti (2016, p. 45), 'common learning challenges that learners may need support in are sentence construction, lack of vocabulary, spelling, and grammatical errors.' These challenges manifest at a very early age and are ignored because of the requirements of the progression policy. As stated above, English is used as a language of teaching and learning in South African schools from Grade 4 to 12, and therefore it is fundamental for comprehension and the ability to answer questions in all other subjects. Failure to master writing in English leads to failure in other subjects (Moses and Mohamad, 2019). Hence, English FAL develops the four skills of reading, writing, listening and mastering language conventions (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement Grade 7 to 9, 2011). The intention is to ensure that learners perform well in all subjects taught in English.

Different studies show that progression can be a good policy that boosts the confidence of learners and allows savings to the country's education budget; however, without support, it

is a futile exercise (Brahmbhatt, 2020, p. 45). All the studies advocate the use of different teaching methods to accommodate the needs of all learners. Furthermore, the studies highlight that parental support is an essential component of the support needed by progressed learners. In the context of writing in English, parental support can make a great difference to learners. As stated above, the South African progression policy (2012) asserts that support should be given to progressed learners. Hence this study investigates the experiences of grade 9 English teachers as they support progressed learner's writing skills.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

English FAL is one of the most important subjects in the curriculum since most subjects are taught in English. Failure to master writing English leads to failures in other subjects (Peter and Singaravelu, 2021). CAPS states that English FAL develops learners' skills in the four domains of English ability, which are: listening, reading, writing, and language structures (Department of Education, 2011). This is to ensure that learners perform well in all subjects taught in English. Some learners perform poorly in content subjects simply because they do not understand concepts. The progression policy has been adopted in South Africa and, according to Matiwane (2015), the practice would decrease the number of learners who drop out of school. However, the lack of support experienced by progressed learners has resulted in a situation where many do not reach Grade 12 anyway (Scot, Dreyer and Venter, 2015). This, therefore, defeats the purpose of progressing learners in order to reduce the number of learner dropouts. Learners who are pushed to the next grade become frustrated as they cannot master the work carried out in that grade, and so they leave school without finishing grade 12.

Since mastery of English writing is so fundamental to learners' performance in school, and since the focused support of teachers is such a critical component of the success of the progression policy in South Africa, this study sought to understand the experiences of English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills in Grade 9. The findings of the study will help policymakers to recognise current gaps in the progression policy, since the study presents teachers' honest feedback on how the policy is working in practice. Moreover, the study allowed teachers in rural schools to share their challenges in supporting progressed learners. Possible solutions to the challenges arose during these discussions. The findings will help stakeholders of the Department of Education to intensify their efforts in providing targeted support to teachers and progressed learners. Parents may also be enlightened about

the importance of their involvement in a child's academic life. If parents are aware of the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers when supporting progressed learners, they may be more inclined to work hand-in-hand with teachers to ensure that their children overcome their writing challenges. The outcomes of this study will ultimately benefit learners, educators, guardians, and administrative personnel of the department of education will establish a more favorable environment for the acquisition of English writing skills in Grade 9.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The acquisition of writing skills is a complex process, particularly when learners are not proficient in the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) which is not their native language, (Mpiti, 2016). In agreement with this statement, Fesi and Mncube (2021) affirms that writing is a challenging skill to teach in a context where both teachers and learners communicate mostly in isiXhosa, which is not the LOLT in the senior phase. The situation is exacerbated when there are progressed learners in a classroom (Brahmbhatt, 2020). According to the Government Gazette 36041 (DOE, 2012), a progressed learner is one who has moved to the next grade without meeting the minimum passing requirements; instead that learner is promoted on the basis of the number of years they have been in their present grade and phase. Brahmbhatt (2020, p. 5) states that 'progressing learners without necessary support can be very harmful to the development of the learners.' Some progressed learners did not pass English as a subject in their previous grade and crucially need support. According to Matiwane (2015) the minister of basic education admitted that South Africa's education system lacks the necessary remediation required for social promotion to be successful. Moreover, Brahmbhatt's (2020) study reveals that teacher unions also see the weakness of the progression policy in that struggling learners are promoted without having the language foundational skills. This is significant for subjects such as Mathematics and English, which rely on prior knowledge. It also applies to English FAL, which is based on language rules that should be acquired in the lower grades. Those learners who are progressed without acquiring these rules can face a lifetime of challenges in their academic careers.

Some researchers oppose the progression policy. Thus, according to Muedi et al. (2021), learners who have not grasped any educational skills should not be progressed. They should repeat the grade until they meet the passing requirements. The literature makes it clear than in order for the policy to work, progressed learners need targeted support. The reality is that in most South African lower quintile schools, progressed learners do not receive the level of

support they need. However, we have little knowledge of and a gap in research concerning the experiences of South African teachers, who are so central to the implementation of the policy, in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. Therefore the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills was chosen as the focus of this study.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to answer the following research question:

1.5.1 Major research question

What are the experiences of Grade 9 English FAL teachers in supporting the writing skills of progressed learners?

1.5.2 Research sub-questions

- What challenges do Grade 9 English FAL teachers experience when teaching English FAL in a classroom with progressed learners?
- What are the perspectives of Grade 9 English FAL teachers concerning progressed learners' writing skills in English FAL?
- Which strategies do Grade 9 English teachers implement in their classrooms to support progressed learners?

1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the experiences of Grade 9 teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills in English FAL.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the challenges Grade 9 English teachers' experience with progressed learners when teaching English FAL;
- To describe the perspectives of Grade 9 English teachers regarding progressed learners;

- To explore the strategies Grade 9 English teachers, implement in their classrooms to support progressed learners.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by Jim Cummins' (1978) theory of language acquisition and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Cummins' theory states that language is acquired by means of two key areas of proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Conversational Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Cummins (2000) asserts that BICS is the first area of proficiency to be established; at this level, language is acquired through conversations. A child develops BICS between six months and five years (Cummins, 2021, p. 156). The communicative skill does not require much vocabulary, as at this stage the child speaks for survival. BICS needs to be firmly established before the individual can move to CALP. So, if a child grows up in an environment where English is spoken, that child's BICS will be developed in English.

CALP, or cognitive academic language proficiency, includes the writing of a language. One may be able to speak a language but struggle to write academically. That is why one will find that many learners at Grade 9 level have acquired BICS, but not CALP; they may speak a rudimentary English and make themselves understood but struggle to write English FAL. As a way of explaining CALP, Cummins divides the cognitive demands of language learning into four quadrants, each representing different conditions in which language skills are demonstrated. Moreover, Cummins's theory includes suggestions on how to support bilingual learners to develop their cognitive academic language proficiency. Furthermore, Cummins introduced the interdependence hypothesis, in which he compares the acquisition of language to a dual-peaked iceberg. A dual peaked iceberg demonstrates the interdependency of languages where the home language forms a surface for the additional language. In addition, Cummins's (2001) threshold hypothesis asserts that learners who have limited academic skills in the language being taught are at risk of falling behind. In order to use a first additional language for instruction, a certain level of proficiency must be achieved. Additionally, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions with family and community members in the development of children's behaviors and cognitive processes.

This theory according to Vygotsky (1989, p. 185) accounts for the learning of a language; where Vygotsky suggests that a 'language is learnt through social interactions. The society is an important part of learning any aspect of language. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1989) claims that the child's growth is influenced by their immediate social interactions, but as they internalize learning, it shifts to an individual level. Moreover, Vygotsky divides the connections to the society in two phases, thus the intermental, which is society based, and the intramental, which is individual based. According to Vygotsky's division of phases, both the society and the individual have roles in the learning process. This means that as a child interacts with the people in the environment, language is therefore developed at a personal level. A child surrounded by English-speaking people learn to speak English fluently. Vygotsky (1978) has three main domains of the learning processes which are: mediation, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Cummins' (1978) theory of language acquisition is relevant to this study, which investigates the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. As Cummins states, English at the levels of BICS is acquired through social interactions; also, Vygotsky states that language is a social aspect. Both theories agree that the surroundings of children is responsible for language development. It is the home, peers and teachers that assist a child in developing communicative language. If English is used more often, even as an additional language, the child is more likely to acquire English at the level of BICS. Cummins asserts that the languages are interdependent. This means that the home language may be used to support learners who struggle with the second language. Once the BICS of a learner is developed and established, it becomes much easier for the learner to acquire CALP. One of the research objectives of this study was to investigate the challenges teachers encounter as they support their progressed learners in the writing of English FAL. The development of BICS in progressed learners might be seen as one of the challenges, as the microsystem of the progressed learners in this study was almost certainly dominated by a single language, isiXhosa. These learners would not have acquired the necessary BICS in their early years and would then struggle to acquire and develop the ability to write in English, which is part of the CALP. Cummins' quadrants highlight that writing is located in the fourth quadrant, the area in which high cognitive demands are placed on learners. Hence Cummins also suggests ways of supporting learners in the development of their CALP.

Additionally, Vygotsky stipulates the role that teachers should play in the development of CALP. According to Vygotsky (1989) the knowledgeable other plays a vital role in prompting the learning of English as a first additional language to learners. The sociocultural theory and Cummins' theory of language acquisition serves as a framework for understanding the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. This is achieved by looking at how language is acquired, the environmental and behavioural processes which influence teachers' experiences in supporting progressed learners writing skills. The main domains of the sociocultural theory relevant to this study are mediation, ZPD and scaffolding. This therefore means that the experiences investigated in this study are based on what teacher's experience while implementing mediation and scaffolding. Moreover, the experiences would include how teachers help learners reach their Zone of Proximal Development.

Both theories are related to this study in that they form a frame for the experiences of teachers and the support strategies that can be used in improving learners writing skills. Understanding how writing is learned. Cummins' theory states how the additional language is developed and the complexities of writing. On the other hand, Vygotsky suggests ways of teaching and supporting learners with English writing difficulties which therefore is key in this study which investigates the experiences of English FAL teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills.

1.8 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This study reviews the literature which addresses the problem this study seeks to investigate. The brief review below begins with a review of the literature on the progression policy. The discussion highlights support given to progressed learners so as to improve their writing skills, challenges faced by teachers as they support progressed learners, teachers' perceptions of the progression policy, and the various forms of curriculum support given to progressed learners.

1.8.1 The concept of the progression policy

Non-retention, according to Brahmhatt (2020), is another term used for the practice of progressing learners from one grade to another when they have not met the academic requirements of the current grade. The guide that states the requirements of the progression

policy is known as the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 (2016). The key point in the original progression policy (2012) is the support that should be given to progressed learners to ensure that they are able to handle the work of the grade they are progressed to. Brahmhatt (2020) asserts that progression without support is a futile exercise. Hughes et al. (2017) confirm that the retention of students leads to a high learner dropout rate, and that progressed students perform inadequately in relation to advanced students. These studies recommend that progressed learners be given support. This researcher agrees with these findings, acknowledging that support should be given; however, the specific aim of the current study is to examine the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers as they seek to provide this support, in terms of the writing skills of progressed learners. The general concept of progressed learners and the progression policy are reviewed in more detail in Chapter 2, which also examines challenges experienced in the implementation of the policy, the components of English FAL, and the curriculum support provided to progressed learners.

1.8.2 Current support given to progressed learners to improve their writing skills

According to the department of education (2012) the progression policy clearly states that support should be given to progressed learners in order to assist them to cope in the new grade. In striving to develop the writing abilities of students, teachers may make use of various helpful methodologies. Mpiti (2016, p. 50) asserts that the interaction approach is one technique that instructors may use to enhance students' composing abilities. The creative cycle incorporates arranging, drafting, altering, editing, and introducing. Learners who follow this process present work that is well written. The process approach is advocated by Ashriati (2017). In the planning stage, learners adhere to the guidelines of Vygotsky's theory (1979), in that they speak what they plan to write, so writing beings from speech. Drafting their thoughts in the English language will help progressed learners to develop their writing skills. The people in the microsystem, as stated by Bronfenbrenner (1979), may play a significant role in editing the work of the progressed learner. This approach has the potential to lead to well-presented written work, already proofread by someone in the microsystem before it is presented to the teacher. Writing is a process, and teachers need to emphasise this, so that the writing ability of progressed learners improves. The literature shows that learners who follow this process produce good written pieces of work.

1.8.3 Challenges faced by Grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners

Mogale and Modipane (2021, p. 1) argue that there are gaps and lack of clarity in progression policy that is causing some confusion in the interpretations of the policy and its implementation and has had a negative impact on progressed learners. Moreover, South Africa adopted the policy from countries like Denmark, Finland, and Sweden (Motshekga 2017). These are developed countries and can therefore offer more resources that help progressed learners to improve their writing skills. Another challenge, according to Kutame et al. (2021, p. 1), is that the Department of Basic Education has not stipulated any specific procedures that will help advanced students to get the help they need. A study conducted by Moswane (2019) concluded that overcrowded classrooms are a major challenge encountered by teachers in most South African schools. The challenges that teachers encounter as they support progressed learners' writing skills are also described by Dube and Ndaba (2021, p. 1) as a 'lack of teaching and learning resources, an inadequate number of teachers, subpar teaching techniques, and students' attitudes toward specific subjects all contributed to poor performance.' Ngema and Maphalala (2021, p. 1) supports this finding, stating, 'The teaching of progressed learners is constrained by overcrowded classrooms, a lack of parental involvement, absenteeism and learner dropout.' All of these are challenges that teachers encounter as they strive to support progressed learners' writing skills.

1.8.4 Grade 9 English teachers' perceptions of progressed learners

A study by Ramputla (2020) examined the views of teachers in America regarding social promotion, which is the same as progressing learners in the South African setting. He found that teachers viewed the policy as tricky, that it simply concealed the school's disappointment at the results they produced, and that it created problems for everyone, especially for the progressed learner. These learners were made to believe that they had the potential to perform better in the next grade, and yet many continued to struggle because of lack of support. Teachers are the implementers of policies, but some do not even understand the policy they have to implement (Mogale and Modipane, 2021). Research by Moagi (2020) showed that teachers face challenges because of overcrowding in the classrooms, a lack of instructional materials and school infrastructure, poor behaviour from students, low attendance at remedial sessions, and a lack of parental involvement. Moagi (2020, p. 1) states: 'Teachers prefer to use teacher-centred approaches and are not qualified to instruct

advanced learners.’ Also, teachers view progressed learners as learners who do not take their work seriously, as they do not show an interest in remedial activities.

1.8.5 Curriculum support provided to Grade 9 progressed learners

The study will pay special attention to scrutinizing the experiences and perceptions of the support in the curriculum and others forms of support offered by the educational institutions to the clarification and delivery of the appropriate curriculum in all its forms, including the allocation of time to support progressed learners. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) gives guidance to teachers on how to teach English as FAL. The CAPS English FAL Grade 7–9 (2011) document indicates the skills that should be developed when learning English as FAL. Lamas (2015) states that students have a good chance of accomplishing results if they are given scholarly help. According to Brahmhatt (2020, p. 29), ‘This support can be in a form of tutoring and offering remedial activities.’ A study conducted by Suprayogi et al. (2017) states that teachers should move from the ‘chalk and talk’ teaching method to a more inclusive method. Their view is in line with the conceptual framework of this study, which advocates a collaborative approach to writing. In this inclusive method, a learner is an active participant in the learning process. On the other hand, Mpiti (2016) affirms that the process approach is the best way of teaching writing. The reviewed literature suggests that as a way of supporting progressed learners, suitable teaching strategies should be developed, and time should be carved out for remedial activities and tutoring.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.9.1 Experience

The term ‘experience’ may be defined as the cycle by which cognizant organic entities undergo their current circumstance. In other words, through knowledge, skill in a certain area, exposure to it, and other factors (Ramputla, 2020, p. 9). Experience, in its concrete shape, can effect a profound transformation; after we pass through it, we are not same as before. In the context of this study, experiences are defined as everything that teachers encounter as they support progressed learners. This may include successes and challenges teachers face when supporting the writing skills of progressed learners’ English FAL.

1.9.2 Progressed learner

A progressed learner is one who has been moved from one grade to the next grade because of the number of years already spent in a grade, according to the procedure definition given in the progression policy document (2012). Similarly, the term ‘advanced student’ is used in this study to refer to one who has not met the passing requirements but is nevertheless moved to the following grade in view of their age and the number of years already spent in a grade.

1.9.3 English First Additional Language

English FAL is one of the languages taught in schools as an additional language. The Department of Education (2002, p. 45) defines an additional language as one that is studied in addition to one's native tongue. English was used by isiXhosa-speaking students in this study as the primary first additional languages well as the language of instruction.

1.9.4 Writing

Writing is a skill, and a process used by learners to express themselves. According to Mashiane and Ngoepe (2021, p. 175), ‘Writing is considered as a support skill, which was previously done to support grammar acquisition, assist language structure memorising, and even to promote oral competency as in grammar- translation, audio-lingual, and communicative approaches, respectively.’ In this study, ‘writing’ is defined as one of the skills that progressed learners use to express themselves. This skill is developed in their home language and in English FAL. Writing is a process that learners are required to master.

1.9.5 Retention

Hadebe and Moosa (2022) define retention as the act of requiring a learner who has not met the academic requirements to remain in the same grade. Brahmbhatt (2020) defines retention in terms of repeating an academic year of school; this is also known as grade retention. In the context of this study, retention is defined as a process whereby a learner does not progress to the next grade because they have not met the academic requirements for progressing.

1.9.6 Non-retention

According to Brahmhatt (2020), non-retention is also known as social promotion. Children progress to the next grade together with their age peers despite their failure to meet the required academic standards for that progression. In South Africa, the term 'non-retention' means the practice of progressing learners from one grade to the next when they have not met the passing requirements. In this study, non-retention is defined as the progression of learners based solely on their age and the number of years in a particular phase, regardless of their failure to meet the academic requirements for promotion.

1.9.7 Attitudes

Hanel, Foad and Maio (2021) define attitude as a specific judgement towards an object or something. It can either be positive or negative depending on how one perceives a phenomenon. Moreover, an attitude may be likes or dislikes towards anything that can be evaluated. In this study attitude is used to mean the way teachers regard the progression policy and supporting progressed learners.

1.9.8 Perceptions

According to Qiong (2017) a perception is the way one thinks about something. It is the way one sees things and it can also be the natural ability to understand and see things. This is also influenced by ones' experiences. In this study perception is used to mean the view of teachers with regards to the progression policy and how to affects support given to English FAL progressed learners.

1.9.9 Perspectives

According to Brown, McIlwraith and Gonzalez (2020) a perspective can be a particular way of considering something. This is also influenced by an individual's attitude and belief concerning a particular phenomenon. In this study perspective is used to mean the way grade 9 English teachers consider the progression policy.

1.9.10 Language Competency

Shobikah (2020) defines language competency is the ability to communicate in a certain language. In this study language competency means the ability to communicate in English following the acceptable grammar rules.

1.10 RESEARCHER'S STANCE

The researcher is an FET English teacher who has taught English FAL from grade 8 to grade 12. The researcher has more than 10 years of teaching and has observed learners doing grade 8 and 9 struggling with their English FAL writing skills. This struggle is particularly evident in progressed learners. These experiences have been the source of the researcher's interest to investigate the factors that influence the support given to progressed learners to improve their writing skills. In investigating this, it is proper to not only focus on the broader factors that influence support but more specifically to look at the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners English FAL writing skills. The writing of English FAL is one of the critical skills in language learning, even non- progressed learners struggle in mastering this skill. The researcher believes that the progression policy can yield good results if it is implemented properly. It is therefore important to investigate teachers' challenges and successes in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills.

1.11 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, I provide a brief synopsis of how data were collected in this study. A detailed account with regards to the methodology and design, research site, the selection of participants, data collection and data analysis is provided in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. This research study is qualitative in nature. According to Creswell (2021) qualitative research seeks to understand the viewpoint of participants based on their unique experiences. Hence the qualitative research approach was used to understand the perceptions and experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. Furthermore, interpretive research paradigm underpinned this study. Rashid (2022), defines a paradigm as a collection of basic beliefs and assumptions about the world that directs the researcher's actions to gain understanding of some of the subjective experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. A

phenomenology research design was employed, as ‘it allowed the research to collect data that talks to personal experiences of individual or group,’ (Hosaka et al., 2020, p. 10).

Moreover, Sutton and Austin (2015) affirm that participants provide important information or perceptions based on researcher’s phenomenon of interest. In this study 5 grade 9 English teachers were purposefully sampled from two schools in the Chris Hani district of the Eastern Cape, South Africa. All the participants had experience of teaching English FAL writing skills to progressed learners, hence they were found relevant for this study. Lillehei et al. (2015) state that semi-structured interviews are a flexible approach that enables depth data to be obtained, giving the interviewer the option to delve deeper into responses given and to broaden the interviewee's comments. On the other hand, Allen (2017, p. 55), affirms that ‘qualitative studies that use open-ended questions enable researchers to take a holistic and thorough look at the issues being examined.’ Hence this study used both semi-structured interviews (see appendix F) and open-ended questionnaire (see appendix G). Furthermore, data were analysed using thematic analysis (see appendices I and J). According to Kiger and Varpio (2020, p. 1), ‘thematic data analysis is a powerful yet flexible method for analysing qualitative data.’ Additionally, I ensured there was trustworthiness in this study as the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity are followed. Richmond et al. (2018) assert that trustworthiness improves the reader's comprehension and interpretation of the findings, allowing them to have confidence in the investigation's quality. The study design was preapproved by the appropriate UNISA research ethics committee (UNISA, 2014).

1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One: Orientation of the study

This chapter provides a comprehensive background and rationale for the study in order to position the problem statement in its context. It presents the research questions and the aim and objectives of the study, the theoretical framework, a brief literature review and definition of key concepts. The researcher’s stance and methodology are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and a review of the relevant literature. It describes the perception of teachers regarding the progression policy, challenges faced by teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills and strategies used to improve progressed learners' writing. The selection of literature was guided by the research questions of the study.

Chapter Three: Research methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology used to investigate the research project. The research approach, design and instruments are discussed in detail, together with data collection procedures.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and discussion of findings

Key findings under each theme are described by the researcher, together with verbatim quotes. These findings are followed by discussions.

Chapter Five: Summary, conclusion and recommendations

The researcher provides an overview of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

1.13 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter has oriented the reader to the topic under investigation. The progression policy has been shown to be a concept adopted from developed countries such as Denmark and Finland. The chapter has outlined the research questions and objectives. This is a phenomenological study which seeks to uncover the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. The study hopes to create awareness among educational stakeholders of the experiences of teachers as they endeavour to support progressed learners. Moreover, the brief review of the literature has revealed the high level of support needed for progressed learners, the challenges faced by teachers as they try to offer this support, the perceptions of teachers about the progression policy, and the curriculum support given to progressed learners. The researcher has summarized the methodology and discussed the

ethical considerations of the study, along with its limitations and delimitations. Terms that form part of this study were defined to clarify the concepts used in this study. The following chapter discusses the literature that was reviewed as part of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter gave an orientation to this study. The aim of this chapter is to review the literature relevant to the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners in English FAL. Firstly, this study begins by discussing the theoretical framework that underpins it, followed by an examination of the concept of the progression policy. The challenges associated with implementing this policy are also explored. The literature reviewed in this study focuses on the additional support provided to progressed learners, the teaching approaches employed in writing, and the components of English FAL that are relevant to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of 2011. Furthermore, the review extends to the challenges experienced by learners in completing English FAL activities. Moreover, this chapter also considers teachers' perceptions of the challenges that affect the development of writing skills and the strategies they employ to support learners in grade 9. Additionally, the chapter examines the resources that teachers use in the classroom to support learners' writing skills. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the key points discussed.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Frank and Vince (2019), a theoretical framework provides a study with a scientific basis and aligns the study with the existing literature, this study is underpinned by Jim Cummins' (1978) theory of language acquisition and Vygotsky's (1989) sociocultural theory.

2.2.1 Cummins' theory of language acquisition

Jim Cummins' theory of language acquisition (1979) distinguishes between Basic Interpersonal Conversational Skill (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Cummins explained that 'the BICS is acquired through conversations and is developed in a child between the ages of six months and five years' (Cummins and Swain, 2014. p. 355). In addition, Cummins stated that first additional language acquisition normally occurs through peer-appropriate conversations. Thus, an English first additional

language child acquires English from conversations with peers, both at home and in the playground. The learners' BICS are enhanced when there is support of the FAL learning. The concept of 'context-embedded learning' (Baker, 2006) involves different types of assistance, including gestures and immediate feedback, to aid verbal communication. Moreover, Cummins (2001) asserted that BICS forms a foundation for CALP but does not guarantee academic language proficiency; thus, a learner with good communicative skills may still struggle with acquiring formal academic language proficiency. This means that at times a learner may be able to speak English but lack academic ability, which demands higher cognitive levels. Cummins (2000) affirmed that when teaching bilingual students critical language skills should be addressed. This implies that approaches to the teaching of the first additional language should develop the learners' level of thinking academically.

Cummins highlights that not all aspects of language may be included in one category of global language proficiency. There should be a distinction between spoken language acquisition and written language acquisition. According to Cummins and Swain (2014), phonological skills in the native language are established in the first six years of life; however, literacy and vocabulary knowledge develop throughout the school years and usually throughout the lifetime. Cummins asserts that as children develop, BICS and CALP cannot be separated, because at a young age children acquire their conceptual foundation through conversational interactions; they use BICS in the home (Cummins, 2001). The BICS forms an essential foundation for the CALP, and therefore, the more bilingual the child, the better their ability to demonstrate Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, or CALP.

In contrast, CALP is more prevalent in academic environments and is often linked to a "context-reduced domain" (Baker, 2006). Put simply, when learning in a context-embedded setting, individuals can utilize gestures and point to objects to successfully deliver messages and grasp their intended meanings. However, in context-reduced settings, meaning is derived from engaging with various texts. Consequently, learners are faced with cognitive challenges that require higher-order thinking skills to assess their language proficiency (Cummins, 2021). CALP facilitates learners' comprehension of language for meaningful learning purposes. The acquisition of CALP typically takes between five to ten years. Both BICS and CALP have significant implications for the success or failure of non-native English speakers (Pretorius and Mampuru, 2007; Whitman, Rooy, and Viswesvaran, 2010). It is important to note that possessing well-developed conversational skills (BICS) in an

additional language does not necessarily indicate academic proficiency in learning through the medium of English as a foreign additional language. Additionally, Cummins asserts that the difference between BICS and CALP should be taken into consideration, because failure to develop BICS can lead to learners' incompetence in English additional language. In the mainstream classes Cummins (2021) asserts that learners receive minimal support for academic language development. This implies that teachers should evaluate the language proficiency of learners before they begin teaching, to target their support and assist progressed learners to reach the same level of proficiency as others in their grade. Hence the aim of this study is to investigate the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. This aligns with Cummins' theory, which states that BICS may be developed randomly, but the development of CALP requires that a child is appropriately supported so as to be on par with native language learners.

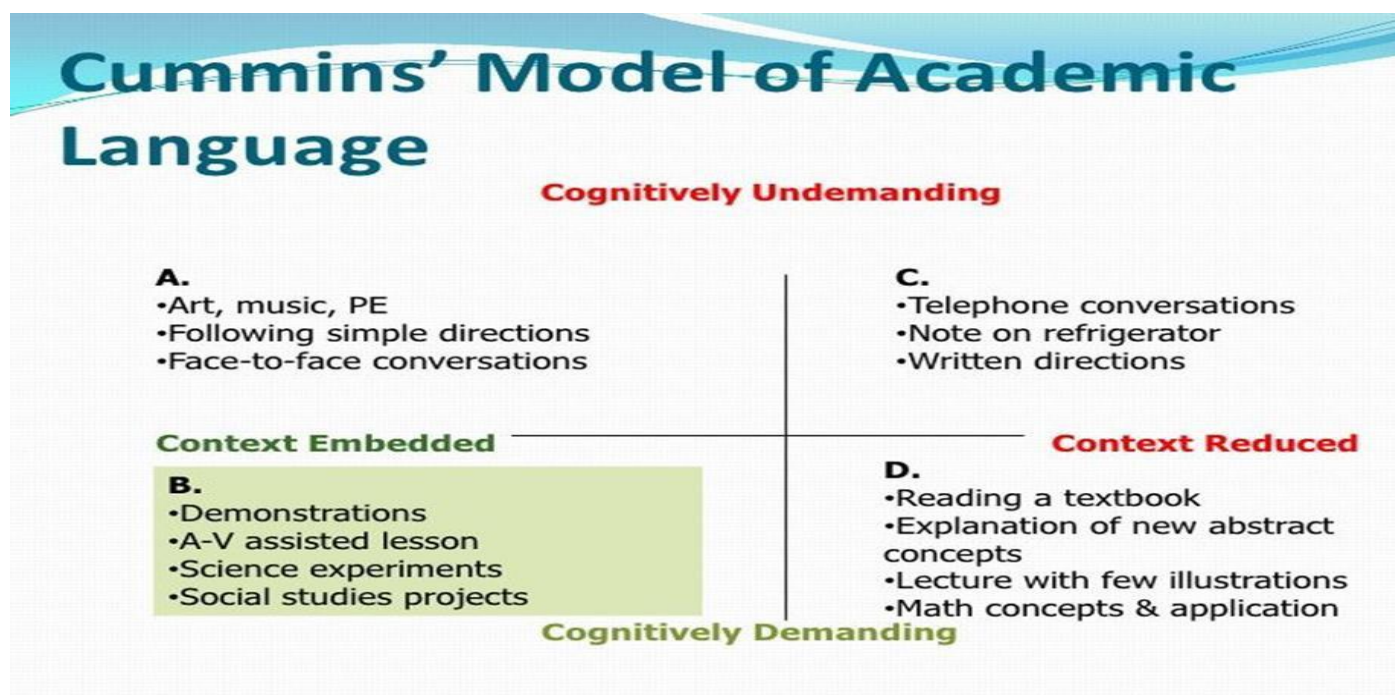
2.2.2 Cummins' four quadrants

The language quadrant model presented in figure 2.1 encompasses both BICS and CALP as they both represent language communication and proficiency. Proficiency can be readily attained by a learner in context-embedded environments, whereas achieving fluency in context-reduced settings, where CALP is necessary for learning, may require several years of effort. In addition, the cognitive demands of a language are highlighted by Cummins' four quadrants in which writing falls in the fourth quadrant. Cummins (2000) states that in the first and second quadrant, there are low context-embedded texts that demand a low academic cognitive level. So, the first two quadrants have more to do with the conversational knowledge of language, the BICS level. In quadrant three, the text is low context embedded but it demands a high academic cognitive level. In the fourth quadrant, the text is high context reduced and there is also high cognitive demand. Activities in this quadrant include essay writing, which requires high cognitive levels. These quadrants highlight the learning process, where ability in the first and the second quadrants is prepared at home and ability in the third and the fourth quadrants is developed at school.

The Cummins quadrants of cognitive demands have been found to be consistent with Bloom's Taxonomy (2001), which outlines the cognitive levels of a given task. According to Bloom's Taxonomy, a task should begin by assessing a learner's ability to remember and recall information, falling within the first quadrant of Cummins' theory. Subsequently, learners should progress to understanding and applying the information, which is situated in the second

quadrant. The third quadrant, as per Cummins, requires learners to analyse and evaluate the information, while the fourth quadrant necessitates the creation of something original or substantially new, which is considered the highest level of thinking in the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. Verbs such as "generate," "plan," or "produce" indicate that learners are expected to work at this level. Given the complexity of these cognitive demands, teachers are expected to provide support and guidance to learners in mastering the requirements of writing in a second language. The diagram below shows Cummins' Model of academic language.

Figure 2.1 Cummins' four quadrants



Note : Source :

<https://images.search.yahoo.com/images%3E+activity+where+in+cummins+%3C/b%3C>

Cummins asserts that writing falls into the 4th quadrant because it is cognitively demanding and it is context reduced, therefore learners should be supported in order to master writing. When writing an essay a learner is just given a topic which he has to unpack and comprehend in order to write a well-structured essay. Unlike in a listening comprehension, where answers are text based writing requires a high level of thinking hence it falls under the fourth quadrant, which is cognitive demanding. This therefore suggests that the writing of English is challenging, hence this study also looks at the support strategies that can be given to

progressed learners. Writing challenges the creativity of a learner because the learner must critically think more deeply about the piece to be written and how it will be written. When writing a learner must have prior knowledge of the structure of what he is writing, be able to remember and apply that knowledge in a creative manner, hence writing falls under the fourth quadrant.

2.2.3 Interdependency hypothesis

Cummins (1978) developed the interdependency hypothesis, represented as a ‘dual-iceberg’, and also known as the iceberg hypothesis. This hypothesis Cummins (2021) claims that in every language, there exists surface features that are readily observable. However, beneath these surface manifestations lie proficiencies that are shared across different languages. This underlying aspect of language proficiency is referred to as the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). As Cummins (2000, p. 232) suggests, ‘the domain of CUP encompasses proficiencies that involve more cognitively demanding tasks, including literacy, content learning, abstract thinking, and problem-solving’.

These proficiencies transcend specific languages and are applicable across linguistic contexts. Hence, in the learning of a second language, Cummins advocates the use of both the home language and the new language in assisting the learner to acquire the new language, since languages share common cognitive demands. In agreement with this statement, the skills that are developed in all languages are the same, according to the Curriculum Assessment Policy (2011); these are reading and viewing, writing and presenting, listening and speaking skills, and language structures. This therefore means, the knowledge of writing the learner has in the first language can be used when learning writing in the second language. These skills are interdependent. BICS falls under the listening and speaking skill because it is the development of the basic interpersonal communicative skills of a learner. Reading, writing and language structures cannot be separated because when a learner is able to read, then that learner develops his vocabulary which is part of language structures and ultimately writing is developed.

2.2.4 Threshold hypothesis

According to Teemantt and Pinnegar (2007, p. 234), ‘in learning a second language, a minimum threshold level of proficiency must be reached in that language before the learner

can benefit from the use of the language as a medium of instruction in school, to avoid the negative effects of bilingualism'. This means that before identifying a language of instruction for learners, the teacher needs to assess their level of proficiency. This statement concurs with the argument that some learners struggle with understanding instructions asked in English. Furthermore, Cummins (2000) highlights the consequences of a low threshold of ability, stating that if learners are weak in the language of instruction, they will fall behind in all subjects unless they find an instruction, they are able to comprehend. This means a low threshold ability has long term effect to the schooling of a learner, hence support is needed to bridge the content gap. Cummins' theory is in line with the progression policy which affirms that learners should be progressed with support.

Moreover, Cummins (2021) argues that when learners who do not show high proficiency in the language of instruction are not given instructional support, they are unlikely to develop literacy skills. This hypothesis states a balance of language development in the bilingual learner. If a child understands his home language and the CALP in the home language is well developed, the learner is more likely to develop a high level of language proficiency in the second language. Furthermore, Cummins's theory asserts that a learner should reach a second threshold to be bilingual. Cummins' (1979) threshold hypothesis resonates with Vygotsky's concept of the mediating role of language and speech, both in children's cognitive functioning and in their interactions with the environment. This implies that if a child is proficient in a certain language, the cognitive and speech elements of language will be evident. The writing of a language falls into Cummins' fourth quadrant, which requires a high cognitive level for a learner to master (Cummins, 2001). Reading and writing cannot be separated hence both fall in the 4th quadrant. Reading helps in developing learners' vocabulary and spelling. Learners with good reading skills do not struggle much with writing as they are able to deal with cognitively demanding questions. This implies that writing is complex and requires support for mastery and a well-developed cognitive academic language proficiency. For learners to master writing support should be given, hence this study looks at what teachers experience when supporting progressed learners so that they can master this complex skill of writing. So, for the learner to be able to write in English, the BICS should be well developed. Moreover, Cummins (2021) distinguishes between two types of threshold: the lower threshold, and the higher threshold. The lower threshold does not require a high academic cognitive level, while the higher one does. The higher threshold

includes the writing of essays which falls under the fourth quadrant as it demands high cognitive levels.

2.2.5 Sociocultural theory

According to Vygotsky's (1989) sociocultural theory, language is developed through social interactions and is influenced by culture. Vygotsky (1989) underscores that language is important as a social tool when he asserts that, 'the primary function of speech, both for the adult and the child is the function of communication, social contact influencing surrounding individuals' (Vygotsky 1934, p. 45). He further explains his theory through 3 stages of language development: stage one is the external or social speech. According to Rocamemi et al. (2020). From birth until the age of three, babies engage in external speech. They use language to convey their emotions, express their feelings, and share basic words. A child acquires the language spoken by his surroundings.

Vygotsky agrees with Cummins, who affirms that the first level of language development is the establishment of BICS. Vygotsky also agrees that the building of communicative skill plays a significant role in child's proficiency in the home language. A child born in an English-speaking home can easily understand English. Stage two is egocentric speech and occurs between the ages of three to seven. As they begin to rationalize internally their actions or behavior, they then begin to talk to themselves (Rocamemi et al., 2020). 'Egocentric speech also involves a child talking to himself for self-guidance, usually through activity' (Alves-Fortunato et al., 2021, p. 1). This stage is associated with immaturity in a child, where a child talks to herself when playing. This forms part of the child's language development. Lastly, the third stage is the inner speech. Rocamemi (2020) affirms that inner speech helps children control their reasoning and organize their thoughts.

Vygotsky suggests that children's perspectives, values and attitudes are influenced by their people in their social circle. To illustrate this, Vygotsky introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which represents the gap between a child's current abilities and their potential abilities. The child's current abilities refer to their capacity to solve problems on their own, while their potential abilities refer to their capacity to solve problems with the assistance of an adult or peer collaboration. The ZPD can be linked to Cummins threshold hypothesis which sets the actual level of language proficiency a child should have

at a certain age. If that proficiency is not developed at that age then that child should be supported to reach the potential development.

2.2.6 The tenets of sociocultural theory

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory asserts that learning is a result of social interactions and is influenced by culture. These social interactions occur in the environment where the child is raised. Sociocultural theory is embedded in three concepts, namely, mediation, scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), (Fahim, Barjesteh and Vaseghi, 2012). Mediation is whereby learners use material tools, psychological tools, and human beings to acquire knowledge, (Mustafa et al., 2019). Material mediators can be wooden stick and other material things that can be used in learning. The psychological tools talk to the psychology of an individual, and it can be pictures, numbers or music. Human beings are the most important mediators as all other mediators depend on them. Parents, peers, and teachers form part of the social interactions a child has while developing his language skills. It is the role of the people surrounding the learner that motivate him in acquiring the second language. These people are called mediators (Brahmbhatt, 2020). 'Mediation is a central concept of sociocultural theories' approach to first additional language acquisition' (Mustafa et al., 2019, p. 31). Vygotsky asserts that learners should interact with other learners in the English language and work together in small groups using English as means of communication, (Vygotsky, 1989, p. 185). The more knowledgeable learner will be the mediator in the group and will ensure that through social interactions the first additional language is developed. This implies that the development of BICS is dependent on the interactions a child has with his surroundings.

In the context of this study, teachers are mediators of improving English FAL writing skills. Other mediators, such as peers, can be used by teachers as a form of support to progressed learners. This study seeks to find what teachers experience as they mediate the learning of writing which is in fourth quadrant, according to Cummins. Vygotsky argues that a first additional language can be acquired better through mediation. This study thus includes finding out what grade 9 English teachers experience is with mediation as they support progressed learners. Moreover, Vygotsky (1989) affirms that collaborative writing is when learners interact with each other and assist each other in writing. On the other hand, scaffolding is when a teacher or peer models what is expected from a child, then once the child masters that, it can then be done individually. This concept is a powerful strategy that assists learners in improving

their writing skills. Mpiti (2016) also advocates collaborative writing. This study is underpinned by this theory, as it seeks to find the experiences of grade 9 educators as they support progressed learners in ensuring that they improve their writing skills. This theory promotes peer learning, where peers assist each other with writing English. Moreover, some learners do not even feel comfortable telling the teachers when they do not understand, hence social interaction with their peers may assist in learning English FAL. As an English teacher, I also observe that, when learners are given essays as a take-home activity, they tend to perform better because they get time for their work to be edited by other people. Teachers can also pair these progressed learners with learners who can write better and assign them to mentor the progressed learners so that they can improve their writing skills. Writing competence is important, as it is how learners present their work in most subjects. If a learner fails to write English, then that learner will have challenges in most subjects. As learners learn from others to write, they can be motivated to work hard and improve their writing skills. Collaborative writing talks to the research question of this study, which seeks to find the strategies teachers use to support progressed learners in improving their English FAL writing skills.

Vygotsky (1989) argues that learners have two levels of intellectual development which are the actual level and the potential level. These are found in his notion of Zone of Proximal Development. When a learner is given a task to complete alone that is where the actual development is seen (Vygotsky, 1989, p. 187). According to Vygotsky (1989) learners who seem to struggle when assigned to write alone have minimal actual development, hence they need special attention and assistance. ‘Scaffolding is a collaborative process which enhances learning by assisting one another’ (Ohta, 2000, p. 52). According to Mpiti (2016, p. 23), the concept of scaffolding involves the expert providing support to the learner until they are capable of independently completing tasks without assistance from the teacher or expert. Additionally, Freeman (2023, p. 59) compares ‘scaffolding to a temporary framework used in construction, as it provides support to a building during its construction phase and is subsequently removed once the building is completed’. In the context of writing English FAL, this construction refers to the acquisition of knowledge in this particular skill.

The writing process is a collaborative system and, according to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (2011), teachers should help learners to practice the writing process in class. The writing processes include planning, drafting, editing, and proofreading, which assists these learners in ensuring that they submit better-written work than they would alone.

The editing part can often be done by peers. The progression policy is in line with Vygotsky's (1989) theory because it states that a progressed learner should be given assistance and necessary support to bridge the content gap. Learning through mentoring is a more natural way to determine the learner's potential.

2.2.7 The theoretical framework in relation to this study

Cummins' (1978) theory of language acquisition and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory are relevant to this study. Both theorists regard learning as a social activity, which means that through interactions with parents, peers and teachers, learners can be supported in the acquisition of their second language, including their CALP in English. These theories suggest that before the development of writing, the basic communicative language skills of learners should be developed as a foundation for learning. Cummins argues that if the BICS of a learner is not developed then that learner will struggle with the writing of English. This concurs with Vygotsky who suggests that when writing the thought comes from the inner speech and is transferred to a written piece. Therefore, this study looks at how well progressed learners' basic communicative skills are developed as a foundation to the development of their cognitive academic language.

Moreover, because the skills developed in both languages are the same, Cummins suggests that the home language can assist learners in acquiring the second language. Additionally, Cummins suggests the threshold hypothesis, which stipulates the level of proficiency a learner should show at a certain level. In relation to this study the focus is on progressed learners in grade 9, who are supposed to show a certain level of language proficiency. In this grade all learners are expected to be able to construct English sentences that are grammatically correct and are also expected to be able to read and write in both the home and second language. If a grade 9 learner cannot construct one meaningful English sentence, that means they have fallen behind the threshold and therefore support is highly needed.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory states that learners can learn concepts that are difficult and master them, as long as teachers give them support until they reach a point of independence. This theory suggests that all learners have potential to be achievers when given the necessary support in the writing of English FAL. Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics states that teachers should teach reading and writing as learners cannot discover these on their own. This means teachers should be mediators of

learning these two complex skills that cannot be separated. Furthermore, Halliday argues that the main function of language is meaning, so learners must be made to grasp the overall meaning of a text before the text is broken down to sentence structure, grammatical meaning and vocabulary. Vygotsky suggest the concept of scaffolding as a way teachers can support leaners to master the writing of English. The scaffolding cycle suggests that, through written texts, teachers must provide prompts and cues for learners to understand sequences of meanings at the level of the whole text, then the level of the paragraph, followed by the level of the sentence, and finally the level of the words. This pattern needs to be repeated through each activity in the sequence to make up the scaffolding approach (Martin and Rose, 2005). Through the process of scaffolding, then learners are able to reach their ZPD.

2.3 LITERUATURE REVIEW

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, this section reviews literature based on the concept of progression. It further looks at the challenges of writing and the strategies used to support learners with English FAL writing difficulties. Relevant teaching approaches are reviewed to find the best teaching strategies teachers could use to support progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. Moreover, the resources used to support learners with writing difficulties are reviewed. The literature reviewed is not only based in South Africa but also global contexts that can be applied in the South African context.

2.3.1 The concept of progressed learners

The concept of progressing learners is practiced globally (Khobe, 2021), but different terms are used to refer to it. For example, in the United States of America and Canada, the policy is known as social promotion (McMahon, 2018), while in Botswana it is known as automatic progression (Malejane and Diraditsile, 2019, p. 2). However, in South Africa it is known as the progression policy. The rationale behind the policy is to deal with some or many learners repeating a class, which then lead to drop-outs (Malejane and Diraditsile, 2019). The aim of the policy is that learners should not be forced to repeat a grade but instead should progress to the next grade, while being provided with additional support. Below the concept and practices of progression policy is explored in a global context.

2.3.1.1 The progression policy in South Africa

The South African regulations pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 (DOE, 2012) show that since Curriculum 2005, the policy on progression has been in effect for the General Education and Training (GET) band, and since 2013 it has been in effect for the Further Education and Training (FET) band. Circular E22 (Department of Education, 2016) prohibits learners from spending more than four years in a phase by stating that a learner may only be kept back in the Further Education and Training phase once. This suggests that a student who fails a grade for the second time must be permitted to move on to the following grade rather than being held back again. A student wishing to receive a matric certificate must, however, complete all National Senior Certificate (NSC) requirements by the end of Grade 12. Schools have been asked to give such learners extra help to improve their performance in particular academic areas, so that they may meet the expectations of the following grade. The Department of Education Promotion Policy (2016) states that progressed learners should be given the appropriate assistance to address the inadequacies in their academic performance. A learner who has failed a grade for the second time is not automatically progressed. Thus, before progressing to Grade 12, students must meet a number of requirements in addition to the fundamental one, which is not having spent more than four years in the phase. They must also:

- Pass the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT),
- Pass at least four of the seven subjects, including Life Orientation,
- Have attended school regularly, and
- Have complied with the School-Based Assessment (SBA) requirements in all subjects.

The DBE has created a guideline to guide schools in their implementation of the progression policy to ensure that they implement it correctly. The first cohort of progressed learners reached Grade 12 in 2014. Motshekga (2017) argues that the South African policy of progression of learners is in alignment with the globally recognized best practices observed in countries such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom. But she adds that these developed countries possess the necessary resources to support progressed learners. Conversely, resources are limited in South Africa, a developing country; more particularly in its rural areas. According to Farrie and Sciarra (2022), the Equal Education Law Centre, noted

that South African schools are plagued by a dearth of resources. Rural schools, for example, lack basic textbooks and other reading material (Cilliers and Bloch, 2018).

Although the Department of Education published guidelines for implementing the progression policy in a circular (E22 of 2016), Kika and Kotze (2018) note difficulties with the policy's implementation. These arose in part because there are various interpretations of the policy throughout the system, leading to differences in implementation across schools. Moreover, Mogale and Modipane (2021) state that the ultimate decision regarding the progression of a learner lies with the parents or guardians of the identified student. In the guideline for the implementation of promotion and progression in Grades 10 to 12, the Department of Basic Education stipulates that schools must offer support and monitor the progress of the learners. This should be done in the low grades, not only in Grade 12. Support is key to helping progressed learners overcome their areas of difficulty (DBE, RSA: 2015). Smith et al. (2019) researched the effectiveness of residential camps held to support Grade 12 progressed learners. Their study found that in South Africa, support is only given when the progressed learner reaches Grade 12; however, the policy clearly states that support should be given to all progressed learners in all grades. The content gaps of progressed learners should be bridged in the lower grades to prevent long- term damage to learning.

Countries like Denmark have effective support strategies in place for progressed learners. The adult vocation program is one of the initiatives employed by Denmark to provide assistance and guidance to learners who experience learning difficulties, as reported in the national report of Denmark (Ersbøll, 2009). The Danish government recognizes the importance of skill development and has implemented remedial classes for learners to attend after school. Additionally, learners are grouped based on their academic performance, and those who are not in the mainstream are assigned a mentor to provide further support. This policy has proven to be effective in countries that have adopted similar approaches. In addition, a study conducted by Musitha and Mafukata (2018, p. 25) on the crisis of decolonising education highlights that 'the progression policy can only be beneficial to the progressed learners if they are provided with favorable learning environments, as that could enable such learners to succeed in the subjects that they had failed'. Dube and Ndaba (2021) assert that resource distribution in South African schools is a challenge that has a great impact on the support progressed learners are given. Schools in remote areas have fewer resources

than schools in urban areas. As a result, Mogale and Modipane (2021) affirm that progressed learners contributed to the decline of Grade 12 national results in 2015 and 2016.

There is a view that some students who fail their grades are underachievers who do not make a concerted effort; they may be distinguished from low achievers who try hard, with the danger of disappointment and failure inspiring them to try even harder, instead of demotivating them (Guner et al., 2019). Motshekga (2019) argues that the rise in the pass rate for Grade 12 students in 2019, as shown in the National Senior Certificate Examination Report 2019, can be attributed to their active engagement in various learner support initiatives. The Department of Education says that academic learner support in South African schools has been a longstanding practice, encompassing a diverse range of educational strategies. These include the provision of supplementary materials, vacation classes, after-school programs, teacher content training, volunteer teachers - often university students - and alternative methods of grouping and instructing learners (DOE, 2019). However, there is considerable evidence that for many progressed South African students these support programs are insufficient or completely absent. As mentioned above, the primary goal of the progression policy is to lower dropout rates. However, according to Grossen, Grobler and Lacante (2017), progressed students have difficulty in earning their Grade 12 certificate because they are unable to cope with the work. As a result, the progression policy's goal of enabling students to enroll in Grade 12 and graduate from it may be deemed unsuccessful. The available literature indicates that South Africa still has much to accomplish regarding the progression policy. Motshekga (2017) stated that progressing learners should be closely observed, but there is little evidence that this is done in any grades other than Grade 12.

This study therefore urges early intervention to prevent the pattern of progressed students being unable to express themselves in writing. Bronfenbrenner (1979) affirms that the environment plays an important role in ensuring learning, and so a conducive environment should be created for progressed learners to ensure better performance. South Africa has much work to do in this regard, especially in rural schools.

2.3.1.2 The progression policy in other countries

Progression as a practice is given different terms around the world. In Portugal, Spain and France it is called grade non-retention. Johnson et al. (2016) assert that grade non-retention is the system in which learners are pushed to the next grade without having met the passing

requirements. The utilization of the term 'non-retention' is infrequent in Finland, Poland, and Greece, as the practice of grade retention is only implemented in extraordinary situations. In India, the Right to Education Act of 1986 introduced a policy of non-retention. As stated by Chataa and Nkengbeza (2019), in the United States, the notion of advancing students to the next grade alongside their peers, regardless of their failure to meet academic criteria, is referred to as automatic promotion. In Norway, guidelines for promotion state that learners progress automatically through the years of compulsory schooling. (Rule and John, 2015), a practice known as 'automatic progression'. Thus, the progression policy used in South Africa is not unique to the country and is fairly widely practiced around the world. Holmes and Matthews (1984, p. 17, cited in Stott et al., 2015) concluded their meta-analysis of the repetition of grades by elementary and junior high students by stating, that 'those who continue to retain pupils at grade level do so despite cumulative research evidence showing the potential for negative effects consistently outweighs positive outcomes.'

Leyai (2011, p. 45) asserts that 'there are few European countries that do not allow learners to automatically progress to the following grade'. Moreover, many European nations consider retention as the last form of educational assistance, which means that the primary approach is to promote and support learners. According to Alves-Fortunato et al. (2015), education should be suited to the child's age, capacities, and talent. In Poland, learners cannot be retained during the first three grades and in Greece, they cannot be retained during the first two grades (Alves-Fortunato et al., 2015, p. 46). Moreover, children automatically transfer from Grade 1 to Grade 2 in Germany, Australia and Portugal (Hopwood et al., 2020). The disadvantage of progressing a grade 8 learner is that such a learner might have missed a lot in the foundation phase and might be unable to catch up in the senior phase. Mtshali and Mashiya (2022) asserts that English is dependent on the foundation built in the primary phase. This implies the primary phase is vital for the development of English FAL as basic language skills are learnt in this phase.

Furthermore, according to Alves-Fortunato et al. (2015), Finland has implemented a progression policy that imposes a maximum limit on the duration of primary school education. This policy restricts students from attending primary school for more than eight years. Similarly, in Wallonia, a region in Belgium, students are allowed to be retained only once in Grades 1 and 2, as well as once in Grades 3 to 6. France and Spain also follow a similar approach, where students can only be held back once during their primary education.

It is worth noting that European countries have established centralized guidelines to determine the criteria for student retention, as specified by Hopwood et al. (2020). In Denmark and the Netherlands, policy is not centralised. The school and school board may decide whether or not to promote or retain learners. Here, the criteria applied include behaviour and absenteeism related to, for instance, illness. As in most European countries, South Africa has centralised criteria that should be followed when learners are progressed.

2.3.1.3 The progression policy in Africa

The progression policy is practiced by several other African countries apart from South Africa. Zimbabwe and Namibia, for instance, have progression policies. Different terms and concepts are used to refer to the movement of learners from one grade to the next without meeting the pass requirements. According to Mapolisa et al. (2016), in Zimbabwe progressed learners are termed ‘learners in the lower stream’. Contrary to South Africa, in Zimbabwe learners are grouped according to their learning abilities, and this is known as streaming of learners. This a very different approach to that of South Africa. Streaming learners according to their ability makes it easier for teachers to support learners in the lower stream. In addition, Nyathi (2022) affirms that in Zimbabwe, learners in the lower stream are allocated experienced teachers who are able to offer support. A study conducted by Okurut (2015) examined the effects of automatic promotion on students’ performance of students in Uganda’s primary education and found that it had a positive effect on learning outcomes.

As in South Africa, Cameroon adopted the policy of automatic promotion accompanied by support mechanisms. A study conducted by Nalova (2016) in Cameroon a study conducted on teachers' views and application of automatic promotion, particularly in light of the challenges faced by numerous primary school students in writing, revealed that negative perceptions towards automatic promotion and inconsistencies between the understanding and execution of the policy could account for the perceived decline in educational standards. When automatic promotion is properly integrated with support and implemented accurately, it can yield positive outcomes. However, the findings of a study conducted in Cameroon indicate that teachers lack a clear understanding of the concept of automatic promotion, leading to its incorrect implementation. ‘Teachers are the key players in the implementation process and their beliefs, practices and attitudes are closely linked to their ways of dealing with challenges in their teaching progressed learners, and those strategies are important for

understanding and improving educational processes' (Nalova, 2016, p. 12). These results should be taken seriously by policy makers. They underline that before a policy is designed and endorsed, realistic implementation strategies are also needed, which means the implementers of the policy, such as the teachers, must be trained and provided with the support needed for proper implementation.

A policy known as automatic or social promotion was introduced in Namibia as part of its educational reform. This policy is the same as the progression policy of South Africa, requires a learner to progress even if academic requirements are not met. In Namibia the social promotion policy requires that the child receives compulsory compensatory teaching in the next grade thus according to a study conducted by Chataa and Nkengbeza (2019) in Namibia.

2.3.2 Challenges in implementing the school progression policy

Even though the progression policy has been widely implemented across the world, its implementation involves overcoming many challenges. As highlighted above, in Uganda it was found that teachers were unsure of how the policy should be implemented. The challenges sometimes defeat the main purpose of adopting the policy. According to Mogale and Modipane (2021), the methods used to implement the progression policy may have had an adverse impact on the progress of progressed learners and consequently, on matriculation results.

In addition, a study conducted on teachers' views and application of automatic promotion, particularly in light of the challenges faced by numerous primary school students in writing, revealed that negative perceptions towards automatic promotion and inconsistencies between the understanding and execution of the policy could account for the perceived decline in educational standards. When automatic promotion is properly integrated with support and implemented accurately, it can yield positive outcomes. However, the findings of a study conducted in Cameroon indicate that teachers lack a clear understanding of the concept of automatic promotion, leading to its incorrect implementation. Learners are progressed with less academic content in various subjects. The gap in content has to be bridged through remedial activities, which are difficult for teachers to build into their busy schedules. Modipane and Mogale (2021) affirms that the implementation of the progression policy remains a challenge owing to numerous factors such as overcrowding, lack of resources and lack of time for remedial activities. Nyathi (2022) also asserts that gaining

parental involvement in Madagascar is one of the challenges in the implementation of the progression policy. This highlights a deficiency or challenge in the execution of the progression policy, as parents ought to be included in order to provide support for their children. Parents are key players in the education of their children and they should play an active role in providing support for their children's education.

In South Africa, Circular E22 of 2016 (DOE, 2016) states that parents should form part of the decision making for learners being considered for progression. This is a serious challenge in rural areas, where many parents are illiterate. As stated above, social interaction forms part of the motivation for learners who experience writing challenges. It becomes a problem if parents do not play a part in the implementation of the progression policy. According to the Guidelines on the Implementation of the Progression Policy Circular E22 (DOE, 2016), the school management should meet the parents of progressed learners to ensure that they understand that their children need support to cope in the next grade. However, few parents engage in such meetings and few schools even hold these meetings. As a result, Mogale et al. (2021) found that there were no minutes of any meeting held regarding the implementation of the progression policy. Lack of parental involvement, therefore, hinders the remedial activities that parents should be doing with their children.

Schools are required to provide support to students and to keep track of their development, according to the DBE (2015) guidelines on the implementation of promotion and progression requirements for Grades 10 to 12. A study conducted by Jarvis and Baloyi (2020) found that the socio-economic environment contributed to dysfunctionality in schools, which has a negative impact upon, and influenced the learning experience of both educators and learners. Schools with low socio-economic status struggle to offer this support. Nortje (2017) found that the progression of learners is influenced by the school's senior management team and teachers' subjective perceptions, attitudes and opinions. Kader's research shows that there is a lack of understanding of the guidelines for implementing the progression policy. Mogale et al. (2021, p. 8) found that 'teachers highlighted the lack of resources and overcrowding as barriers to monitoring and offering curriculum support to progressed learners'. This finding is consistent with Musitha and Mafukata (2018) who assert that lack of resources prevents curriculum support as teachers might not be creative enough to work with limited resources. Schools in rural areas lack learning resources to support these learners. There are also shortages of textbooks and teachers. Moreover, Mpiti (2016) states that rural schools are

faced with the challenge of overcrowding, which makes it difficult for teachers to offer support to progressed learners. A teacher needs a lot of time to assist a learner who cannot write in English as FAL. Musitha and Mafukata (2018) point out that the progression policy can only help progressed learners if they are provided with favourable learning environments that help them succeed in the subjects that they have failed. Sebetoa (2016, p. 45) asserts that ‘failure to implement guidelines of the progression policy has led to progressed learners not getting their matric certificates and eventually dropping out of school’. This outcome defeats the purpose of the progression policy, which is to prevent learners from dropping out.

The progression policy states that the school-based support team (SBST) should monitor and report on the progress of progressed learners, referred to as learners at risk (DBE, RSA, 2015). Furthermore, research conducted by Mogale et al. (2021) reveals that only one of the schools studied had a SBST and kept records of supporting progressed learners. The other school in their study did not even have the SBST structure. The last challenge to the implementation of the progression policy is the lack of teacher consultation. The teachers who took part in the research by Mogale et al. (2021) complained about not being consulted before learners are progressed. This can result in teachers resisting the implementation of the progression policy.

2.3.3 Additional support for progressed learners

As alluded to above, progressed learners should be given support, according to the progression policy. Ahmad et al. (2015) asserts that countries such as Denmark, Finland and the US offer intensive additional support which includes pre-school programmes, early reading programmes, before and after school programmes, basic skill- building classes, and the provision of extra lessons. Hadebe and Moosa (2022) asserts that in European countries, progressed learners are supported through remedial activities, and if a learner still fails, retention is the proposed form of support. This simply means that if a learner is not sufficiently assisted by the support given to them by teachers (which may include extra work), then that learner should repeat the grade for the second time. Moreover, countries such as Norway and Brazil use looping as a form of additional support to progressed learners (Nyathi, 2022). Ahmad et al. (2015) defines looping as one educator teaching the same class over two years. This kind of support enables the learner to build a relationship with the teacher who may be better able to assist, as they know the learner well. Furthermore, research conducted by Chataa and Nkengbeza (2019) in Namibia confirms that primary school teachers at a school

in the Zambezi Education Region encounter significant obstacles such as bullying from fellow students, underperformance of promoted learners, absenteeism, and insufficient time to support the progress of learners. Additionally, Lodge et al. (2018) argue that a notable challenge of this educational system is the promotion of students without them having obtained a sufficient grasp of the required academic material.

In addition, countries such as Zimbabwe support progressed learners by streaming them, (Mapolisa et al., 2016). This is contrary to the education system of South Africa which practices inclusive education. Streaming learners is advantageous, as it allows teachers to pay attention to the individual needs of learners. Support strategies are easy to implement when progressed learners are put in one class. Smith et al. (2019) wrote an article about residential camps formed in Gauteng to support Grade 12 progressed learners. The article concluded that the camps were useful, largely because they enabled all struggling learners to be taught together. The guideline for progression states that support should be offered to every progressed learner, not just to Grade 12 progressed learners. Research conducted in South Africa shows that support is mostly given to progressed learners in Grade 12. Moreover, Grade 12 progressed learners were supported by the introduction of the multi-exam opportunity in 2017, which was withdrawn in 2019 (Lamont, 2020). According to the amended progression policy (2016), schools should form School Based Support Team SBST committees that focus on the implementation of the policy. A study conducted by Mogale (2021) revealed that some schools do have an SBST committee, whose role is to create enrichment activities, track learners' responses to each activity and program, and make periodic reports to parents. School B in Mogale's (2021) study had a file with data showing how it supported and monitored progress. A report to the Department of Education district office about the difficulties encountered during implementation was also included in the file.

Kolobe (2019) conducted a study on the use of technology in supporting progressed learners in English First Additional Language in Tembisa intermediate phase schools in South Africa. This author found that the use of information communication technology (ICT) yielded positive results in supporting progressed learners. The findings indicate that ICT has the potential to boost performance and to reduce the number of learners who need to be progressed. Moreover, findings also reveal some of the challenges educators faced in using ICT as a pedagogy. A common thread in teachers' comments was that there is a need for further training and support in order for teachers to apply ICT as a pedagogy. Gauteng, where

the study was conducted, is one of the better resourced provinces in South Africa. Schools in rural areas might show entirely different results. The issue with supporting learners with technology is that most schools do not have enough ICT resources.

Progressed learners in Grade 12 may also be given particular support in the form of modularizing (Lamont, 2020). According to Mhlanga and Moloji (2020), the Second Chance program offered by the DBE offers a range of support measures to assist learners. These measures include face-to-face classes, television broadcasts on both free and paid subscription channels, access to internet sites, and online learning links. All of these resources can be utilized to provide extra support to learners who are advancing in their education.

2.3.4 Approaches to teaching writing

Kadmiry (2021) posits that various approaches can be employed in teaching writing, including the genre approach, integrated and product-based approach, and the process approach. These approaches are instrumental in enhancing the writing skills of learners. It is therefore vital for this study to review these approaches as they can be utilized to support learners with English FAL writing difficulties. The efficacy of language writing skill development is contingent on the approach adopted by teachers in teaching writing. The researchers believes that progressed learners require a specific approach when taught writing. Notably, the genre, integrated and process approaches are deemed most suitable for English first additional language learners. However, there exists contentious debate regarding the effectiveness of these approaches, with some critiques expressing reservations.

2.3.4.1 Genre approach

A genre approach to writing focuses on the development of writing based on the purpose, audience and organization of the written text (Phi, Kim and Bui, 2021). This means the writer writes with a particular goal in mind. A genre approach can be used to communicate a particular message or to tell a story. Dirgeyasa (2016) claims that using a genre approach has the main focus on the ‘how to’, for example how to report and how to retell. Teaching writing in a genre approach allows the writer to simultaneously learn grammatical structures and different structure of written text. This approach allows for scaffolding, as learners can build upon their knowledge of the purpose of writing a particular written piece. The use of language that is understood by the audience is of utmost importance, with less emphasis on

the correctness of grammar and more on what the learner intends to communicate in the written text. This approach relies heavily on basic communicative skills, similar to Vygotsky's argument that learners begin by expressing their intended message through inner speech before writing.

In the context of grade 9 learners, identifying the audience and purpose when brainstorming is encouraged when using the genre approach, with potential readers responding to the pupils' writing through letters or other means. This study highlights the importance of progressed learners being able to identify the audience and purpose of their writing, as this is where the content lies. Lin (2019) asserts that effective identification of audience and purpose can motivate learners to communicate more effectively in their writing. However, it is also essential to find real audiences for learner writing, including teachers, other learners, groups, and public forums such as blogs, websites, and letter pages.

2.3.4.2 The integrated approach

English language learning involves the development of four interrelated skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In the context of teaching writing, these skills are integrated, as writing is widely regarded as the most challenging skill for language learners due to the requisite background knowledge of the second language. This aligns with Cummins' four quadrants of cognitive demands, which define the integrated language skills teaching approach as the teaching of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in conjunction with each other. The integrated approach involves activities that relate listening and speaking to reading and writing. The process of teaching writing begins with learners listening to instructions, thereby utilizing their listening skills. Once they have comprehended the instructions, they proceed to write using appropriate language structures and conventions. The written task is then read for editing and presentation, requiring the use of all four skills. It is premised on the idea that teaching writing is a complex process that necessitates the integration of all four language skills.

Cooney, Darcy, and Casey (2018) assert that writing cannot be separated from reading, and therefore, integration between the two is essential. Learners develop their vocabulary through reading, and this vocabulary is necessary when writing. The integrative approach aligns with Cummins' theory, which posits that the development of basic communicative skills is a prerequisite for a child to acquire proficiency in writing a second language. The integrative

approach leverages the learners' communicative language abilities by integrating writing with other skills and activities, thereby enhancing its relevance, importance, and interest. The current grade 9 textbooks are designed to foster linkages between the four skills, with topics organized thematically to encourage integration. For instance, a theme may require learners to listen to a dialogue, write a dialogue, and read a dialogue, thereby reinforcing the theme of dialogue. To promote effective writing, we must employ meaningful, realistic, and relevant writing tasks that cater to the learners' needs and interests. Individualized tasks may be necessary to address the specific writing needs of individual learners. Additionally, discussing writing with learners, including how to write well, the purpose of writing, the intended audience, and the challenges of writing, can provide valuable support and motivation. Such learner training can enhance the learners' writing skills and foster their overall language proficiency.

2.3.4.5 The product-based approach

Mico and Zacellari (2020) posits that a product-based approach emphasizes the final product, which should be coherent, error-free, and facilitate learning, imitation, and transformation of the models presented in schoolbooks or by teachers. This approach necessitates that learners produce written work that adheres to a standard structure, such as a narrative essay. However, critics of this approach contend that it stifles learners' creativity (Bathelt et al. 2018). Furthermore, advanced learners may find this approach challenging due to the high cognitive demands it places on them. Nevertheless, according to Kadmiry (2021) the product-based approach enhances learners' grammatical structures and knowledge. Typically, learners in product-based writing classes study model texts and engage in various drills aimed at drawing their attention to the relevant features of a text. The ultimate objective is for learners to produce a similar text to the one they have studied. This approach limits the level of creativity in the learner. However, this approach fails to consider the individual needs of non-native learners.

2.3.4.5 The process approach

The process approach is an approach that is preferred and used in the CAPS (2011) document for teaching writing (Islam and Khan, 2017). This approach covers all four quadrants described by Cummins. It is utilized to foster the capacity for communicative writing, with a specific focus on the student as the originator, author, and conveyer of the message to the

recipient. It affords the learner the opportunity to exercise creativity and imbue their writing with their own voice (Yoo, 2017). The initial phase of the procedure involves ideation, curation, categorization, and sequencing of the selected ideas in a chronological manner for their presentation in writing. The process-oriented methodology emphasizes on classroom activities that foster language proficiency, such as brainstorming, group deliberation, and revision.

The process approach underscores the notion of writing as a means of problem-solving, with a focus on the thought process. This is consistent with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of 2011, which advocates for the teaching of writing in a process-oriented manner. This approach is especially conducive to progressed learners, as it prioritizes the mastery of the initial stages of writing before progressing to the final stages. It is an approach beneficial to progressed learners as it breaks down the writing process and allows for a learner to master one stage at a time. As posited in the theoretical framework, English demands high cognitive demands, and teaching writing in a process-oriented manner enables learners to utilize the first and second quadrant cognitive demands, which may be more manageable for advanced learners. The process entails translating the plan into sentences and paragraphs, reviewing the first draft, and subsequently revising the text to produce the final product.

According to Piamsai (2020) the utilization of scaffolding in the teaching of writing can be effectively implemented through a process-oriented approach, as opposed to a product-oriented approach. Within this framework, the acquisition of sub-skills related to editing and revising are facilitated through group reviews or collaborative work. This is in line with the Vygotsky's theory which suggests collaborative writing as one of the support strategies to learners with writing challenges. The initial stage of this process involves the generation of ideas, their selection, and subsequent organization into distinct categories, culminating in their arrangement in a chronological order that reflects their intended presentation in the written work. While teaching writing, editing and revising sub-skills are learned through reviews in the group or working in pairs (Berggren, 2019).

The process-oriented approach emphasizes the implementation of various classroom activities that foster the development of language use, such as brainstorming, group discussion, and rewriting. This approach encourages learner involvement, promotes collaborative writing, and facilitates the expression of creativity.” (Jacob, 2017 p. 23). While this approach is practical in terms of familiarizing learners with the form and structure of

official formats, it may stifle the expression of original ideas and creativity. According to CAPS (2011), the writing process that should be followed when teaching writing has the following steps: planning or pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, proof reading and presenting. This approach could be mostly used by grade 9 English teachers because it is approved by CAPS and it simplifies the writing process. Although it may be time consuming as it focuses on the mastery of one step at a time but it is most relevant for progressed learners who need special attention. This approach allows the teacher to mediate the progressed learner's work and ensure that a well written piece is produced.

2.3.2.5.1 Planning/Pre-writing

According to the CAPS (2011:26–27), 'Learners should be exposed to relevant vocabulary and similar text types.' Learners should brainstorm ideas for the topic under review and create a plan for the text using the structure and ideas discussed in the pre-writing stage. This stage of writing falls within the first and second quadrants of Cummins' theory, as it necessitates learners to recall the structure and style of the text they are expected to produce, drawing upon their prior knowledge. This stage does not demand a high level of cognitive complexity. Rather, it relies on the fundamental communicative language skills of the learner, who must consider the content and requirements of the text they intend to write. To achieve this, learners must identify the main ideas of the text, which can be facilitated through the use of a mind map. Additionally, learners must arrange their ideas in a logical sequence to ensure coherence. This stage serves as a test of the learner's comprehension.

2.3.4.5.2 Drafting

Learners need to write a rough first draft that takes into account the purpose, audience, topic, and text type; they then choose appropriate words and organise ideas in a logical sequence so that what they write makes sense. Learners should read their drafts critically and obtain feedback from the teacher. During the drafting stage, learners must possess the ability to analyze and demonstrate comprehension of the text's requirements. As per Cummins, this skill falls under the third quadrant, which entails high cognitive demands. Although the text may not be flawless at this stage, the learner must exhibit critical thinking skills and commence writing while applying their knowledge. Dalpiaz et al. (2015) asserts that a ninth-grade learner should be capable of constructing accurate and uncomplicated sentences. In instances where a learner struggles with drafting, assistance is necessary.

2.3.4.5.3 Revising, editing, proofreading and presenting

Learners should evaluate their own writing and that of others, using set criteria, with a view to refining word choice and the sentence and paragraph structure. They should also work on the sequencing and linking of paragraphs and spelling, and the correct use of grammar and punctuation. They should prepare the final draft, including the layout, and present the text and then 'after presenting, revising should be done' (CAPS, 2011, p. 27). The composition process necessitates the ability to assess and amalgamate written material, a task that is situated in the fourth quadrant due to its demand for advanced cognitive abilities. Proficiency in writing conventions, including grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, is essential for this stage, which is where the bulk of writing marks are allocated. However, many progressed learners struggle with this complex aspect of writing. To aid learners in revising, editing, proofreading, and presenting their work, educators and parents can provide guidance on these skills. In the context of this study, this is in line with the mediation and collaborative writing stated by Vygotsky in the theoretical framework. Progressed learners may seek assistance with editing and proof reading from the more knowledgeable person at their disposal.

2.3.4.6 The writers' workshop

According to Dirgeyosa (2016) writers' workshop is where by the teacher prompts writing activities then models what learners should write and then allows them to write. Feedback is then given to each learners for corrections. Additionally, the writers' workshop approach prioritizes models, form, and duplication, emphasizing quantity over quality. This approach requires a gradual development of grammatical accuracy and organization, with the focus on "audience" and "content." Unrestricted writing, based on learners' interests, is often recommended (Ntombela, Ngubane and Govender, 2015). It allows the learner to write with mediation and guidance offered by the teacher. This is relevant in grade 9 as CAPS states that creative writing should be developed in grade 9. Learners who write to learn are given the opportunity to write and they learn from what they have written. Vega and Pinzon (2019) recommended that students be afforded abundant opportunities to engage in writing activities, irrespective of the grammatical and mechanical aspects of their written work. Arguing that they will learn grammar and other aspects as they write. Writers' workshop allows for scaffolding as the teacher facilitate the step by step writing process.

2.3.5 Components of English FAL relevant to writing in CAPS

The previous section reviewed approaches to teaching writing which progressed learners may be exposed to and may improve learners' writing skills in English FAL. It is also important to examine the components of English FAL that are relevant to writing. A knowledge of what the curriculum requires in the teaching and learning of English FAL will assist teachers to identify the areas in which support is most needed.

The term 'First Additional Language,' abbreviated to 'FAL', refers to a language that is not a mother tongue but is used for particular communication purposes in a society; in South Africa, English, the FAL for many learners, is used as a medium of learning and instruction in the education sector (DBE, 2011, p. 8). For students who are taught in the FAL, the curriculum offers a considerable amount of assistance (DBE, 2016, p. 3). The First Additional Language CAPS curriculum makes use of the literacy abilities of learners in their native tongue. For instance, the FAL in CAPS introduces activities such as guided reading in the foundation phase, offered first in the home language. Reading helps learners to master basic language structure. For a learner to master writing, they must master language structures, as failure to do so will result in a high number of grammatical errors in the learner's writing.

Moreover, according to the DBE (2016, p. 10), 'A good command of vocabulary and grammar provides the framework for skills development (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in the First Additional Language.' To make a critical assessment of their own and other writers' texts for meaning, usefulness and accuracy, learners must investigate how language is used and then establish a shared language for discussing language (a 'meta language'). In addition, they should be given opportunities to experiment with language to develop meaning (from word and sentence level to entire texts), and to understand the relationship between a text and its setting. These skills are interdependent. They operate together to assist learners to develop their English as a second language. Writing is an integral component of English FAL, as stated in the CAPS document. It serves as a potent tool for communication, enabling learners to effectively express their thoughts and ideas in a coherent manner (DBE, 2011, p. 35). The CAPS (2011) further emphasizes the importance of regular writing practice across diverse contexts, tasks, and subjects, as it fosters functional and creative communication skills among learners. Teaching learners to write helps them to produce appropriate written and visual texts for a variety of purposes.

Furthermore, according to CAPS (2011, p. 36), ‘Writing is significant on the grounds that it empowers students to contemplate syntax and spelling and this urges students to handle the language, speeds up language securing, and increase exactness.’ Students in the senior phase are expected to be able to compose specific text types independently. They should also use the creative cycle to deliver efficient and grammatically correct texts. A learner needs to be supported to develop good writing skills. Reading is an important way of introducing the learner to a language, but writing skills must be developed by actually writing. Thus: ‘Writing instruction will usually involve working through the writing process. However, not every step of the process will be used on every occasion’ (CAPS, 2011, p. 37). For instance, if students are composing an essay text type, they may need to use scaffolding tools such as brainstorming, drafting, editing and proofreading, while smaller tasks will require fewer steps. There may also be cases where educators need to focus on sentence development or passage composing; also, students may compose messages without drafts in anticipation of assessment. Progressed learners may need assistance with language structure to improve their writing skills. Learners with writing difficulties usually lack vocabulary, grammar rules and spelling (Moses and Mohamad, 2019).

In addition, writing is a process (DBE, 2011). Mpiti (2016) asserts that learners who follow a set writing process produce better written pieces than those who do not follow a step-by-step writing process. The pedagogical approach to teaching creative writing is commonly viewed through the lens of the process approach, which has been deemed the most appropriate methodology. Creative writing is a process which also consists of the following steps, according to the Curriculum Assessment Policy and Statement (2011). According to Nondabula (2020), the acquisition of proficient writing skills is crucial for learners to effectively learn and demonstrate their knowledge and creativity. In the context of grade 9, creative writing plays a significant role in enabling learners to express their thoughts, emotions, and imagination. Through the composition of essays, letters, dialogues, diary entries, reports, and reviews, learners are able to showcase their creative abilities. As posited in the theoretical framework, creativity necessitates high levels of cognitive functioning, thereby requiring grade 9 learners to demonstrate their capacity for creative thinking.

When following these guidelines, students are more likely to write well-written assignments. According to CAPS (2011), students will understand how language is used and therefore will be better equipped to critically assess the correctness, efficacy and meaning of their own

and other texts. Learners develop their vocabulary and apply their understanding of language structures and conventions through reading a variety of books. Learning language structures and conventions assists learners to write essays that are coherent and cohesive. For the construction of texts in their intended contexts, language structures should be taught. CAPS (2011) states, ‘The use of linguistic structures should not be limited to the study of single sentences.’

Learners must be taught and learn the correct use of spacing, capital letters, commas, quotation marks, colons, underlining, italics, bolding, semi-colons, apostrophes, hyphens, dashes and parentheses. Writing involves the use of paragraphs, so learners need to be familiar with the correct use of paragraph and ‘linking’ words to ensure that the written piece makes sense and is coherent. According to Gardner (2021), paragraphs provide structure and flow to a text, allowing the reader to move from one thought to another. In particular, Bacon (2017, p. 2) asserts, ‘When you start a new paragraph, you are telling your reader that the topic is over and you are moving on. Without this structure, your brilliant ideas and your sound argumentation will be difficult to follow.’

According to Mustafa, Arbab and Sayed (2022, p. 7), ‘Writing is a skill that requires language learners to master several complex rhetorical, linguistic and mechanical conventions.’ Formulation, which consists of reading and editing, gives in-depth knowledge about what occurs in each convention and how they interact with one another. Formulation entails planning and translating as well as execution, which in turn involves programming and monitoring. Bulqiyah, Mahbub, and Nugraheni (2021) maintain that even grammar is important when writing and we must be aware that problems with grammar can create an impression over and above the general quality of a student’s writing. Based on this, teachers need to help learners to develop their editing as well as their composing skills. In addition, ‘Misuse of capital letters, improper punctuation, and incorrect spelling are the most frequently mentioned issues’ (Mpiti, 2016, p. 36). As a result, ‘it is important to emphasise correct writing mechanics for communicative and academic objectives, including exercises and tests’. Uleanya, Uleanya, Taiwo and Shobiye (2020) assert that mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation do not prevent an understanding of written messages. However, they might negatively influence the reader's judgment and make the writing appear odd. There are even cases where information may be misinterpreted if writing techniques are not used correctly.

One of the primary causes of spelling mistakes, according to Kepe, Foncha, and Maruma (2017), is students' use of technological devices. This opinion seems to be quite well founded if one bears in mind the negative impact that social media is already having on students' writing. Some terms are difficult for learners to spell because of the condensed language used on social media. Spelling problems and the inability to distinguish between spoken and written language, and between informal and formal registers, may be caused by over-exposure to social media. They may also be caused by interference from the mother tongue, and incomplete learning of the target language. These aspects of writing show the many areas of support in which teachers need to assist progressed learners.

This study looks at what teachers experience as they teach these aspects to progressed learners. The aspects of writing discussed above need to be taught and mastered at the primary school level, but because of the progression policy, some learners get to high school without having mastered these aspects. Support given to progressed learners to improve their writing skills should focus on all these aspects of writing. If a progressed learner is shown how to follow the writing process and to use correct language structures, the learner is more likely to produce well-structured written work.

2.3.6 Challenges experienced by learners in writing English FAL

Challenges experienced by learners in writing English FAL are reviewed to reveal the common challenges learners experience and how these challenges can be resolved. Romero and Manjarres (2017) conducted a study which highlights the impact of learners' native language on their language acquisition process. The findings suggest that when learners encounter unfamiliar words in their second language, they tend to transcribe them using their native language. This phenomenon indicates the influence of their home language on their first additional language learning. Additionally, the study reveals that code-switching, or the practice of alternating between languages, has fostered a reliance on translation among some learners. Consequently, these individuals may exhibit a lack of initiative in attempting to respond to questions in English. Learners in rural areas struggle because they are not used to English. This finding is in agreement with Rajesh (2019, p. 132), who revealed that 'rural students face difficulties while writing the English language as they are inadequately familiar with the English language and do not have enough practice'. Learners of English FAL face challenges in reading and writing and they also demonstrate a weak understanding of written texts in English. This results in a high failure rate, low self-esteem, and learner dropout.

Darling-Hammod (2019) affirms that the challenges faced by learners in improving their writing skills present opportunities to the school system, as well as to the individual learners and home community. The major challenges in the school and home system include limited training of teachers, lack of support for teachers, poor foundation skills in learners, insufficient opportunities for practising written language in the home and school, no nurturing home environment, and a lack of remedial activities in or outside of school. These challenges are mostly faced by progressed learners in rural areas who already encounter problems in writing English FAL. Gheda and Llmi (2019) state that a home should be a safe and nurturing environment. The home plays a crucial role in the learning of a child, and a safe and educationally nurturing home will provide the necessary foundation for the learner to be able to work on writing difficulties. This kind of environment has been shown to be effective in most schools in urban areas, where most learners tend to come from literate homes. In these settings, parents can identify a learning disability even before the child starts school. Early intervention is given to such learners and writing challenges are limited. Govender (2015) affirms that the learner's linguistic landscape in the home plays a critical role in developing the learner's literacy skills. If there is not a proper linguistic landscape at home for developing the additional language, learners from these homes will experience writing difficulties. Ashraf et al. (2016, p. 66) stated that 'the challenges learners face when writing English are insufficient linguistics proficiency, which includes command over grammar, syntax, and vocabulary'. Challenges included writing anxiety, lack of reading and writing practice, large classrooms, low motivation, and lack of ideas. Rural schools face many challenges such as overcrowding and lack of infrastructure, which makes it difficult for progressed learners to receive individual attention. Leah (2018) found that learners experience challenges in coming up with ideas, organizing them and developing details, and then choosing correct sentences in which to express them. They also do not understand the proper usage of paragraphs.

Gobena (2018) asserts that at the family income or wealth level can influence the level of achievement in schools. These include the possession of a radio, having an attractive house, as well as a phone, electricity, and a family member helping with homework. Learners enjoying these kinds of resources tend not to struggle with learning English as they learn some of the English words from television. This then develops their BICS for the foundation of CALPS. The literacy levels of parents affect the performance of children in a significant way. They may watch cartoons on television, which assists them in developing their English.

The importance of the family cannot be overstated when it comes to encouraging a student's interest in studying at home, and in particular, encouraging their enthusiasm to learn English. With the proper direction and enough help from those around them, especially their parents, they would finally succeed (Yaafouri, 2019). Parents can participate in school events, assist children with their homework, and have a conversation with the class teacher about their child's academic performance; they can also offer emotional support and inspire motivation (Yusup and Ahmad, 2016). Thus parents are very important in the learning process. I believe that strong parental involvement can achieve much in assisting progressed learners to deal with writing challenges.

A study conducted by Sebetoa (2016) examined the challenges of reading and writing English FAL and found that 'learners in rural areas are disadvantaged in terms of exposure to English First Additional Language'. In a rural setting often, it is only in the classroom that the learner is exposed to and can practice English, while in urban areas they are usually exposed to it outside the classroom. This situation affects how teachers instruct these English language learners. According to Moagi (2020, p. 31), teachers find it difficult to teach English FAL to Grade 6 progressed learners since they often have to use code-switching approaches. The use of this strategy is far from ideal because the goal is to have students speak English well by the end of this grade. Learners and teachers tend to be more comfortable with their native language and can end up using the learner's home language for communication. It is possible that this method does more harm than good, as it does not help learners to develop their English proficiency. It affects learners' thinking processes, as they remain in the habit of processing ideas in their native language, according to Vygotsky (1989). Learners, therefore, struggle to write those thoughts in English.

Mupa and Chinooneka (2015, p. 22) agree with the preceding views and state that 'if teachers do not use strategies that encourage children to speak in English, the children might not gain the competence needed to use English as the language for learning'. If all learners were introduced to English at a young age, there would be fewer progressed learners who have trouble writing English FAL. This is in line with Vygotsky (1989), who asserts that language learning is based on social interactions. Therefore, communicating in English is one of the strategies by which progressed learners may be supported in order to help them improve their English FAL writing skills. In the case of learners writing in English, Mpiti (2016, p.56) suggested that the mother tongue may interfere with writing a first additional language

because thoughts arrive first in the home language, and then it becomes difficult for the learner to translate these into English when writing.

Furthermore, verbal interaction plays an important role in the pre-writing phase. This is one of the strategies teachers can use to teach learners who have writing difficulties. Verbally explaining one's ideas to a peer may help learners to organise their thoughts and prepare them for writing those thoughts down.

2.3.7 Teachers' perceptions of the challenges of writing

According to Dussling (2019), the first obstacle that teachers face when they attempt to improve their students' writing abilities is their students' inadequate foundation in the second language. In addition, some students do not seem interested in learning a new language, which affects how these students develop (Moagi, 2020, p. 35). A study conducted by Sebetoa (2016) found that in developing learners' writing skills, teachers discovered that English FAL learners lacked vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and motivation; they also lacked a supportive learning both at school and at home. According to Ndinisa (2016), there are barriers and opportunities at the educational system, individual learner, and home/social community levels. Mpiti (2016) also found that significant hurdles at the level of the educational system were insufficient training and lack of support for instructors, poor foundation skills among learners, and language difficulties. Lumadi (2016, p. 35) writes, 'teachers identified additional chances to improve the learners' written language development because the current possibilities for written language development were insufficient.' The desired help that teachers identified were more instruction for educators, precise and consistent assessment policies, learning remediation classes, and secure, supportive home situations (Ndinisa, 2016). The teachers had to contend with their learners' academic and socio-emotional issues as well as a lack of parental participation. Đurišić and Bunijevac (2017) reported that the educators participating in their study identified a need for departmental, professional, and parental support, as well as increased training and resources. According to South Africa's inclusive education and training policy document, Education White Paper 6, 70% of students in mainstream education who face learning difficulties receive little or no educational support (DoE, 2001). This shows that the progression policy is not implemented properly as little support is given to learners with learning difficulties.

2.3.8 Strategies teachers use to support learners' writing skills

Teachers are the main source of support that progressed learners use to address their learning difficulties. Vuzo (2019, p. 18) asserts that 'through interactions, teachers and learners work together to create intellectual and practical activities that shape both the form and the content of the subject'. Boonmoh and Jumpakate (2019) states the pedagogical approach of scaffolding involves imparting knowledge through a systematic process, wherein the steps are first taught, then modeled, and subsequently, the pupils are allowed to attempt the task independently. According Piamsai (2020), scaffolding can help students develop their English FAL writing abilities. Moreover, Spycher (2017) asserts that learners who took advantage of the opportunity to learn about scaffolding concepts outperformed those who were not familiar with these concepts. Scaffolding can be done in a way where learners scaffold for each other and play an active role (Boonmoh and Jumpakate, 2019). After scaffolding, learners are able to do what was demonstrated on their own. Scaffolding supports students by helping them to develop confidence in doing the activity unassisted (Vygotsky, 1978). Scaffolding was used by Mayaba and Wood (2015) to collect data using the draw-and-write technique; they found that this produced positive results. Teachers, students, and parents can all use scaffolding to help Grade 9 students write better. Although this method has been demonstrated to be effective, it can be difficult if the scaffolder is illiterate. The illiteracy at home can negatively influence academic support. Learners who live with say their illiterate grandmothers, would likely struggle to get assistance with their school work. These strategies are applicable in South African context as they are in other countries that practice the progression of learners.

Vygotsky (1978, p. 156) states, 'Peers can contribute through collaborative writing, which can improve learners' writing ability.' According to Cole and Feng (2015), small groups give students more opportunities to use the first additional language for a variety of purposes than is the case with teacher-led classroom activities. Seven (2020) states that coupled activities allow students to work together and create new information about language, resulting in more successful writing experiences. 'Through peer feedback, learners engage in critical examination of peer literature to trade support for modification,' claims Wakabayashi (2018, p. 98). Because students can acquire additional writing and revision knowledge by reading other peoples' drafts critically, and because their understanding of what makes writing good and effective can be improved. Students who practice collaborative work and mutual

editing/proofreading eventually develop into more independent writers. The communicative approach offers students opportunities to interact in groups where they can learn from one another and build confidence; here they can hear and use the language in a setting that is less formal than the classroom. In addition, teachers can link classroom learning with their students' prior knowledge and experiences at home through their input (Marshall, 2016, p. 25). When learners scaffold amongst themselves, they learn to work independently and become confident about writing assignments. Vygotsky (1989) encourages collaborative writing so that students may share ideas. Even though most activity in South African school require learners to write individually but group work should be given in the informal tasks to ensure that learners also write collaboratively.

There are several ways in which parents can support their children's academic progress, including dealing with writing difficulties, such as providing moral support and encouraging words. In addition, they can engage in various school activities, help children with their homework assigned by the teachers, and attend discussions with the class teacher regarding their child's academic development (Yusup and Ahmad, 2016). The reasons for the dearth of participation are not exclusively linked to the operation or state of the School Governing Body (SGB) (Scherman and Tsebe, 2020). According to Breiner (2016), there are further considerations; for example, some parents would like to participate but lack the knowledge of how to do so. This statement implies that the parent is facing a challenge of lacking knowledge, rather than exhibiting a lack of willingness to participate.

As stated above, writing is a process that a learner should follow. The steps to achieving good (or improved) writing are clear; they are planning, drafting, editing, proofreading, writing a final version, and presenting. All except the last two may be done collaboratively. A child who receives support from parents can produce a good piece of writing if the process is followed correctly, and if teachers and parents support the process. Even if collaborative work is not practiced in the classroom, the progressed learner can write the piece and the parent or sibling can assist with editing it. However, children in rural areas are often unfortunate because they come from families who are unable to provide this kind of support. Parents can also support their children by creating an encouraging and pleasant family environment and time and encouragement to do homework, which makes it easy for the child to study at home. Some learners are faced with difficult situations where they cannot study at home because of quarrels in the home or being overburdened by household chores. Yusup

and Ahmad (2016, p. 32) state, ‘Parents with a good relationship with their children tend to provide support and encouragement for them to succeed academically, including in English education.’

2.3.9 Resources used by teachers to support learners’ writing skills

Cole and Feng (2015, p. 187) write that ‘resources which enhance writing can be books that are collected and are used for summary writing’. They also state that e-journals give learners a protected platform for articulating their ideas without having to worry about their handwriting and spelling errors. For example, an online discussion board can help a learner to rehearse writing skills as they put complete ideas together in the form of a single sentence or two. Peer response is one of the most significant methods of becoming a skilful writer of English FAL.

Technology is one of the resources that teachers use to improve their learners' writing skills. According to Keith et al. (2018), technology not only motivates and encourages English first additional language learners to participate in reading and writing, but it is also extremely flexible in the ways it can be used. Thus, it is beneficial for nurturing the writing skills of many students. E-books are often more appealing to learners than conventional books. Learners enjoy reading on their phones, and so e-books can be useful tool for encouraging learners to read. Yilmaz (2018) states that a computer develops the writing skills of learners in an easier and faster way. A computer gives an instant alert to grammatical and spelling errors, which becomes a lesson for improving writing and developing vocabulary. Thus, both phones and computers are useful for improving learners’ English writing skills.

According to Adun, Anyiam, Okogbue (2016, p. 8), ‘Web Quest is a source for searching information on the internet and it allows students to seek information from well-organized sources for learning purposes, like a library.’ Web Quest may be used as a supplementary teaching technology that becomes a part of improving students' learning skills. The challenge with many schools in rural areas is the limited technology available to teachers and learners. Sometimes schools in rural areas do not even have ordinary libraries, let alone technological aids. But, nonetheless it is clear that technology can be used in a variety of way to improve learners' English FAL writing skills. In the South African context, these recommendations only apply to schools with resources and they do not apply in rural schools, where there are no ICT facilities and no library. South African school suffer from the crisis of being under

resourced which makes it difficult for teachers to use these strategies to improve progressed learners' English FAL writing skills.

2.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

This chapter reviewed the literature deemed relevant to the study. The reviewed literature shows that the concept of progression is an international one (Brahmbhatt, 2020). The chapter presents a summary of the progression policies and strategies adopted by a number of countries and those of South Africa were explained in detail. The chapter examined in some detail the additional support needed by progressed learners and challenges of implementing progression policies. What emerges clearly from the literature is that for the policy to work, targeted, consistent and effective support should be given to the progressed learner. Developed countries are able to offer this support as they are well resourced and have trained personnel to deal with progressed learners. The situation is different in developing countries such as South Africa. In South Africa, many schools have been unable to offer the kind of support needed for progressed learners, and hence the system has not been a helpful antidote to the high dropout rate of high school learners.

The two theoretical frameworks described in detail in this chapter create the necessary basis for understanding the process of child development and the acquisition of language and writing skills. These are Cummins' language acquisition theory and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. Directly or indirectly, both theories give suggestions for assisting learners to improve their writing. The chapter reviews the main teaching and learning models advocated for the teaching of writing, viz. The genre approach, the integrated approach, the product-based approach, and the process approach are presented. Literature on the challenges experienced by learners in writing English FAL and teachers' perceptions of these challenges are then reviewed. Finally, strategies and resources of grade 9 teachers use to support learners' writing skills development are discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an overview of the literature related to this study. It looks at the theoretical framework that underpins this study and further discussed the concept of the progression policy, the components of writing English FAL, the challenges regarding the implementation of the progression policy, teaching approaches of writing and components of English FAL and challenges facing teachers as they attempt to help progressed learners write in English, and various strategies that are used to help these learners with English writing. In this chapter, I discuss the research approach, research design and research paradigm of the study. I also discuss the study site, population, sample and sampling method, the participants, methods of data generation, data management and data analysis. Finally, measures of trustworthiness and ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

The research methodology employed in this study was qualitative in nature. As per Sutton's (2015) definition, qualitative research involves the development of a comprehensive and all-encompassing framework by analysing narratives and observations in the natural setting during the research process. Qualitative research focuses on obtaining data on peoples' experiences by analysing their narratives and observing participants in their natural setting. In addition, the primary goal of the qualitative research approach, according Tenny, Brannan and Brannan (2022), is to understand peoples' beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviours and interactions through studying them in their natural setting. This means in a qualitative study participants provide data that contributes to understanding their beliefs and experiences. Therefore, in this study, the research was conducted at two schools, the natural setting of the interviewed Grade 9 English teachers.

Additionally, Aspers and Corte (2019) define qualitative research as a technique that aims to collect detailed descriptive information about a particular event or setting in order to better comprehend what is being observed or investigated. This implies that, in order to understand what is being studied, information about the phenomenon needs to be investigated and

described in some detail. This information is obtained from participants' narrative about a particular phenomenon. Qualitative research is an investigative approach where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by referring to the aims of the study (Haradhan, 2018). Before the commencement of this study, the aims and objectives were drawn up, and the investigation was then conducted according to those aims and objectives. According to Bhandari (2023), qualitative research aims to offer a comprehensive depiction and comprehension of human experiences, as per Haradhan's definition. By utilizing a qualitative approach, researchers can provide a detailed account of participants' experiences, leading to a better understanding of their perspectives and actions.

In light of the above, Shidur (2017, p. 165) affirms that the advantage of using the qualitative approach is that it prompts deeper insight and understanding about a phenomenon. Thus this study sought to investigate the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. Teachers shared their experiences and views, which contributed to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Stahl and King (2020) affirm that qualitative research produces in-depth data that is contextualised by the circumstances in which participants share their experiences and the meanings of those experiences. This study intended to understand and reveal the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers as they support progressed learners' English FAL writing. Therefore, in-depth data were collected through investigating their experiences. The focus was on teachers' challenges and achievements as they offered support to progressed learners. Moreover, this study involved a small number of participants which assisted with the search for in-depth data about the teachers' experiences.

Maree (2017) asserts that the qualitative approach may be used to explain and understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the participants. 'Qualitative research can also be used to explore and comprehend the meaning that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human situation' (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 22). This implies that qualitative research focuses on individual perspectives on social situations. The conversations with the teachers allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of Grade 9 teachers' perspective on teaching English FAL writing skills to progressed learners. These teachers were identified as the best participants for this study because they deal directly with progressed learners and they are teaching in rural schools. They were also relevant to the topic of this study which seeks to find what the experience in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills.

Moagi (2020, p. 55) defines qualitative research as ‘a research approach which relies on words, unlike the quantitative research design, which relies on numbers.’ Similarly, Haradhan (2018) affirms that a qualitative approach is a social science research that gathers and works with non-numerical data. Thus, both Moagi and Haradhan stress that qualitative research is narrative and descriptive, rather than numerical. The aim of this study was to provide a descriptive narrative on the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers as they support progressed learners’ writing skills. Hence the qualitative approach was ideal. Furthermore, Msomi, Ngibe and Bingwa (2020, p. 56) assert that qualitative research focuses on peoples’ subjective experiences, on how they ‘construct’ their social reality through sharing meanings, and on how these experiences interact with one another. This implies that a qualitative study looks at how people regard their life experiences and how they perceive the world around them.

Moagi (2020) affirms that data collected in a qualitative research study can be interpreted in a flexible manner. In agreement, Aspers and Corte (2019) affirm that qualitative research seeks to interpret meaning from data in order to help us understand a social phenomenon through the experiences of a sample that is representative of a target population. This implies that qualitative data enables researchers to understand social phenomena and interpret data according to what participants reveal. There is no specific method of data interpretation; rather, data is interpreted according to the researcher’s views and what participants themselves reveal. After interpreting data in a qualitative study, the researcher may develop a theory or simply present the themes that emerge on the experiences of the participants and the meanings they ascribe to those experiences (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 189). Hence in the data analysis of this study, themes were developed from participants’ responses. Moreover, qualitative studies may be characterized by five key characteristics; they are usually descriptive, exploratory, correlational, explanatory, and inductive. All these qualitative characteristics are found in this study which seeks to investigate the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners’ English FAL writing skills.

3.2.1 Descriptive nature of qualitative research

Kumar (2019) asserts that a descriptive study seeks to describe a situation or phenomenon that humans experience in their everyday lives. Moreover, Tomaszewski, Zarestky and Gonzalez (2020) state that qualitative research includes a description of peoples’ daily interactions and experiences with an identified phenomenon. A descriptive study can also

provide additional information about a phenomenon (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 155). Thus, a descriptive study gives in-depth and detailed information about the issue being investigated. They also (2021, p. 155) explain that the goal of qualitative research is ‘to produce new concepts and theories by systematically describing and interpreting topics or phenomena from the viewpoint of the individual or population being examined’. Thus, a qualitative approach is descriptive in nature, as is the case in this study. The advantage is that descriptive qualitative research generates detailed information about a phenomenon, though participants can perceive one phenomenon differently. As stated previously, a qualitative approach uses words rather than numbers, so the description of the phenomenon at hand was presented through words. This study describes the interactions, experiences, successes, and challenges of Grade 9 teachers as they support their progressed learners to master the writing of English FAL.

3.2.2 Exploratory nature of qualitative research

‘Qualitative research is exploratory in nature and concerned with the examination of narratives and people’s interactions within a particular social context’ (Richmond et al., 2018, p. 97). The main aim of a qualitative study is to understand how people make sense of their experiences and the environment in which the experiences are formed. This implies that a qualitative study does not have a fixed idea of what the findings will be, but embarks on an investigation to explore a phenomenon. Tenny, Brannan and Brannan (2022) affirm that the exploratory nature of the qualitative research approach aims to explain 'how' and 'why' a specific social phenomenon or program operates as it does in a given setting. It aids in our comprehension of our social environment and the reasons why things are the way they are. It is used to explore behaviour, perspectives, feelings, and experiences. This study is exploratory as it explores the resources and strategies teachers employ in supporting progressed learners’ writing skills.

3.2.3 Correlational nature of qualitative research

Qualitative studies may be correlational in nature. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a correlational study aims to discover or establish the existence of a relationship, association or interdependence between two or more aspects of a situation. Kuziemyky and Lau (2017) state that a correlational study examines the extent to which things are related to differences between the characteristics of a phenomenon. Once a relationship is established,

the level of the relationship is examined. Moreover, data is collected about two or more characteristics of a particular group of people or other appropriate units of study (Dhi, Kumar and Singh, 2019). When a correlation is found between two or more phenomena, the conclusion may be that one characteristic influences the other.

However, there are many studies that have already shown a correlation between the provision of support for progressed learners and their improved performance. The literature shows that such a correlation exists, in that those who receive support from their teachers and parents write better English than those who do not receive such support. That is why progression policies of different forms have been adopted in many countries. As explained in earlier chapters, the South African progression policy has the goal of assisting progressed learners to succeed and states that learners should be progressed with support from teachers and parents and various kinds of support are recommended.

What this study is rather investigating are what elements may facilitate or hinder the provision of such support in South Africa, based on the experiences and perceptions of a small sample of teachers as the data source. It is also seeking to better understand the lived experiences of teachers on the front line in trying to deliver such support. This study seeks to find correlations between the findings of this study and the support stated in the progression policy. The researcher believes that if progressed learners are given support, their writing skills would improve. This belief is backed by the literature which shows that countries that support progressed learners manage to improve progressed learners' performance.

3.2.4 Explanatory nature of qualitative research

Qualitative studies are explanatory in nature. Explanatory studies seek to explain a phenomenon (Dhir et al., 2019). George and Merkus (2021) assert that explanatory research seeks to develop a causal explanation of some social phenomenon. This means that the researcher analyses the findings to find an explanation for the causes and effects of a phenomenon. The explanatory aspect of qualitative research yields insights into why a phenomenon occurs the way it does. An explanatory study gives clarity on the situation studied. Moreover, Aggarwal and Ranganathan (2019) affirms that explanatory research strives to build theories that explain and predict natural and social events. These theories give an explanation for why things happen the way they do. If a relationship or unexpected finding

is made, an explanation is given on why this relationship or unexpected finding was made. The progression policy has certain aims and advocates various support strategies that schools and teachers should offer progressed students. These are premised on the prior conclusion, based on research and experience in SA and other countries, that they will assist these students in catching up and performing well. Among its goals this study will seek to identify and explain some of the elements that enable or stand in the way of teachers implementing this policy, using their experiences and perceptions as the source data.

3.2.4 Inductive nature of qualitative research

Collins and Stockton (2019) assert that qualitative research is inductive in nature because it develops concepts, insight and understanding on the basis of patterns of data, rather than by collecting data to support preconceived models, hypothesis or theories. This means that a qualitative study depends on the narratives given by participants regarding a particular social phenomenon. From those narratives, insights and understandings are drawn. A qualitative study obtains its logic of enquiry from the collected data. Moreover, Dhir, Kumar and Singh (2019, p. 98) avow that the ‘reasoning of a qualitative study begins with observation of particular instances from which general laws are developed’. This is in line with this study, as it seeks to investigate the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers as they support progressed learners’ writing skills. Experiences may differ from person to person, so the researcher relies on the data given by participants in order to draw a conclusion. The research question of this study concerns the perspectives of Grade 9 English teachers of the support they give to progressed learners. Answering this question requires the inductive approach, which was clearly adopted in this study.

In light of the above discussion, this is a qualitative study because the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners’ writing skills were investigated. This approach was suitable for this study as it investigated the lived experiences of grade 9 English teachers. It allowed the researcher to get holistic data, which was a narrative on what teachers experience in supporting progressed learners’ English FAL writing skills. Multiple inputs from participants led to deeper insights about their lived experiences of supporting progressed learners’ writing skills. Through this approach, participants revealed their successes and challenges in their natural setting – the schools where they taught and where interviews were conducted. Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 135) state that the final written report or presentation of a qualitative study should include participants’ voices, evidence of

the researcher's reflexivity, a detailed description of the issue, and an insightful analysis of it. Also, in analysing the findings, the researcher should refer to the literature review so as to establish where and how findings may differ or confirm those of other researchers. Lastly, the researcher should draw conclusions and make recommendations for action.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) stated that a study design is a comprehensive plan that includes philosophical assumptions, respondent selection, data gathering procedures, and data analysis. Based on assumptions about their own research abilities and methods, a researcher selects a study design, which in turn affects how data is gathered. Hoover (2021) indicates that there are four common research designs in qualitative research. They are the case study, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology. This study is aligned to phenomenology, which concerns the lived experiences of participants (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This type of design looks at the daily experiences of participants in their natural setting. With regards to this study the researcher looked at the lived experiences of grade 9 English teachers as they support progressed learners' writing skills.

Moreover, Creswell and Creswell (2021) affirm that hermeneutic phenomenological study is a study of individuals' lived experiences. Moreover, Fuster (2019) asserts that hermeneutic phenomenology is the description and interpretation of lived experiences. In agreement with the Creswell definition, Smith et al. (2018) affirms that phenomenology is about individual experiences in relation to situations or other people. Hence this design was suitable for this study, as individual experiences of Grade 9 English teachers were investigated. In addition, 'phenomenological research is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants' (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 30). A phenomenological study is a way of investigating core information regarding the experiences of humans concerning a particular phenomenon. The researcher relies on the responses given by participants in order to understand the essence of their experiences. Such a study may make use of a variety of information sources, which in this study aided in my exploration of the phenomenon, and my ability to explain it clearly. Bekele and Ago (2022) state that phenomenology depends on lengthy interviews with carefully selected participants. The selected sample may comprise five to 25 participants, all of whom should be people who have experienced the phenomenon.

In relation to this study, the sample comprised six participants who shared their experiences of supporting progressed learners English FAL writing skills. The researcher relied on the participants for data as they shared their daily experiences. The semi-structure interview and open-ended questionnaire allowed participants to freely share their experiences as they were no restrictions on what to say. The researcher interacted in some depth with six five participants, who assisted in giving a clear understanding of the experiences of teachers in supporting progressed learners. Furthermore, according to Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio (2019) the main aim of a phenomenological study is to capture how people construct their reality. This means that a phenomenological study seeks to understand and convey how people perceive their lived experiences for supporting progressed learners' writing skills. The phenomenological design of this study helped the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences as they support progressed learners' writing skills. 'The different types of experiences that can be analysed using phenomenology include feelings, emotions, perceptions, imagination, thought, desire and action' (Richmond et al., 2018, p. 55). The focus of this study is on the thoughts, feelings and views of participants on the support they give to progressed learners, as stipulated by the progression policy.

3.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Bhattacharjee (2021) defines a paradigm as a basic model or reference framework that helps organize observations and reasoning. It serves as a valuable tool in conducting research, aiding in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Additionally, Taylor and Medina (2013) affirm that a paradigm is a broad belief system, a worldview or a framework that guides research practice. Four types of paradigms are more typically drawn upon in educational research: the positivist, the pragmatist, the constructivist and the interpretivist (Moagi, 2020). According to Makhanya (2023, p. 49), 'positivists believe that there is a single reality that may be measured'. The positivist paradigm is suitable for a quantitative study. In contrast to positivists, constructivists believe that there are 'multiple realities', and that phenomena need to be interpreted, since an experience of reality is highly personal and subjective. This approach is suitable for a qualitative study. Kaushik and Walsh (2019) assert that pragmatists believe that reality is constantly renegotiated, interpreted and debated. This again suggests that reality may be interpreted differently according to supporting facts. This type of paradigm is also suitable for a qualitative study. This study made use of an interpretive paradigm.

3.4.1 Interpretative research paradigm

Ramputla (2020) affirms that the interpretivist paradigm applies when a researcher seeks to understand the world as others experience it. The purpose of interpretative research is to understand peoples' experiences. Hence it is an appropriate paradigm for this study as the objective was to understand the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers as they support progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. Nickerson (2022) avows that interpretative theorists make different perspectives meaningful in an effort to grasp reality. The interpretive paradigm is described as an effort to comprehend how different people view their surroundings. According to Frechette et al. (2020), interpretive research primarily focuses on meaning, and aims to comprehend how other people define a scenario. Researchers using an interpretive approach aim to uncover meaning towards a better understanding of the issues involved (Putnam and Banghart, 2017). In other words, it is dependent on the viewpoints of the research subjects and how the researcher perceives these viewpoints. Englander and Morley (2021) concur, stating that this method offers a rich window into the intricate world of lived experiences as seen from the perspective of individuals who encounter them. From a different perspective, Pervin and Mokhtar (2022) notes that the interpretive paradigm is more often linked to methodological strategies that give research participants the chance to express their opinions, worries and practices.

In this research, I used the interpretive paradigm to enhance my qualitative study. The problem of offering support to progressed learners is a societal problem, and teachers were cognizant of this as they shared their experiences of supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. The idea of 'interpretivism' is concerned with addressing and comprehending the world from others' perspectives (Lumadi, 2016, p. 43). The interpretive paradigm differs from positivism in its presumptions on the nature of reality, what constitutes knowledge, and its sources and values, and their function in the research process (Ramputla, 2020).

Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that interpretivists hold the belief that reality can be discovered and shaped through human interactions and meaningful actions. Numerous social realities exist as a result of diverse human experiences, encompassing individuals' understanding, perspectives, and interpretation of those experiences. In this study, participants answered a single set of research questions but responses were different, varying according to the different interpretations that teachers had of their experiences. In addition,

the research had to interpret the participants' responses, with this interpretation influenced by the research paradigm, and my own ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions. Each of these assumptions is discussed below.

3.4.2 Ontological assumptions

According to Alharahsheh and Pius (2019), ontological assumptions are the assumption a researcher has about the nature of reality. The existence of various ontologies indicates that there are multiple and subjective realities in coexistence, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018). A researcher's ontological assumption is based on what the researcher believes is true about human existence and life. Hence the data is interpreted according to what the researcher believes in. The theoretical framework that underpins this study is in line with researcher's beliefs. In light of the literature review, the researcher believes that the ability to write well is a societal issue with a strong personal and social aspect. This view is supported by Cummins' (1979) ideas on the child's BICS and CALP. People who surround a learner play a crucial role in shaping their writing skills. This study further acknowledges the importance of the environment in which progressed learners grew up, as this influences how they perceive reality and deal with academic challenges. This view sees writing as societal and social in nature.

Moreover, the ontological assumption of interpretivists is that reality is socially constructed and subjective. Realities vary according to how the individual perceives and interprets the world. Data collected can be interpreted in many ways, depending on how one perceives what participants have said. How participants experience a phenomenon is based on their subjective view of the world around them. Hence ontology played a part both in my own interpretation of reality, and in the participants' interpretations of reality.

3.4.3 Epistemological assumptions

An epistemological assumption concerns the question of how one believes knowledge is acquired. Thus, a researcher's epistemological assumption is shaped by their ontological stance. What the researcher believes determines the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participants during data collection. The relationship may be shaped primarily by subjective or objective concerns, depending on what the researcher believes in. Furthermore, the epistemological assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that events are

understood through a mental process of interpretation influenced by one's interaction with social contexts (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Thus, how the researcher interacts with the participants influences their interpretation of data. According to Dhir, Kumar and Singh (2019), epistemology advocates that knowledge is constructed by experiences of real life. In relation to this study knowledge was generated from grade 9 teachers who teach English FAL. An interview schedule was used to elicit data from participants. The questions in the interview scheduled addressed the research questions of this study. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for follow up questions which helped the researcher to get more data. In addition, data were generated through an open-ended questionnaire. Participants were given three days to fill in the question, this allowed them to answer and provide data related to the research questions of this study.

3.4.4 Axiological assumptions

According to Randel et al. (2018), axiology is the study of the nature and types of values, and the criteria used to assess them, especially in ethics. The axiological assumptions are therefore what the researcher believes are valuable and ethical. When conducting a study, it is important to follow ethical guidelines so that the study will not harm others in any way. Basic beliefs of what is ethical influence and are influenced by the research paradigm and guide the researcher on decision making. The methodology used in this study was pre-approved by the relevant University of South Africa research ethics committee. The methodology of the study involved only mature adults who were fully informed as to the aims of the study and participated voluntarily. No harm was caused by this qualitative study instead the acceptable ethical precautions were taken. The Paradigm underpinning this study allowed for participants to share their interpretation of what they experience as they support progressed learners.

3.5 STUDY SITE

A study site is the place where research is conducted and from which participants are selected. The purpose of this study was to investigate and understand teachers' experiences in supporting Grade 9 progressed learners' writing skills. These sites were selected as they were accessible to the researcher. They were proper to this study because the researcher wanted to know the experiences of English teachers in rural schools. Grade 9 is an exit grade on the GET phase, hence it was important for the researcher to use this grade. Grade 9

English teachers were the participants of this study. Therefore, the setting of this study were the schools where these teachers teach English FAL to progressed learners in Grade 9. Teachers were drawn from two schools, one some distance from Tsomo, a rural area, and one in Cofimvaba, but situated in the midst of a small rural town in the Eastern Cape. Both are high schools that offer tuition in the General Education and Training (GET) phase, including English FAL.

School A is located about 50 km from Tsomo town and School B is in the industrial area of Cofimvaba town. Most learners in School A and some in School B use scholar transport to get to school. The learners in these schools are black. School A has 15 classrooms and three offices, and a non-functional science laboratory, computer lab and library, all used as classrooms. There are three Grade 9 classes in School A. The first class has 36 progressed learners of 106 learners in total. The second class has 20 progressed learners of 70 learners in total. The third has 20 progressed learners of 85 learners in total. The school has many learners and very little infrastructure. Classes are overcrowded, with learners sitting in threes in desks designed for two learners. School B is slightly better off. It has about 50 classrooms, with many used solely for workshops and debates. There are two Grade 9 classes. The first class has six progressed learners of 120 learners in total. The other class has five progressed learners of 78 learners in total. The classrooms are big, and learners are able to sit in twos at the desks. Unlike School A, School B has a functional library, science laboratory and computer laboratory. Some of these resources contribute to supporting progressed learners' writing skills.

3.6 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Awung (2015:8) defines a population as 'the total number of participants that could be used in a study'. The population is many people who have to be sampled for the purpose of the investigation.

3.6.1 Population

'A population is a collective group in which a sample can be drawn and to whom results are applicable and generalized after the sample has been studied' (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 67). Moreover, Casteel and Bridier (2021) defines a population as a group of people from whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions about a phenomenon. In this study, the

population is all teachers in rural mainstream schools who have progressed learners in their classrooms. This was too great a number to study, so a sample was selected from two schools in the Chris Hani East District. These schools were chosen because they are in a rural areas that experiences lots of challenges. They were relevant to this study as they gave the experiences of teachers, who teach writing to progressed learners. The results of this research are not generalizable as the sample was not large enough. Furthermore, the targeted schools one in a rural area and one in a rural town where particular unique socio-economic factors could be affecting the level of education and the resources available.

3.6.2 Sampling

A sample is a chosen number of units from the population that accurately reflect the overall population being studied (Dermatol, 2016). ‘Sampling is the practice of choosing a small number of people from a larger population as the foundation for estimating a prediction of the prevalence of an unknown piece of information or scenario related the larger group (Dhir, Kumar and Singh, 2019, p. 165). This implies that in qualitative research, sampling leads to acquiring rich descriptions of peoples’ ideas, behaviours, and experiences (Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio, 2019). The researcher used purposive sampling to select teachers who could provide answers to the research questions. This method helps to identify participants who can provide information-rich insights, as it requires the researcher to seek out individuals, groups, places, or events that are likely to yield valuable data (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). These Grade 9 teachers taught English FAL writing skills to classrooms with progressed learners; therefore, they were ideally placed to contribute information-rich data.

According to Foley (2018, p. 170), ‘Purposive sampling requires the researcher to have prior knowledge about the purpose of their study so that they can properly choose and approach eligible participants.’ This means that the researcher needs to be clear about the purpose of their study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers as they support progressed learners’ writing skills. This purpose determined the selection of participants. According to Motona (2015), purposive sampling has the benefit of producing a high-quality comprehension of the research issue because only a small number of participants are researched. The small number of participants and the depth of their knowledge enabled a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon under investigation in this study. Participants were drawn from two schools in the Chris Hani East District in the

Eastern Cape. Originally, the plan was to interview six Grade 9 English teachers from both schools but in the end only five teachers participated from both schools. This was influenced by personal commitments the sixth participants had.

3.7 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

In this study, I narrowed the number of participants down to six; three from School A and three from School B. Four were female and two were male. However, one female participant withdrew from the study, which left five participants, three female and two males. All were qualified English educators who had been teaching Grade 9 English FAL for several years. Teachers who participated in this study were from the same district but two schools one 50 km from Tsomo and the other in the small rural town of Cofimvaba, in the province of the Eastern Cape. Participants were given code names. The researcher named the first school; School A and the second school; School B. See Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Participants’ code names

PARTICIPANTS OF SCHOOL A	CODE NAME	PARTICIPANTS OF SCHOOL B	CODE NAME
First participant	Participant 1	First participant	Participant 4
Second participant	Participant 2	Second participant	Participant 5
Third participant	Participant 3		

Table 3.1 shows how participants were named in this study. In school A and B, there were three participants, given the code names Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 4 and participant 5.

3.8 DATA GENERATION METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

The process of data generation involves the collection of information from participants, followed by the organization and summarization of the data in a manner that is deemed useful (Sutton and Austin, 2015). This means data generation is whereby the researcher gets

data from participants. The researcher uses data instruments as a way of generating data from participants. According to Dhir, Kumar and Singh (2019), data generation instruments are the tools used to collect data. They are chosen according to the objectives of the study. In this study, data were generated from a sample through two data collecting instruments: semi-structured interviews and an open-ended questionnaire. Rutakumwa et al. (2020) assert that ‘to guarantee the accuracy of data collected and to ensure that everything said is preserved for analysis, a recorder must be used’. During data generation, records should be kept as a way of ensuring that the data is available to other researchers who may need to verify facts.

According to Caddy (2015, p. 45), an interview is ‘a means of data collection in which an interviewer asks questions to the interviewee in an attempt to gain greater understanding on a certain topic’. Qualitative interviewing is defined by DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) as ‘in-depth, semi-structured, loosely organized modes of interviewing’. According to Rahman and Areni (2016) the advantage of this methodology is that it allows the researcher to have one-on-one interactions with participants and to construct knowledge and data during the interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in such a way that the interviewee felt comfortable and trust and rapport were established prior the interview’ (Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger, 2020). Through the visits to the schools, the researcher established a good relationship with the participants, which enabled a relaxed and free environment during data collection. Participants were not disturbed during tuition time. Birt et al. (2023) assert that no matter how careful one would interview through questions, it comes to naught if the interviewer fails to capture the actual words of the person being interviewed.

3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews

There are three types of interviews commonly used in qualitative research: open-ended interviews, semi-structured interviews, and structured interviews. An open-ended interview involves a conversation between the researcher and the participant, aiming to explore the participant's experiences, views, ideas, beliefs, and attitudes regarding specific events or phenomena. On the other hand, a structured interview consists of a predetermined set of questions and does not permit follow-up questions. Semi-structured interviews are the most frequently employed type in qualitative research. Therefore, the researcher opted for semi-structured interviews. Richmond et al. (2018, p. 73) define the semi-structured interview as a form of interview that provides the opportunity for both parties to explore questions and

answers and develop new conversations around emergent ideas. Turner and Noble (2015, p. 3) suggest that ‘interviews mostly enable the researcher to enter the life world of the interviewee. It is also a conversational partnership in which the interviewer assists participants with a process of reflection’ (Turner and Noble, 2015, p. 3). I formulated a set of basic research questions (see appendix F) and asked follow-up questions to draw out more meaningful and relevant information. During the semi-structured interviews, an audio-recorder was used to backup note taking. Rutakumwa et al. (2020) claim that a recorder must be employed in order to verify the accuracy of the data gathered and to make sure that everything stated is saved for analysis. I used the voice-recorder after obtaining consent from the participants.

It is suggested by Foley (2018) that an interview schedule should be used to ensure that the same questions are posed to the different participants. This ensures that the results of data collected are accurate. According to Kabir (2016) an interview schedule is a written list of questions, open ended or closed, prepared for use by an interviewer in a person-to-person interaction. The researcher in this study developed the interview schedule (see Appendix F) that would best contribute to the validity of results. The semi-structured interviews took place at the participants’ schools, with appointment set up the day before each interview. The researcher targeted Friday break and cleaning time to ensure that participants were not disturbed during tuition time.

3.8.2 Open-ended questionnaire

An open-ended questionnaire was used as the second data collection method. According to Allen (2017, p. 99), ‘Qualitative studies that use open-ended questions allow researchers to take a holistic and comprehensive look at issues being studied.’ In this study the open-ended questionnaire focused on the data based on the challenges grade 9 English FAL teachers experience when teaching English FAL in a classroom with progressed learners and the perspectives of Grade 9 English FAL teachers concerning progressed learners’ writing skills in English FAL.

A questionnaire can be an exceptionally valuable instrument for gathering data, because it gives the analyst a chance to gather data from the respondents concerning their demeanours, individual history, discernments and numerous other things’ (Kyeremeh et al., 2021, p. 146). In this study, an open-ended questionnaire was used. A questionnaire is submitted to certain

people with the aim of obtaining data through the written responses of the members (Bhandari, 2023). Additionally, Kabir (2016) portrays a questionnaire as a set of composed questions often comprising one or more scales to which respondents give written responses.

Participants were provided with open-ended questionnaires (see appendix G) to complete during their break time. Furthermore, the questionnaires were returned to the researcher for analysis. According to Kuziemsky (2021), questionnaires have the advantage of encouraging people to be more honest when answering controversial questions, as their responses are anonymous. The semi-structured interviews conducted prior to the questionnaire helped establish rapport with the participants, making them more comfortable and better able to understand the study's objectives. I chose the format of an open-ended questionnaire to ensure that participants had the opportunity to give additional information in answer to the research questions asked. It was also inexpensive to design and use.

The open-ended questionnaire was physically distributed to the participants by the researcher at their schools. The researcher explained the questionnaire to the participants to ensure that they knew what was expected of them. Participants were given three days to complete the questionnaire, after which the filled-in forms were collected. This gave participants adequate time to think through their answers. The open-ended questionnaire used in this study comprised a list of questions that the Grade 9 teachers responded to in order to share their lived experiences. The first part of the questionnaire sought to uncover how teachers understood the progression policy and how they thought it should be implemented. The second part asked Grade 9 teachers about the challenges they came across in supporting progressed learners. The last part required participants to recommend strategies that could be used to solve their related challenges.

3.9 DATA MANAGEMENT

Data management is 'a designed structure for systematising, categorising and filing the material to make it efficiently retrievable and duplicable' (Lin, 2019, p. 132). In this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and an open-ended questionnaire. Data from the semi-structure interviews were managed as follows:

- The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder.
- The recordings were transferred into a computer and stored as a folder.

- The researcher created a link and shared the recording with the supervisor through Google Cloud.
- The researcher then transcribed data from the voice recorder and stored the data as a word document.
- The researcher created a spreadsheet, where all the response of participants were tabulated and matched with the research questions of the study.

These steps allowed the researcher to discern areas of commonality, categories, and themes, and to ascribe codes to the data (Kiger and Varpio, 2020, p. 118). Data from the open-ended questionnaire was received as a hard copy from participants, and was managed differently from the interviews. The researcher collected the responses from participants and created a file where all the open-ended questionnaires were stored. The file had a divider indicating the school the responses came from. The researcher read through the responses and matched them with the research questions of this study. Coloured highlighting pens were used to highlight similar responses. Later the responses were coded and categorised, and thereafter themes were developed. The file was then stored in the researcher's cupboard for later use.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Wolvius (2020) defines data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Lester, Cho and Lochmiller (2020) assert that data analysis begins by organizing the hard copy of the field notes, the researcher's reflective notes and the interviews in chronological order. Nowell et al. (2017, p. 45) assert that 'the process of choosing, classifying, contrasting, synthesizing, and interpreting data for the purpose of illuminating a specific phenomenon of interest is known as qualitative analysis'. Kruger (2017) states that data can be examined using the following strategies: code the information, assign names to the codes, bunch codes into subjects, interrelate subjects and subjective programs.

Qualitative data analysis is about telling other people the story of the research and what has been established, (Bhandari, 2023). This implies that qualitative research is a narration of participants' experiences. Additionally, Aspers and Corte (2019) state that qualitative information investigation is fundamentally an inductive process of sorting out information into categories, and distinguishing designs among the categories, while Ngulube (2015, p.

131) affirms that, ‘a qualitative information examination is concerned with changing crude information by looking, assessing, perceiving, coding, mapping, investigating, and portraying designs, patterns, subjects, and categories within the crude information, translating them to give their basic meanings.’ In this study thematic data analysis was used. Kiger and Varpio (2020) state that the first step to thematic data analysis is familiarizing oneself with the data through reading through the whole data set. In this study, I listened to the recorded interviews so as to familiarize myself with the collected data. I then transcribed the recorded data, a process which served as an additional means of familiarizing myself with it. I listened to what was said by participants and wrote the interviews down. During the transcription of data, participants’ verbatim words were used. I then moved to the second step of thematic data analysis, which is the generation of codes. I went through the transcribed data and matched the responses of participants to the questions in tabular form; see appendix H and J. Then I identified data that had the potential of answering the research questions of the study. I developed codes from the responses of participants, using the same codes for units of data that showed essential similarities. I then grouped these coded units of data into categories and grouped the categories into themes. This study used an inductive method of data analysis. Table 3.2 shows the research sub-questions and the ways in which each was investigated and analysed.

Table 3.2 Matching Research sub-questions and research instruments

Research Sub- questions	Research instrument	Data collection method	Data analysis
What challenges do Grade 9 English FAL teachers experience when teaching English FAL in a classroom with progressed learners?	Open-ended questionnaire	Open-ended questionnaire	Thematic data analysis

What are the perspectives of Grade 9 English FAL teachers concerning progressed learners' writing skills in English FAL?	Open-ended questionnaire	Open-ended questionnaire	Thematic data analysis
What strategies do Grade 9 English teachers implement in their classrooms to support progressed learners?	Semi-structured interview questions	Semi-structured	Thematic data analysis

3.10.1 Thematic analysis

The qualitative data obtained in this study were analysed through thematic data analysis. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020, p. 1), 'thematic data analysis is a powerful yet flexible method for analysing qualitative data.' I read or became familiar with the data from the open-ended questionnaire and the interviews before beginning Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic data analysis technique. I read through both data sets, starting with the semi-structured interviews, followed by the open-ended questionnaires. This was followed by generating codes for the participants for confidentiality purposes so that I was the only one who could identify them. I then matched units of data with the research questions and assigned codes to common responses. Similar codes were then grouped into categories. See appendix H for how data were coded and categorised. Then themes that emerged from the categories were identified and considered. Relevant themes from both sets of data were grouped together and interpreted. 'In the understanding of the context in which any form of research is conducted, it is critical to interpret data gathered' (Humble, Mozellius and Sallvin, 2020, p. 15). This implies that the interpretation of data gives an understanding of the context of data. Moreover, Nickerson (2023) defines data interpretation as the utilization of various analytical techniques to examine data and draw meaningful conclusions. The data obtained from semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were analysed separately using these steps to gain a comprehensive understanding of how Grade 9 English teachers support the development of writing skills in progressed learners.

After collecting the questionnaire from participants, I used participants' code names to label each questionnaire and created a spreadsheet on which participants' responses were matched with the research questions. Codes were then developed, with codes grouped into categories and categories grouped into themes. The qualitative data of this study was interpreted and described in a narrative manner, and from this, conclusions were reached. Lastly, I produced the final report with recommendations.

3.11 MEASURES OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

'Trustworthiness is the corresponding term used in qualitative research as a measure of the quality of research' (Creswell and Creswell, 2021, p. 76). It is also the degree to which data collected and analysed may be regarded as authentic. It is therefore an important pillar of qualitative research. Research may only be deemed trustworthy if the data can be shown to be authentic, and the interpretation of the data can be shown to be directly related to the data. As explained in chapter one, Korstjens and Moser (2018) distinguishes between five ways of ensuring that a study is trustworthy, they are: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and reflexivity.

3.11.1 Credibility

Creswell and Creswell (2018, p. 110) state, 'Credibility in qualitative research is the extent to which the data and data analysis are authentic and trustworthy'. Moreover, a qualitative study is subjective and interpretive; therefore, there cannot be a solid way of ensuring credibility as it depends on the understanding of the reader. As a researcher, I employed member checks to promote credibility. This means that after transcribing, interpreting and drawing conclusions from the data, I gathered all participants and read the findings of my research to them to share information and create a platform for participants to validate the data. This created trust between the participants and the researcher, which also created research credibility.

3.11.2 Transferability

This is the extent to which discoveries made in the study may be generalized. It is difficult to generalize a qualitative study as qualitative studies involve a degree of subjectivity, both that of the researchers and that of the participants. According to Nikolopoulou, Gialamas

and Lavidas (2023), generalisability is the extent to which we can apply the findings of a study to other people, times, or settings that were not directly studied. ‘Transferability is attained by providing a detailed, rich description of the settings studied to provide the reader with adequate information to be able to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings that they know’ (Schloemer and Schröder-Bäck, 2018, p. 45). In the methodology of this study, the setting and research methods are clearly described to enhance the study’s transferability. Detailed descriptions will enable other researchers to transfer the investigation to an environment with a similar setting.

3.11.3 Dependability

According to Renjith et al. (2021, p. 35) ‘dependability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated with similar subjects in a similar context.’ The following four strategies improve the internal validity of qualitative research: triangulation (which means using multiple sources of data) thus data from interviews and open ended questionnaire. Participants were from teachers from different environment. Triangulation was established by giving participants who work in different schools the same questions. Member checks is when the collected data in this study were returned to the participants for accuracy checking and to establish resonance with their experiences. Achieving reliability can be accomplished by evaluating the researcher’s record-keeping of information, techniques, and choices made throughout a dissertation, as well as its final outcomes (Stahl and King, 2020). This study elaborates on the descriptions and data of this research to ensure that auditing for dependability will be possible. In this study I enhanced dependability by doing member checks with participants, as described under 3.14.1, and by triangulation, which meant using two different data collection instruments and referring regularly to the findings of other researchers, to check for areas of similarity and diversion. I also ensured dependability by long-term immersion in the data and by clarifying and being aware of my own possible biases and assumptions and attempting to bracket these during the research process.

3.11.4 Confirmability

‘Confirmability is the degree to which research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others’, (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 155). Confirmability means objectivity, which is the ability for multiple independent individuals to agree on the accuracy, relevance, and meaning of data. Additionally, it measures how easily other researchers can confirm the

study's results. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018) confirmability assures the reader that data and interpretation reflect participants' views that are not influenced by the researcher. In this study confirmability achieved by using a voice recorder during the semi-structured interviews and word for word transcription was done for later verification. The same questions were asked to all participants to ensure consistency. This helped to ensure that data collected represented the voice of the participants not that of the researcher.

3.11.5 Reflexivity

Probst (2015) defines reflexivity as the process of checking how the researchers' attitudes, beliefs and values influenced the research. It is therefore important to guard against biasness and avoid misrepresenting participants provided data because of the researcher's belief. In this study peer-debriefing was a way of reflecting on the study. I asked a friend to read the research to guard against any bias information that maybe caused by the fact that I am also an English teacher. Furthermore, my supervisor and a critical reader read the research to ensure that the information was subjective. As the researcher, I also tried not to influence data with my beliefs as that would compromise the credibility of the study.

3.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Dhir, Kumar and Singh (2019), research ethics refer to the moral dimension of research, which is what is right or wrong in the research process. I considered what is moral and ethical before conducting this research. I obtained ethical clearance from the University of South Africa, from the Department of Education (see appendix A) and from the school principals (see appendix D and E) and teachers concerned (see appendix G). This was the first step to ensuring an ethical study.

Ethical ramifications must be considered because human subjects are frequently used in social science research, according to Bhandari et al. (2023). Therefore, participants must be treated with respect and their dignity must be upheld throughout the research process. Participants much informed in advance of the day, time and length of the interview in order to ensure that they are prepared. Regarding morality, Adam (2010, cited in Mpiti, 2016, p. 102) notes: 'the researcher must ensure that no individual suffers any adverse effects as a result of the research.' Hence the risks to participants were checked prior to conducting the study. This study was a low risk one, as it involved non-vulnerable adult participants and

non-sensitive information. The only foreseeable risk this study presented was the risk of inconvenience to the participants, as participants were requested to take the time to participate in the semi-structured interviews and complete the open-ended questionnaire. However, the benefits of this study may outweigh the risk, as participants seemed to enjoy talking about their challenges and gained insights into strategies that are sustainable and helpful to progressed learners in their English FAL writing abilities.

The study presented no conflicts of interest, as data were not collected in the researcher's workplace. Primary data were used, as data were collected directly from participants. In addition, guidelines from the Association of Internet Researchers regarding the use of special interest forums for research purposes emphasise the importance of ease of search and retrieval of data from public searches, but do not specifically state that consent is required. Hence the data collected in this study is stored electronically in Google Cloud for later retrieval. Furthermore, a sound process of recruitment was followed. After developing the research question, I had to identify participants relevant to this study. I made an appointment with the two principals of the selected schools to request permission to conduct the study see appendix C and D. Both principals signed consent forms and granted permission. The principals then called the heads of departments to convey the request to the English teachers. Neubauer, Witkop and Varpio (2019) clearly state that researchers should select people who have experienced the phenomenon and are willing to share their experiences. I followed this guideline. From all the English teachers of the two schools, only Grade 9 English teachers were recruited to participate in this study. The researcher explained the study in detail to the Grade 9 English FAL teachers and only those with progressed learners were given the consent form to fill in. Only participants who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study did so.

Moreover, Creswell (2021) affirms that researchers are expected to observe the code of conduct that governs professionals when they are conducting research projects. Researchers must take ethical and scientific responsibility for their research. In this study, I clearly outlined the purpose and objectives of the study to the participants. In addition, I used code names for participants and their anonymity was protected throughout the research. I understand that disclosing confidential information about participants may cause harm to them. Hence it is essential to maintain confidentiality in any study involving people. All participants were treated with respect and courtesy. This study will help teachers who experience challenges in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. It

provides insight into the challenges teachers face, and the various tactics they use to overcome them. Its outcome, therefore, will be in line with what is ethical.

3.13 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the experiences of grade 9 English FAL teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. There are three main limitations of this study: Time was the biggest limitation to this study, hence the study is limited to only two schools in one district. The study was done on a limited budget. I could not reach schools from afar but had to choose schools that were in the area I could afford access to. The study was further limited only to Grade 9 English FAL teachers in two rural Eastern Cape schools. The findings have limitations as they are specific to the context and cannot be extended to various other scenarios. They can only be applied to schools facing similar issues in comparable settings. In addition, the results cannot be considered representative of the only experiences of English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills.

3.14 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A qualitative research methodology was used. Participants were selected through purposive sampling. The study required participants to have progressed learners in their classrooms. This study focused on two high schools in the Chris Hani East District. The experiences of Grade 9 English teachers were investigated. Participants revealed their successes and challenges as they support progressed learners' writing skills. Furthermore, strategies on how to overcome those challenges were investigated. The collected data were analysed by means of thematic data analysis. The objectives of the study were met through the investigation of the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers.

3.15 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In the third chapter, I discussed the research approach, research design and research paradigm of the study. I also discussed the study site, population, sample and sampling method, the participants, methods of data generation, data management and data analysis. Finally, measures of trustworthiness and ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter. The research design was an interpretive one, with data analysed largely through qualitative methods. The chapter has described the different stages involved in designing and

developing the study. The following chapter presents the data, followed by analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the third chapter, the methodological decisions undertaken in this study were expounded upon, encompassing the procedures for data collection and analysis. The present chapter entails the presentation of the themes and sub-themes that surfaced from the analysis of semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Each theme and sub-theme is substantiated by verbatim quotations extracted from the transcriptions of both data sets. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the themes which are corroborated with pertinent literature.

4.2 EXPLICATION OF DATA

The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of grade 9 English FAL teacher in supporting progressed learners' writing. Below is the main research question and sub-questions.

4.2.1 Main research question

What are the experiences of Grade 9 English FAL teachers in supporting the writing skills of progressed learners?

4.2.2 Research sub-questions

- What challenges do Grade 9 English FAL teachers experience when teaching English FAL in a classroom with progressed learners?
- What are the perspectives of Grade 9 English FAL teachers concerning progressed learners' writing skills in English FAL?
- Which strategies do Grade 9 English teachers implement in their classrooms to support progressed learners?

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used to collect data, as outlined in Appendix H and Appendix I respectively. The primary aim of the analysis and interpretation was to provide

comprehensive descriptions of the participants' experiences in supporting the development of writing skills in progressed learners. As discussed in chapter 3, this process involved organizing data for analysis, reading the data thoroughly, coding, categorizing the coded data and grouping similar categories together to form theme. Themes were presented in a tabular form together with subthemes that emerged of the collected data. Furthermore, I made use of thematic analysis to analyse the transcriptions of both data sets. As described in Chapter 3, I was able to code, classify and interpret the themes, which emerged according to their applicability to my research questions and to the literature review of this study (Creswell, 2021).

Table 4.1: Overview of themes

Themes	Teachers' perceptions of the progression policy	Progressed learners' English FAL Competency	Support provided to progressed learners	Pedagogy of teaching English FAL writing skills
Sub- themes	Teachers' attitudes towards the progression policy	Level of competency in English as a subject	Sources of support for progressed learners	Approaches in teaching writing
	Various understandings of the progression policy	Challenging aspects of English FAL writing	Available resources	Methods used to teach writing in English FAL
	Implementation challenges Support challenges		Support programs for progressed learners	Strategies of supporting progressed learners' writing skills

4.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DATA

In this study data revealed the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners English FAL writing skills. Data revealed how teachers perceive and understand the progression policy. Teachers have varied attitudes and understandings towards the progression policy, which is influenced by the challenges they face in implementing the progression policy and in supporting progressed learners writing skills. Moreover, data is significant in this study as it revealed the level of competency of progressed learners in English FAL. Data further gave an insight on the challenging aspects of English FAL writing. Data in this study did not only focus on the negative experiences of grade 9 English teachers but also revealed the support provided to progressed learners, the sources of support, resources and support programs teachers expose progressed learners to. Furthermore, data revealed the approaches, methods and strategies of teaching writing to progressed learners. This data led to the conclusion that the progression policy has a positive impact in the education system but better monitoring and implementation would help to promote better outcomes for progressed learners, which is the goal of the policy. Progressed learners should be supported by using different teaching approaches, methods and strategies. It is detrimental to progress a learner without support therefore the conclusion is that proper support should be given to progressed learners in order to bridge content gap.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The following four main themes emerged from data collected from semi structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. They are as follows:

Theme1 – Teachers’ perceptions of the progression policy.

Theme 2 – Challenging aspects English FAL writing.

Theme 3 – Support provided to progressed learners.

Theme 4 – Pedagogy of Teaching English FAL writing skills.

Each is discussed in detail below.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Teachers' perceptions of the progression policy

The analysis of data obtained from semi-structured interviews has unveiled variations in teachers' perceptions of the progression policy. While some participants view it positively, others hold a negative perspective. These differing perceptions are influenced by the participants' comprehension of the principles of the policy, the challenges encountered during its implementation, and the impact it has on the development of English FAL writing skills.

4.4.1.1 Teachers' attitudes towards the progression policy

Data revealed that teachers have different attitudes towards the progression policy. Some view it positively, others have mixed perceptions and others have a negative attitude toward the progression policy. During the semi-structured interviews, it was found that participants 2 and 3 expressed the view that the policy is beneficial, although with the suggestion that it requires enhanced monitoring.

“I think the intention behind the policy is good because it's really frustrating for learners to have to repeat a grade multiple times, but at the same time, I feel like the policy should be better monitored.” (P2 Interviews 09 November 2022)

“...it is useful because some learners or many learners, decide to drop out of school if they fail more than twice,” (P3 Interviews 09 November 2022)

In contrast, participant 5, in expressing her perspective, which showed mixed emotion about the policy. He acknowledged that the policy possesses both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, she highlighted the potential for reducing the financial burden associated with grade repetition. Conversely, she also identified a negative aspect, namely the existence of a content gap.

“...it has got both good and a bad side to it. The bad side is that it will affect grade the learner moves to the next grade with a content gap. But also it has got a good side because repeating a grade is very expensive for parents.” (P5 Interviews 09 November 2022)

However, participants 1 and 4 expressed a negative attitude towards the progression policy due to the increased workload it poses for teachers when teaching English FAL.

“... It’s a huge challenge, not just a small one, because what is happening is that progressed learners give us more challenges in the next grade, we must work hard as teachers in bridging the content gap because of those learners who are passing Grade 9 as progressed learners. It’s a bit of a challenge,” (P1 Interviews 09 November 2022)

“This progression policy has literally failed the students more especially this generation because you would compare a grade 9 learner back in the days would be able to read and write. These ones need to be assisted otherwise, they cannot read and write. Which makes the teacher to work extra time trying to assist the

The above data reveals the various perceptions teachers have with regards to the progression policy. A Perception is defined as the way something is regarded, understood or interpreted (Mpiti, 2016). How one regards, understands and interprets something can influence the type of attitude one will have towards that particular thing. Similarly, participants held varying attitudes toward the policy. Some participants viewed the policy positively, some negatively and some had mixed feelings about the policy. Moreover, Matiwane (2015), Mogale and Modipane (2021), and Ramputla (2020) discovered that teachers' attitudes toward the progression policy differ due to the challenges associated with it. This implies the varying attitude and perception revealed in this study are influenced by participants' experiences. Those who had a positive attitude towards the policy agreed with researchers like Brahmhatt (2020) and Tello and Mainardes (2015), who believe that the progression policy is a good thing but needs better monitoring and support to progressed learners. Those who held a negative attitude aligned with Phala (2019), Mbhudhi (2022), and Stott, Dreyer, and Venter (2015), who are critics of the progression policy and advocate a learner to repeat a grade until the learner meets

the academic requirements for progression. Despite the different attitudes, the participants held the view that ‘in principle’ the policy was a good idea and expressed commendable goals, but many challenges were raised. They identified what they felt were gaps in the policy itself, but more notably to numerous serious weaknesses and obstacles in its implementation at the school and classroom level, to the degree that they did not see it realizing its goals.

4.4.1.2 Various understandings of the progression policy

Data obtained from semi-structured interviews show that grade 9 English teachers do understand the progression policy but vary in its interpretation. All the participants revealed how they understand the policy.

“... I so understand the requirements that are required for a learner to progress to the next grade. And the requirement is that a parent should be made aware of a learner who qualifies to be progressed,” (P1 Interviews, 09 November 2022)

“My understanding of the progression policy is that a learner is not allowed or cannot be allowed to repeat a phase twice”. (P2 Interviews, 09 November 2022)

“It was intended to assist learners who had been retained from a certain phase and also its aim was to reduce the number of dropouts.” (P3 Interviews, 09 November 2022)

“...requirements thus checking the absenteeism of the learner, is the age. A learner should not repeat a phase more than two times.” (P4 Interviews, 09 November 2022)

“...And also it focuses on the age that at a certain age, you are not supposed to be in a particular grade.” (P5 Interviews, 09 November 2022)

The above understanding of the policy shows that participants have various understandings of the policy and support was never mentioned by all the 5 participants. Participants 1, 2 and 3 revealed that they understand the progression policy but there are limitations.

“Now in grade nine a learner must not repeat a grade twice, must repeat a grade once and then progress to another grade” (P1 Interviews, 09 November 2022)

“The people that are responsible for the progression policy are the class managers.” (P2 Interviews, 09 November 2022)

“Introduced by the department of education and it was in 2013.” (P3 Interviews 09 November 2022)

Data revealed that teachers have various ways of interpreting the progression policy with a vague understanding of how the policy should be implemented. Data shows that participants had limited knowledge on the implementation of support stated in the policy for progressed learners, as they did not mention support when answering the question on their understanding of the progression policy. They only mentioned what is required for a learner to be progressed but participants never mentioned the support that should be given to a progressed learner. This is a concern as it is crucial to note that the progression policy (DOE, 2016) advocates support for progressed learners. Failing to provide support would have severe consequences, including learner dropout, as highlighted by Kutame et al. (2021), Robeyns (2017), and Brahmabhatt (2020). The purpose of the progression policy is to reduce the number of learner dropouts, but if teachers have various understandings of the policy it would be one of the elements that would negatively affect the implementation of the policy.

4.4.1.3 Implementation Challenges

In this study, the implementation challenges identified by the teachers were many. They included a lack of understanding of the policy by implementers, lack of support from the department of education, lack of support from the parents, overcrowding, and limited resources. This study found that participants in the study also perceive the school management team as lacking understanding of the policy and they interpret it differently, resulting to poor implementation.

Participant 2 and 5 in the semi-structured interviews revealed that there are many implementation challenges which lead to poor implementation of the progression policy.

“...that the SMT or the management does not know the progression policy and it is even difficult for them to explain it to us. So we just push the learners. So no one really understands and with the progression policy and we cannot properly implement it because we do not understand. The teachers do not understand it, the SMT management does not understand it.” (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“The principal does not even know the requirements for progressing a learner, he relies on teachers for interpretation and the implementation of the policy” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Moreover, participants revealed that the department of education does not support grade 9 teacher’s English teachers with means to support progressed learners English FAL writing skills. They revealed that there is no monitoring of support in English FAL through the subject advisor. Participants 4 and 5 revealed that there is no subject advisor for the GET phase.

“Honestly speaking, I have never received any form of support from the department of education. I’ve never received any. I have never been in a workshop where we were told how to support these learners. Also we have a problem in our district of not having a subject advisor for English GET phase.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“It is embarrassing to say, nothing is done by the Department of Education. As I said, there is no subject advisor, so there is no focus in grade 9. The Department of Education is focusing in grade 12 forgetting the importance of foundation. No motivation is given so the department is doing nothing. Nothing at all. But the department is not meeting me halfway. So it is difficult. The admission policy also contributes to overcrowding of which it is something that is over my power. The district does not have GET subject advisor. So, who’s going to assist when we are stuck, who’s going to assist us?” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Participants added that the department of education does not employ teachers who will assist progressed learners.

“The department on the other hand does not employ more teachers and we lack assistance because as I speak we do not have a subject advisor.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“We do not have support because the last time I attended a workshop it was for FET. We were busy with grade 10 to 12. There is nothing said about grade 8 and 9.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“We are on our own, in grade 9, in the senior phase, and primary phase. I feel like the focus is mainly given to grade 12 in the high schools, there is absolutely no support or support material we are receiving from the Department of Education,” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

The data also reveal that there are no school based support teams to implement the progression policy. The implementation is the responsibility of the class teacher and the management.

Participants 1, 4 and 5 revealed that the policy is implemented by the school management team. There is no specific committee for the implementation of the progression policy.

“There is no specific committee for the progression of learners. It is done by the management and class teacher.” (P1 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“At times the class teacher is called but if it is the last hour the progression is done by the principal.”

(P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“The Smt does the progression of learners even though they do not understand it. Good learners fail but poor performing learners are the ones progressed.” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Furthermore, the issue of overcrowding has been identified as a significant challenge in the successful implementation of the progression policy in data from the semi-structured interviews. Participants 1, 2 and 5 have reported that the high teacher-learner ratios in their classrooms pose a considerable obstacle to providing adequate support for progressed learners.

“I perceive the implementation of the progression policy challenging because of large numbers caused by the admission policy, which does not allow the school to reject learners even if the capacity is reached. We do not have even a space to go around and attend those progressed learners.” (P1 Interview, 9 November 2022)

“Numbers in their classrooms are very huge which makes it difficult for them to support progressed learners, the English teacher, which then becomes a challenge. Overcrowding and rationalisation is perceived as a challenge in supporting progressed learners writing skills.” (P2 Interview, 9 November 2022)

“Also, as I mentioned the overcrowding of classes is very challenging and also shortage of material such as reading books.” (P5 Interview, 9 November 2022)

Participants revealed that their implementation of the progression policy is challenged by the fact that progressed learners are mixed in one class with the non-progressed ones. The inclusive classroom poses a challenge in the implementation of the progression policy. Participants in both interviews and open-ended questionnaire revealed that the inclusive classroom is a challenge to the implementation of the policy.

“I cannot pay individual attention to progressed learners because the non-progressed ones get bored and become chaotic.” (P2 Interview, 9 November 2022)

“As much as I refer the progressed learners to the non- progressed ones having them in one class is draining and when I organise extra classes they do not come.” (P5 Interview, 9 November 2022)

“Also, as I mentioned the overcrowding of classes is very challenging these make it difficult for a class with progressed and non-progressed learners to flow. I find it heavy.” (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Data revealed various challenges to the implementation of the progression policy, which include lack of understanding from the school management team, lack of support from the department of education, no school based support teams, overcrowding and inclusive education. Participants revealed that even the school management team does not understand the policy, hence it is poorly implemented. In agreement, Mogale and Modipane (2021), Kika and Kotze (2018), Stott, Dreyer, and Venter (2015), also found that the progression policy is poorly implemented due to varying interpretations and understanding among implementers. Kutame et al. (2021) suggest that the lack of clear procedures from the department of education on how to implement support contributes to the differences in understanding and interpretation of the policy and ineffective implementation. The policy simply states that progressed learners should be supported, and does not state how, which results in poor implementation of the policy. Policymakers should recognize these problems and address the many issues contributing to poor implementation.

Moreover, participants revealed that the department of education does not support grade 9 teacher's English teachers with means to support progressed learners English FAL writing skills. They revealed that there is no monitoring of support in English FAL through the subject advisor. Similarly, Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) argue that the department does not provide clear guidelines for implementing the progression policy, resulting in additional challenges to support provided to progressed learners. The data also reveal that there are no school based support teams to implement the progression policy. The implementation is the responsibility of the class teacher and the management. There is no specific committee for the implementation of the progression policy. This goes against the policy itself, which states that schools should have school-based support teams (SBST) in place to oversee the implementation of the progression policy. According to Nortje (2017), the SBST should be made up of the school management, class teacher, and parents. Contrary data reveals that there are no SBST which means parents are not involved in the implementation of the progression policy.

Furthermore, the issue of overcrowding has been identified as a significant challenge in the successful implementation of the progression policy in data from the semi-structured interviews. In agreement, Mogale and Modipane (2021), Ngema and Maphalala (2021), Moagi (2020), and Moswane (2019), affirm that most South African schools experience overcrowding. These studies have also found that overcrowding negatively affects the implementation of the policy. Additionally, Dube and Ndaba (2021) suggest that the number of teachers in South African schools is insufficient for the number of learners in their classrooms, leading to overcrowded classrooms. The data indicates that teachers are burdened with large class sizes, making it challenging for them to provide adequate support to progressed learners. Most rural schools in South Africa experience these challenges. Additionally, the implementation of the progression policy is found to be challenging due to the adoption of inclusive education. This contrasts with the approach taken in Zimbabwe, where progressed learners are taught separately from non-progressed learners. While some scholars, such as Brahmhatt (2020), suggest using differentiation as a teaching method in classrooms with progressed learners, this conflicts with the theoretical framework of the current study, which advocates collaborative writing. Furthermore, participants in the study reported that teaching in an overcrowded inclusive classroom presents additional challenges, requiring extra time and support for progressed learners.

4.4.1.4 Support challenges

Data indicate that that progressed learners do not find motivation in learning English FAL. Participants 2, 3 and 5 revealed that it is a challenge to support progressed learners as they lack motivation and do not show the willingness to learn.

“Progressed learners also lack motivation which leads to them to not doing their homework. Sometimes it is difficult to cater for all learners different learning styles.” (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“I find it very hard because they do not want to answer in class which makes the whole class becomes hesitant to ask questions since they do not think what they have to say is important. They also do not see the need to interact in class.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“They do not avail themselves for support. You call extra classes, progressed learners do not come. They do not do their extra work so you find the lesson does not move. They lack learning motivation. They do not push themselves. Others become frustrated because they are unable to understand and master what they are supposed to write.” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

In addition, participant 4 in the open-ended questionnaire revealed that progressed learners get discouraged by questions they feel they cannot answer.

“If the tasks are too difficult the students may become demotivated to even attempt the question.” (P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Furthermore, in this study lack of support from parents is viewed as a support challenge. Participants revealed that they do not get support from parents because they are illiterate or the parents rely too much on the school for the education of their children. Progressed learners do not do their homework because they lack monitoring at home.

“... Lack of parental support. Learner’s engagement in the process, they are not actively involved.” “...most of our parents are illiterate, they are unable to assist their children for schoolwork.” (P1 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“They also lack support from parents which results to them not doing their work” (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“...they are not playing it. And the parents are relaxed when it comes to their children. I feel like the parents also needs to take initiative like assist the learners with their homework or even like assist the learners. So I think the parents are not playing their role, they are relaxed and are relying on school too much.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“... the parents in our area are uneducated I think maybe because we are in rural areas so I think it has negative effects.” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Moreover, participants revealed a challenge of lack of writing foundational skills. Participants suggest that progressed learners lack foundation. When they try to implement their support strategies, there is nothing to build on because of lack of foundation.

“...you find that some learners can’t even move. They cannot properly plan, they cannot write their GAPS, and they can’t brainstorm so you have to help them; tell them write this word.” (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“Learners are unable to punctuate sentences for example they write I as a pronoun in small letters. They write long sentences.” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“Many learners have attitude when they are being assisted, they do not cooperate and many take time to even understand simple things such as sentence construction.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022) “They do not want to see value of revising and editing their work. Progressed learners may be more focused on getting their ideas down on paper and may not be as interested in the finer details of their writing.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Additionally, participants also revealed in both the interviews and the questionnaire that time is a big challenge in supporting progressed learners’ English FAL writing skills.

“The challenge is time and the fact that they should not feel discriminated from others. So I do not separate them from others.” (P1 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“Remember, we cannot just only focus on the 20, whereas I still have the other 50 learners who need me. So, I must balance, which is difficult to do, considering the hours that we have, that are stipulated on the timetable. I mean, we only have an hour. We cannot properly deal with these progressed learners”. (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“So, we don't have much time to attend those progressed learners, that's the main challenge, and the lack of teaching staff is challenging.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“The main problem here is time. Time is always against us. So sometimes it happens that you are willing to handle those learners, but time is against you because you are not only focusing on these six learners, you do have other classes which you need to prepare for them for the following day.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“Well, the biggest challenge, ma'am, is time. We are dealing with numbers. I feel like if we had 50 learners, it was going to be better. Now we've got 78 and 80 learners, which is not easy to manage. We don't have time.” (P1 Interviews, 9 November 2022) “Another one is ensuring that the students have enough time to complete a task and assignment. If the tasks are too difficult, the students may become frustrated and discouraged.” (P4 Questionnaire 12 September 2023)

Moreover, lack of resources is another challenge identified in this study. Participants revealed that they do not have enough resources for supporting progressed learners' writing skills.

“One of the challenges that we are having is that we do not have resources such as projector so I believe that it would be better if we were projecting when we're dealing with those kind of learners.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“When learners came to our school from primary, they came with nothing. We were only given the learners, no material, no teachers so we have to do things by ourselves, hence we lack resources.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“There is no material even the workbook that was once delivered in our schools is no longer delivered. We really lack resources” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Data indicate that there are numerous challenges to the support given to progressed learners. Participants revealed that progressed learners lack motivation in learning English FAL. Moreover, this study revealed that the lack of learning motivation displayed by progressed learners causes them not to attend support programs designed for them. Ngema and Maphalala (2021), Moagi (2020), and Matiwane (2015) similarly discovered that progressed learners often fail to attend remedial lessons and ultimately drop out of school due to a lack of motivation. Moreover, participants in this study also revealed that progressed learners display a lack of motivation for learning, and some do not taking their schoolwork seriously. Teachers reported that learners who require support do not attend extra classes.

Furthermore, in this study lack of support from parents is viewed as a support challenge. Participants revealed that they do not get support from parents because they are illiterate or the parents rely too much on the school for the education of their children. Progressed learners do not do their homework because they lack monitoring at home. This suggests a lack of parental involvement because parents have to motivate their children to do school work and attend classes. In agreement, Goben (2018) and Yaafouri (2019) found that parental involvement is a form of motivation for learning to a child as the parent monitors and supports the child in learning. Similarly, participants believed that the lack of motivation displayed by progressed learners is because parents are not involved in their learning. Participants believed that the reason progressed learners do not do their work and do not attend extra classes is because parents are not there to offer motivation. However, Moagi (2020) and Govender (2015) believe that illiteracy among parents is the cause of this lack of parental involvement. In contrast, participants in this study revealed that most parents are not illiterate but lazy to support their

children. Schools should ensure that parents are more involved in their children's learning so as to address some of the challenges faced when providing support to progressed learners.

Participants revealed that progressed learners lack the foundation of writing. Similarly to Chataa and Nkengbeza's (2019), study which revealed that supporting a learner who lacks foundation consumes a lot of time. This finding aligns with the observations of Mpiti (2016), Dussiling (2019), and Netshipise, Madima, and Makananise (2022), who noted poor foundation skills and difficulties with language usage among learners. Participants argue that when they attempt to use scaffolding to support progressed learners, they find that there is nothing to build on, and starting from scratch is time-consuming. This suggests that there are no support strategies in the lower grades, resulting in learners progressing with a lack of foundation in writing English FAL. Mtshali and Mashiya (2022) assert that English as a subject depends on the foundation built in the primary phase. The lack of foundation in writing skills poses serious challenges for teachers in providing support to progressed learners and indicates that primary education is not adequately monitored to prevent any content gaps when learners progress to higher grades.

Furthermore, participants revealed that lack of resources challenges the support they give to progressed learners. In agreement several studies conducted by researchers like Musitha and Mafukata (2018), Dube and Ndaba (2021), and Mpiti (2016) confirm that rural schools in South Africa face a significant resource challenge. Furthermore, participants in this study have revealed that they sometimes cannot provide extra classes due to the unavailability of scholar transport on weekends. This negatively affects the support strategies of teachers. Additionally, Moagi (2020) discovered a shortage of instructional material in rural areas. Similarly, participants in the study have also reported a scarcity of instructional material in schools. They argue that priority is given to mathematics and grade 12, leaving teachers to find their own grade 9 material. This challenge highlights the lack of support from the department in assisting rural schools with the necessary resources to support progressed learners.

4.3.2. Theme 2: Progressed learners' English FAL competency

The data obtained from semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires indicate that learners of English First Additional Language (FAL) in grade 9 are significantly below the anticipated level of proficiency because of some challenging aspects. The participants of the study opine that there is a stipulated level of competency a learner should show including the progressed ones. In some activities, learners might fail to portray that level of competence,

especially progressed learners. The level of proficiency is ascertained by evaluating their competence in English as a subject, their communicative abilities, and their performance when tasked with challenging activities.

4.3.2.1 Level of Competency in English as a Subject

Data from semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaire show that the writing of English is a challenge to all learners but the situation is worse when it comes to progressed learners. In the open-ended questionnaire participants show the expected level of English Competency a grade 9 learner should portray. Participants 2, 3 and 4 revealed that grade 9 learners should be competent in speaking, reading and writing English FAL.

“Learners are expected to have mastered writing, reading and speaking skills.” (P2 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“A grade nine learner is expected to know how to write a letter.” (P3 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“...expected to know how to read and has to be able to understand a variety of texts such as novels, poems, short stories and articles. They should also be able to write different types of texts such as essays, stories and poems. They should also be able to listen to and understand spoken English and communicate their ideas clearly in speech.” (P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“A grade 9 learners should master language conventions that means be able to construct English simple, compound and complex sentences. They should be able to read with understanding and be able to comprehend. They should be able to write essays most especially the narrative essays.” (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

However, regardless of the level of competency expected from grade 9 learners, participants 2, 4 and 5 revealed that the progressed learners in grade 9 do not show a high level of competency. They have challenges when it comes to speaking, reading, and writing and language structures.

“The level of understanding in what are they going to write is too low. Sentence construction and understanding of language.” (P1 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“Writing skills is a big issue. Learners are unable to do simple things like spelling most common words such as receive. You know a learner is expected to be able to spell words such as receive.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“Learners are unable to punctuate sentences for an example they write I as a pronoun in small letters. They write long sentences.” (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Moreover, data from semi- structured interviews and the open-ended questionnaire strengthen the idea that the level of competency of grade 9 learners is very low. Participants 1, 4 and 5 revealed the areas of low level of competency. They cannot write, read or construct meaningful sentences.

“Many of my learners have difficulty in putting words on paper. So most of the time they just copy the question paper, they are struggling as they have been progressed in all of the previous grades. They cannot write and some cannot even read some they cannot even articulate themselves in English.” (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“...they don't have that enthusiasm to boldly express themselves in English. So they are unable to construct a complete sentence and express their feelings. So those areas really, really need to be revisited.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“So you find a grade 9 learner struggles with language structures, spelling, parts of speech and grammar rules generally.” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“Progressed learners are not fluent in speaking the language which affects mostly their creative writing. The more you are unable to express your feelings affects the speech.” (P1 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023) *“They cannot properly speak English, because of this my learners cannot properly write. Even when I communicate in English, they struggle to get what I am saying unless I code switch.”* (P2 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“...cannot speak proper English or English that children their age should be speaking. Since they are unable to write proper English they also cannot be creative because how they communicate.” (P2 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“...extremely fluent that affects their creative writing in a way that they write bombastic words in which they struggle to spell them making it hard to get the message.” (P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“They cannot speak English and they are not willing to try which makes it difficult to write English.” (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Participants in the open-ended questionnaire revealed that progressed learners cannot speak properly in English, and this contributes negatively to their English FAL writing skills. Grade 9 learners are expected to be competent in speaking, reading, writing and the use of language structures according to CAPS (2011). However, data revealed that grade 9 progressed learners have difficulty in expressing themselves in English, which negatively affects their writing skills. Participants further revealed that writing is a complex skill, which learners struggle to master. This agrees with Cummins (2000) who asserts that writing is in the fourth quadrant because it requires high cognitive levels. The data found in this study suggests that the lack of English communicative skills contributes to progressed learners' difficulty with writing.

In support, Kocamezi (2020) and Vygotsky (1989) agree that writing begins with speech so if a learner cannot speak English then it will be difficult to write. Similarly, the theoretical framework of this study asserts that language learning starts from basic interpersonal communicative skills then later develops to the cognitive academic language proficiency; which includes writing. The literature reviewed in this study affirms that it is difficult to teach learners who cannot speak English as there is a lot of code switching needed. In agreement, Moagi (2020, p. 31) found that teachers find it difficult to teach English FAL to Grade 6 progressed learners since they often have to use code-switching approaches. The

use of this strategy is far from ideal because the goal is to have students speak English well by the end of this grade. Learners and teachers tend to be more comfortable with their native language and can end up using the learner's home language for communication. Mupa and Chinooneka (2015, p. 22) agree with the preceding views and states that 'if teachers do not use strategies that encourage children to speak in English, the children might not gain the competence needed to use English as the language for learning. This implies that progressed learners should be encouraged to speak English to develop better English FAL writing skills.

4.3.2.2 Challenging aspects of English FAL Writing

Data from open-ended questionnaire revealed that there are aspects of writing that progressed learners find challenging. All participants revealed that amongst progressed learners many aspects of writing, most especially essay writing, are challenging for them. In line with Cummins (2001) who categorized essay writing in the fourth quadrant, which requires high cognitive levels, progressed learners find essay writing difficult. Additionally, Leah (2018) affirms that learners struggle to generate ideas for their creative writing. As mentioned previously, progressed learners are unable to express their ideas in English, as they cannot speak the language fluently.

"All the aspects of writing affects them, it is not easy for them to write those pieces of writing in particularly essays. It starts from choosing the type of structure." (P1 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"I have observed that my learners struggle with shorter transactional text and essays." (P2 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"I find essays and longer transactional text challenging while shorter transactional texts for my learners."

(P3 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"Essays are the most challenging as they cannot adhere to the word- length as prescribed in the question."

(P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"They find narrative essays easier than the other essays. The situation is worse when it comes to argumentative and discursive". (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Additionally, participants revealed that questions that required understanding or interpretation, or to discuss, interpret and compare that progressed learners find hard to understand and answer.

“...often have problems with understanding essay topics. They also have issues with questions that require them to discuss, interpret and compare and contrast.” (P2 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“They find it hard to interpret.” (P3 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“...it hard to write essays and understand what is it that they are asked to do so.” (P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Data reveals that the common challenging aspect of writing is essay writing which is caused by lack of language skill and lack of interpretation. Similarly, Mpiti (2016), Bulqiyah, Mahbub, and Nugraheni (2021), as well as Foncha, Kepe, and Maruma (2017), noted poor grammar, spelling errors, and a lack of vocabulary in learners’ writing of essays. In this study, participants also identified these aspects as challenges faced by progressed learners. Therefore, it can be inferred that the challenges experienced by progressed learners are comparable to those encountered by non-progressed learners. This study indicates that first additional language learners struggle with mastering writing but particularly progressed learners. This finding is in agreement with Rajesh (2019, p. 132), who revealed that ‘rural students face difficulties while writing the English language as they are inadequately familiar with the English language and do not have enough practice.’ Similarly, participants revealed that progressed learners struggle with writing essays as they are unable to interpret essay question because of their lack of understanding of the English.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Support provided to progressed learners

Data from both interviews and questionnaires suggest that there is support given to progressed learners despite the challenges. Participants reveal that they use different sources to support progressed learner’s writing skills. Moreover, participants showed that they use different resources and school support programs to support progressed learners. Abdulla et al. (2019) assert that learners should receive support from various sources, including school programmes, human interactions, materials and technological devices.

4.3.3.1 Sources of Support for Progressed Learners

Data from semi-structured interviews and open-end questionnaire revealed that teachers refer progressed learners to different sources of support. Teachers serve as the primary sources of support because they can expose progressed learners to different types of sources of support. Participants 4 and 5 revealed that senior learners and peers are used as sources of support to enhance progressed learners' English FAL writing skills.

“Seniors in the school to assist them when they seek help. I also use the peers, tutor.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

“There could be corporation between progressed and non- progressed learners meaning the promotion of them working together and teaching each other.” (P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“Group them, they must be separated from each other as progressed learners. They must sit with peers.”

(P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Additionally participant 3 revealed that the learner support agent and teachers plays a significant role in supporting progressed learners' writing skills

“In our school we do have LSA (learner support agent) is the source of support because they talk and work with them closely. Other teachers, in my school they play a vital role in supporting these learners.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Data shows that participants refer progressed learners to different sources of support. These sources include senior learners, peers, learners support agent and teachers. The theoretical framework of this study puts emphasis on collaborative writing, mediation and guidance (Vygotsky, 1979). Similarly, these sources of support ensure that learners improve their writing skills. A mentor may assist in helping the learner to work hard and realize his potential. He goes on to state that what a child can do in cooperation, the child can do alone (Vygotsky 1989, p.

189). The theory seems to suggest that mentoring is critical to improving learning in people. Writing of English FAL may be improved by assigning a mentor to progressed learners.

4.3.3.2 Available Resources

Participants revealed that there are different resources they use to support progressed learner's writing skills regardless of the fact that they are not enough. Participants revealed that they use books, charts, posters, colourful pen, chalk, board, workbooks, classwork books and exclusive books.

"I use their books mostly in the process of writing and then also I use the colourful pens."

(P1 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

"I use charts, I take old posters because our school is under resourced, we do not have those cartridge papers. So I just look for like old calendars would be nice if we had like resources I would use tablet. If we had them or a computer like it would really help them a lot, but we do not have resources so I just use posters. I expose them to these books that are for grade 1 and 2. Books that I see fitting and easy for them. I also expose them to textbooks I would take them to library and expose them to different texts." (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Additionally, participant 3 and 4 in the semi-structured interviews revealed that they use workbook, chalkboard and books to support progressed learners. Moreover, participant 5 in the semi-structured interviews revealed that cell phones are used as a way of learning.

"...our cell phones come in handy because I tell them to download a game that has words. So that they

can play with their phones to learn." (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Data reveals some resources teachers use when teaching writing to progressed learners. Despite the scarcity of resources in South African schools, teachers try to use what they have access to as teaching aids. Musitha and Mafukata (2018) affirm lack of resources prevents curriculum support as teachers might not be creative enough to work with limited resources. Mpiti (2016) adds that schools in rural areas lack learning resources to support learners in rural schools. Additionally, there are also shortages of textbooks and teachers. Despite these challenges in resources, participants revealed that they use books, charts, posters, colourful pens, chalk,

board, workbooks, classwork books and exclusive books. Moreover, Cole and Feng (2015, p. 187) write that ‘resources which enhance writing can be books that are collected and are used for summary writing.’ Mpiti (2016) and D’Angelo (2018) emphasize the effectiveness of these resources in supporting progressed learners. Furthermore, Kolobe (2019) and Yilmaz (2018) advocate for the use of technology as a means of support for these learners. Similarly, in school B learners have access to computers so they utilize them in developing their writing skills.

4.3.3.3 Support programs for progressed learners

Data from semi-structured interviews reveal that there is some support that teachers get from the schools they teach in. Ahmad et al. (2015, p 34) asserts ‘that countries such as Denmark, Finland and the US offer intensive additional support which includes pre-school programmes, early reading programmes, before and after school programmes, basic skill-building classes, and the provision of extra lessons.’ Similarly, participants revealed that there is support they get from schools, thus from the school management team and school timetable.

“We do have support from my school’s sides, because we do have a policy of homework and then we do have a code of conduct when a learner misbehaves, management if the misbehaviour is beyond our control.” (P1 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

“The school does support me like some resources that they are able to provide. So the school does provide me with transport.” (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

“The school management team sometimes if, I organize the extra class they will arrange with the scholar transport for that day to transport the learners.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

“I feel like the school has really supported us, the fact that the school was able to feature in that 45 minutes to deal with these learners. The school has set a library because the school has got a library we are taking the books from the library.” (P4 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

“...my HOD is very supportive, she empowers us in ways of dealing with the challenges that we are having. She also invites parents she empowers us in ways of dealing with the challenges that we are having. She also invites parents.” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

Data from semi-structured interviews revealed that the support program for progressed learners in grade 9 is the extra classes initiated by teachers. Participants 1, 2 and 3 from school A revealed that there are no on-going support programs except for extra classes teachers call when necessary.

“Not currently ma’am the support program but as grade 9 teacher I must see to it that I do assist these learners with my own expertise and my own experience.” (P1 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

“No specific ongoing support programme besides the teacher calling learners for extra class.” (P2 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

“No support program in my school. Just extra class.” (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

In contrast to school A, participant 4 and 5 from school B revealed that there is an on-going support program, which is a 45-minute slot that is used for remedial activities.

“...we do have the support program yes that slot that is there in the timetable which is going yearlong.”

(P4 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

“There are no specific intervention programs for grade 9 but the school timetable has an extra hour where extra time is given to subjects as I said it is the afternoon class.” (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2023)

Data revealed that participants have extra classes and give remedial activities as support for progressed learners. The data reveals that school A does not have a support extra class in the school time table, but participants call learners for extra lessons when necessary. In contrast, school B where there is an on-going support program which is a 45 minutes extra class. This extra class allows for extra teaching and remedial activities. This data is supported by the theoretical framework of this study which advocates for remedial work in agreement, Hadebe and Moosa (2022) assert that in European countries, progressed learners are supported through remedial activities, and if a learner still fails, retention is the proposed form of support. This simply means that if a learner is not sufficiently assisted by the support given to them by

teachers (which may include extra work), then that learner should repeat the grade for the second time. Other intervention programs as stated by Smith et al. (2019) are residential camps formed in Gauteng to support Grade 12 progressed learners which allow for extra work and remedial activities. These effective support programs should also be implemented in the grade 9 to ensure that progressed learners get support.

4.3.4. Theme 4: Pedagogies of teaching English FAL writing skills

Data from semi-structure and open-ended questionnaire reveal that grade 9 teachers use different approaches, methods and strategies to teach writing in an English FAL classroom with progressed learners.

4.3.4.1 Approaches in teaching writing

Data from semi-structured and open-ended questionnaire show that teachers use the process approach and scaffolding to teach writing of English FAL.

“I use of the writing process approach it breaks the writing process down into smaller, manageable steps which can be easier for students.” (P1 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“...writing process such as brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing. In this way students can apply their skills in listening, reading and language structures to process of writing.” (P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“Process writing is one of the best methods I use. I start by teaching the planning learners must first master GAPS.” (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“The teaching strategies that I use, I use scaffolding so that is how I use the scaffolding method. And also I do the writing process whereby, for example, we are writing essays or letters or any other form of transactional writing I check the planning and ask the tutors I said I assign them to assist. When I give them the topic. I teach writing by stages and code switching also helps when implementing my strategies.” (P2 Interviews, 12 September 2022)

The data revealed that participants use the process approach in teaching writing to progressed learners. This is in line with CAPS (2011) which stipulates all the steps that should be followed in the teaching of the writing process. Similarly, research conducted by Yoo (2017) and Seven (2020) revealed that the best approach for teaching writing is the process approach. The process approach is where the teacher teaches writing step by step, that is starting from planning, drafting, editing, proofreading and presenting. Mpiti (2016) also supports this notion, highlighting the benefits of teaching writing as a systematic process. In agreement, participants in this study argue that the process approach is beneficial to progressed learners as the concept of writing is broken down and learnt step by step. This suggests the writing process approach simplifies the writing, which allows for sequential instruction and scaffolding.

Moreover, data revealed that participants use scaffolding while teaching the writing process. According to Piamsai (2020) the utilization of scaffolding in the teaching of writing can be effectively implemented through a process-oriented approach, as opposed to a product-oriented approach. In agreement Boonmoh and Jumpakate (2019) states the pedagogical approach of scaffolding involves imparting knowledge through a systematic process, wherein the steps are first taught, then modeled, and subsequently, the pupils are allowed to attempt

the task independently. Additionally, Vygotsky (1979) affirms that scaffolding is whereby a teacher or peer models what is expected from a learner and once the child masters it, he can write on her own. Scaffolding encourages collaborative writing which is in line with the theoretical framework of this study which describes learning writing as a social thing. Consistent with these scholars, participants in the study revealed they use of scaffolding to support progressed learners in their English FAL writing skills. They emphasized the importance of teaching planning, using the Genre, Audience, Purpose, and Structure (GAPS) model in the teaching of writing, ensuring that learners master the planning stage before progressing further. Lin (2019) asserts that identifying the audience and purpose of writing strengthens the written piece. Therefore, these data suggest that scaffolding and good planning is an effective method to support progressed learners' writing skills.

Additionally, participants revealed that guidance and mediation is one of the approaches they use where progressed learners require a lot of mediation and guidance as compared to the non-progressed ones.

"I give more mediation and guidance to progressed learners as they struggle the most."

(P3 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"More attention and guidance I give to progressed learners as I have to break down questions so that they understand what is needed." (P4 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"I teach them pre-writing where learners are given a topic to brainstorm on then them planning, drafting, editing and revising I ask them to write first draft that I make and give feedback. The non-progressed are able to write on their own no much guidance is needed."

(P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Data revealed that teachers offer guidance and mediation to progressed learners when teaching writing skills. This is done as they use the process approach to teaching writing. Mediation and guidance is given in each step of the writing process to ensure that learners master writing. According to Vygotsky (1979), teachers are the main mediators of learning. As stated, they refer learners to other sources of support within the school. Mediation was found to be one of the most useful methods of teaching writing to progressed learners. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that guidance and mediation are additional methods employed to support progressed learners. These methods are intertwined with scaffolding, as

teachers mediate and guide learners during the scaffolding process. Vygotsky views teachers as mediators, and it is therefore appropriate for them to provide guidance and mediation when teaching writing. Fahim, Barjesteh and Vaseghi (2012), Brahmbhatt (2020), and Abdullah et al. (2019) also recommend mediation and guidance as effective strategies for supporting learners. ‘This approach encourages learner involvement, promotes collaborative writing, and facilitates the expression of creativity’ (Jacob, 2017, p. 23). This implies that during mediation and guidance, teachers work with learners, model what they are supposed to write and assist them where they find difficulties. Though this approach is useful, it can be time consuming and hard to implement in an overcrowded classroom. Moreover, participant 4 revealed that he uses the writer’s workshop approach.

“The writer’s workshop approach in which the teacher provides a writing prompt and then allows the students to spend time brainstorming, drafting and revising their work. The teacher circulates around the room providing individual feedback and support. The learning of the characteristics of different genres of writing such as poetry, short stories

Similarly to scaffolding, mediation and guidance, the writer’s workshop approach is revealed to be one of the approaches participants use in teaching writing to progressed learners. Dirgeyosa (2016) and Ntombela, Ngubane and Govender (2015) support this approach, as it allows teachers to demonstrate writing techniques to progressed learners and then provide them with the chance to write independently. This approach also encourages collaboration and peer learning in line with the theoretical framework of this study which affirms that writing can be learnt through social interactions with peers. Participants in the study expressed that they employ this approach because it enables them to guide and assist learners in writing for real-life situations. Furthermore, this approach fosters a sense of enjoyment in writing and provides learners opportunities for practice.

4.3.4.2 Methods used to teach writing in English FAL

Participants in both semi-structured and open-ended interviews show that they use different teaching methods to teach writing in a classroom with progressed learners. Participants 1 in both data sets revealed that shared writing and group guided reading

helps in helping learner's writing skills. Moreover, participant 3 in the interviews revealed that discussions amongst the group and class assist progressed learner.

"Shared writing to ensure proper pronunciation, spelling and punctuation. Group guided writing, teacher involvement in reading and writing of comprehension. Writing of the first draft etc." (P1 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"From group guided reading I use to ask them to write down what they read, what they have learnt."

(P1 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

"...is giving students time to write independently and then share their work with the class. The second one is when the teacher demonstrates good writing skills and gives studentsp4. I start by teaching the planning learners must first master GAPS." (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"We use discussion method. We make sure that we discuss the text or maybe it's a drawing or a chart we put it there and encourage them to participate in group discussion." (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022)

Data shows that participants use peers to ensure that progressed learners master their writing skills. Various methods revealed by participants are shared writing, group guided reading and discussions done in class. All these methods involve collaborative writing which is in line with the theoretical framework of this study. In agreement, Vygotsky (1978, p. 156) states that 'peers can contribute through collaborative writing, which can improve learners' writing ability.' According to Cole and Feng (2015), small groups give students more opportunities to use the first additional language for a variety of purposes than is the case with teacher-led classroom activities. Additionally, Seven (2020) states that coupled activities allow students to work together and create new information about language, resulting in more successful writing experiences. 'Through peer feedback, learners engage in critical examination of peer literature to trade support for modification,' claims Wakabayashi (2018, p. 98). This implies that the group guided writing and discussions learners do in class prepare them for individual writing. These methods are useful and promote unity amongst learners in an inclusive classroom.

4.3.4.3 Strategies of supporting progressed learners' writing skills

The present study utilizes data obtained from both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to elucidate the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers to enhance the writing proficiency of advanced learners. The data reveals that all participants adopt an integrated approach that incorporates all English First Additional Language (FAL) skills when instructing advanced learners in the art of writing in English FAL. Specifically, the participants reveal that listening, reading, and language structures can be effectively utilized as strategies to facilitate the development of English FAL writing skills among advanced learners. Integration aligns with the guidelines set forth by CAPS (2011), which assert that the four English skills should be developed in an integrated manner. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of this study confirms that language development occurs in an integrated way, as supported by Cummins (2000) and Vygotsky (1989), who posit that language acquisition begins with communication and progresses to written expression.

“I integrate their listening skills because I also ask them to write out the whole comprehension while I read it out to them, and by doing so I also improve their writing skills.”

(P3 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“When I am teaching I always integrate paper 1 questions (grammar) as I have observed that they are struggling with paper 1. I also try to infuse a bit of creative writing even when I teach literature.” (P2 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Additionally, participants revealed that developing progressed learners reading skills first can be of great assistance to their writing skills.

“I sometimes focus on developing their reading skills first. I ask them to read something daily and they write down what they have read.” (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

“...oral reading or even reading out the questions or text if the questions have texts. I also ask them to construct sentences on their own using parts of speech I give them.” (P3 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Data revealed that participants use the integrated approach to teach writing to progressed learners. Cooney, Darcy, and Casey (2018) assert that writing cannot be separated from reading, and therefore, integration between the two is essential. Learners develop their vocabulary through reading, and this vocabulary is necessary when writing. The integrative approach aligns with Cummins' theory, which posits that the development of basic communicative skills is a prerequisite for a child to acquire proficiency in writing a second language. The integrative approach leverages the learners' communicative language abilities by integrating writing with other skills and activities, thereby enhancing its relevance, importance, and interest. The current grade 9 textbooks are designed to foster links between the four skills, with topics organized thematically to encourage integration. Data revealed that progressed learners get to develop their writing skills which developing other skill. One of the participants revealed that paper 1 which focuses on language is integrated with writing as the knowledge of language structures and conventions are highly need in writing.

Moreover, one common strategy amongst participants is that of extra classes. Participants revealed that they group learners during extra lessons and give them extra work. Participants further revealed that they encourage teamwork amongst learners as a way of helping progressed learners.

"I have to mix them amongst other learners." (P1 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"I treat them equally so that they do not feel inferior from those who were promoted so I treat them equally and I always encourage them to study and I always motivate. I group them into small groups and give them a task." (P3 Interviews, 9 November 2022) "I think that having practical example and having them to be the ones doing the teaching most of the time, and having them to plan for." (P3 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

"So you have to pay attention to their feelings, how will they feel? I group my learners by mixing them according to their academic intelligence. Also the mentors in those groups become group leaders. I also make sure that my progress learners do not feel inferior during my lessons. As a result, I assign tasks to them." (P5 Interviews, 9 November 2022) "I guide them. I sometimes call them for extra-classes of which not all of the progressed learners attend such classes." (P5 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023) "...support them by giving extra work, I also tutor to assist them with the work I give. I give books to read." (P2 Questionnaire, 12 September 2023)

Similarly, to the methods used in teaching writing, participants emphasise the importance of collaborative work; as it equips the learners for individual activities. Participants revealed that they group learners and give them work, this allows learners to practice what they were taught and be able to teach each other. Moreover, Seven (2020) affirms that group work and peer learning allow learners to support each other, with more advanced writers assisting those who struggle. Participants in the study paired progressed learners with non-progressed learners to provide assistance, which aligns with the observations of Vuzo (2017), Seven (2020), and Vygotsky (1989). Peer feedback also plays a crucial role in assisting learners with writing difficulties, as noted by Wakabayashi (2018). Participants in the study reported that progressed learners produce better-written pieces when writing with a peer than individually. Therefore, it can be concluded that assistance from peers can significantly improve writing outcomes for struggling learners.

4.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings are drawn from the analysed data from semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. They are informed by the research questions and objectives stated in the first chapter of this dissertation. The key findings of this study are as follows:

- Stakeholders' understanding of roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the progression policy is key
- Language skills development needs to be enhanced.
- Progressed learners' low levels of competency in essay writing need attention.
- Providing support to progressed learners should be prioritised.
- The use of collaborative teaching strategies facilitates the inclusion of progressed learners in English FAL classrooms.

4.5.1 Stakeholders' understanding of roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the progression policy is key

The findings of this study revealed that it is vital for every stakeholder involved in the implementation of the progression policy to know their roles and responsibilities. The key stakeholders stipulated in the progression policy are the department of education, school management, teachers and the parents. Moagi (2020) affirms that the SBST committee is

made up of parents, school management and teachers; to ensure that the progression policy is implemented correctly. The findings of this study revealed many challenges in the implementation of the progression policy, which in turn shaped the perceptions of participants regarding the policy. Although the DBE has created a guideline to guide schools in the implementation of the progression policy, it appears that there is no clear understanding of this policy. This study reveals that teachers and education stakeholders have different understandings about the key principles of the progression policy. This suggests that there is a need for teachers to be educated more about what this policy entails and their role in the implementation of the policy. In that way even the debates around progression policy could be addressed (Ramputla, 2020).

For example, criticisms of the progression policy include the fact that promoting learners who do not have reading skills is setting them up for failure as they continue to fall behind academically (Phala, 2022). Moreover, Aguilar, Cale and Nevenglosky (2019) argue that progression does not have the potential to fully support learners with learning challenges or supply appropriate answers to learning issues and low performance because the strategy has a number of disadvantages. Thus, learners who do not get the support stipulated by the progression policy become progressively more disadvantaged in their learning, which leads to learner dropouts. The study has also shown that there are no SBST committees in participating schools. Instead, the responsibility of implementing the progression policy falls on the class teacher and the school management. If the progression policy was properly implemented, schools would have functional SBST committees. The evidence is that the department of education does not effectively monitor the implementation of the policy (Grossen, Grobler and Lacante, 2017). In addition, Moagi (2020) states that before a learner progresses, the parent should be called to a meeting to endorse the progression and recommendations can be made to the parent on how to support the progressed. However, data suggests that parents do not engage in any discussions about progressing a learner.

Participants in this research revealed that they do not receive any support from the department of education in the implementation of the progression policy in grade 9. Specifically, the lack a subject advisor who can equip them with effective methods and strategies to support progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. The findings of this study align with the existing literature, as participants disclosed that the progression policy is poorly implemented. This suggests that the department of education fails to demonstrate support

for teachers who teach grade 9 and does not fulfill the claims made by Motshekga (2017) that the implementation of the progression policy would be closely monitored. Systemic issues such as overcrowding, teachers' overload, lack of training and lack of time to provide more support also contribute to implementation challenges. One would wonder how the department of education addresses these challenges to ensure that progressed learners get academic support. It is therefore important that the department of education monitors the implementation of the progression policy to ensure that no learner moves to the next grade without getting academic support.

4.5.2 Language skills development needs to be enhanced

Data shows that progressed learners English FAL competency is very low, hence findings reveal that teaching language skills need to be enhanced. English is used as a language of teaching and learning in South African schools from Grade 4 to 12, and therefore it is fundamental for comprehension and the ability to answer questions in all other subjects. As part of the, failure to master writing in English leads to failure in other subjects (Moses and Mohamad, 2019). Hence, English FAL develops the four skills of reading, writing, listening and mastering language conventions (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement Grade 7 to 9, 2011). The intention is to ensure that learners perform well in all subjects taught in English.

Findings from this study reveal that progressed learners lack basic skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. As a result, these skills need to be taught and enhanced as they are foundational to the learning of language. Moreover, according to the DBE (2016, p. 10), 'A good command of vocabulary and grammar provides the framework for skills development (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in the First Additional Language.' To make a critical assessment of their own and other writers' texts for meaning, usefulness and accuracy, learners must investigate how language is used and then establish a shared language for discussing language (a 'meta language'). In addition, they should be given opportunities to experiment with language to develop meaning (from word and sentence level to entire texts), and to understand the relationship between a text and its setting. These skills are interdependent. They operate together to assist learners to develop their English as a second language. However, in this study there is evidence that progressed learners are not meeting these expectations. Specifically, their writing skills are hindered by their inability to read and speak in English.

4.5.3 Progressed learners' low levels of competency in essay writing need attention

In this study, it was found that progressed learners' competency is influenced by the expected level of English FAL competency in grade 9, their level of proficiency and challenging aspects of progressed learners writing skills. The findings suggest that being competent in writing English is a general challenge amongst learners, but the situation is exacerbated when it comes to progressed learners because they are far below the expected level of competency. Findings revealed that progressed learners struggle with English FAL essay writing. Participants disclosed that progressed learners' essay writing skills are influenced by their inability to construct English sentences, spelling errors, incorrect grammar, punctuation, and limited vocabulary. These findings align with the observations made by Gardner (2021) and Bacon (2017) regarding poor writing skills and incorrect paragraph structure.

In addition, the cognitive demands of a language are highlighted by Cummins (2001) four quadrants in which writing falls in the fourth quadrant. In the fourth quadrant, the text is high context reduced and there is also high cognitive demand. These quadrants highlight the learning process, where ability in the fourth quadrant is developed at school. Therefore, learners should be supported in order to master writing. Frequently, when writing an essay a learner is just given a topic which needs to be unpacked and comprehend to write a well-structured essay. Unlike in a listening comprehension, where answers are text-based writing requires a high level of thinking hence it falls under the fourth quadrant, which is cognitive demanding. Writing challenges the creativity of a learner. The learner has to think critically about what written piece to write and how to write it. When writing a learner must have prior knowledge of the structure of what is written, be able to remember and apply that knowledge in a creative manner, hence writing falls under the fourth quadrant.

Sebetao (2016) and Mpiti (2016) concur that rural learners' lack of exposure to English at an early age contributes to their low language proficiency. By contrast, participants in this study reported that progressed learners struggle to speak English and comprehend instructions, which hinders their writing abilities. This aligns with Brutt-Giffler and Cho's research in Korea, where learners struggled to answer English FAL questions due to a lack of understanding. Netshipe, Madima, and Makananise (2022) also observed poor foundational skills in learners who cannot speak English. Overall, the study suggests that grade 9 learners fall short of the expected level of competency, especially in essay writing.

4.3.4 Providing support to progressed learners should be prioritized

Findings suggest that support to grade 9 English FAL learners should be prioritized. Participants complained that priority is given to grade 12s and Mathematics, with less support given to grade 9 progressed learners. Moreover, the progression policy emphasizes support that should be given to all progressed learners. This support should be in the form of remedial activities which help in bridging the content gap learner might have. This study reveals that there are support challenges as much as progressed learners are provided support and can access available resources. However, access to support and available resources was not consistent across schools. This suggests that there is a lack of equality in the two schools, similarly to the rest of the country. The other one has resources and the other one lacks resources. However, regardless of the challenges, teachers still find some sources of support for progressed learners.

Findings suggest that teachers refer progressed learners to peers, parents, senior teachers, and learner support agents as sources of support. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Yaafouri (2019), Ngoepe (2016), and Vygotsky (1989), who emphasize the importance of utilizing parents and peers to enhance learners' writing skills. Additionally, these researchers highlight that parents when they are involved in their children's education can provide emotional support to progressed learners. In this study participants also revealed that learners are referred to learner support agents for further assistance, and peer groups are utilized for support. Despite the challenges associated with referring learners for support or exposing them to support sources, these teachers still find ways to support progressed learners' writing skills. Furthermore, findings suggest that participants use extra classes and remedial period to support progressed learners. However, participants revealed that these programs are limited in grade 9 but are more in grade 12. In agreement, Ngoepe (2016) and Smith et al. (2019), found that residential camps programs, second chance programs are an effective support strategy used in grade 12.

However, participants revealed that School A does not have a school support program except for extra classes they conduct. They revealed that these extra classes are challenged by a lack of transport needed for learners to attend the extra class. However, School B has implemented a 45-minute program for remedial work. Hadebe and Moosa (2022) and Lamont (2020) concur that remedial activities are essential for supporting learners with content gaps.

Moreover, participants suggest findings suggest that focus is on grade 12 progressed learners and those in lower grades receive less attention.

The study found that teachers employ various strategies to support progressed learners' English FAL writing skills, in addition to teaching methods. These strategies include remedial work, extra classes, the development of reading and code switching. The effectiveness of these strategies is supported by research conducted in Denmark, Fenlands, and by Mapolisa et al. (2016) where progressed learners are introduced to early reading programs and are further given remedial activities. Hadebe and Moosa (2022) also advocate that teachers should give learners remedial activities. Moreover, participants in this study confirmed the usefulness of these strategies, despite the challenges they face.

Despite the challenges of the shortage of resources, this study reveals that there are resources available to teachers which they expose progressed learners to as sources of support. These resources include reading books, posters, workbooks, class workbooks, and even cellphones. In this study, participants in school A revealed that they do not have a computer lab and a library. In contrast, School B has both a library and a computer lab, which participants in the study revealed they use as sources of support for progressed learners. Despite the challenges in accessing resources, participants in the study try to utilize the resources available to them to support grade 9 English FAL learners.

4.3.5 The use of collaborative teaching approaches and methods facilitates inclusive practices

In this study various teaching approaches and methods to support progressed learners were used. Approaches include the process approach, the writer's workshop approach, team teaching and the integrated approach. Methods used to teach learners are shared writing, peer learning, group guided writing and group guided reading. In these classrooms progressed learners are not taught separately from non-progressed learners, hence the used of collaborative approaches and methods. The process approach underscores the notion of writing as a means of problem-solving, with a focus on the thought process. This is consistent with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) of 2011, which advocates for the teaching of writing in a process-oriented manner. This approach is conducive to advanced learners, as it prioritizes the mastery of

the initial stages of writing before progressing to the final stages. Participants might have used this approach since it is stipulated in the CAPS document.

Additionally, in this study findings revealed that teachers utilize the teaching approach known as writer's workshop to support progressed learners writing skills. These findings indicate that progressed learners should not solely write for assessment purposes, but also write for real-world contexts. This study also demonstrates that grade 9 English teachers use the integrated approach as a means of supporting progressed learners' writing skills. The integration approach proves effective for scaffolding, as Marshall (2016) advocates for the consideration of prior knowledge when teaching writing to progressed learners. This study also reveals that participants integrate reading, listening, and language structures in teaching writing, although progressed learners needed a lot of foundational skills as they were not well developed in previous grades. Cummins (2021) further suggests that the learners' native language can be integrated when teaching first additional language writing skills, as the skills developed in the home language are transferable. This implies that English teachers can utilize learners' home language as a foundation for acquiring the additional language.

The study's findings further indicate that teachers use various teaching methods to support the development of writing skills in progressed learners. These methods encompass scaffolding, guidance and mediation, discussion, differentiation, group work, and peer learning. These findings are grounded in the theoretical framework of the study, which emphasizes the acquisition of language through social interactions. Scholars such as Vygotsky (1989) and Cummins (2000) concur that language learning occurs through social interaction and builds upon a child's existing knowledge of their home language. Mediation refers to humans intentionally inserting items between their environment and themselves so that they can modify it and gain specific understanding (Vygotsky, 1979). This simply means that mediation is a strategy whereby a more knowledgeable person assists the less knowledgeable in mastering something. Moreover, Abdullah et al. (2019) define mediation as a process where a learner is exposed to things that will assist the learner in acquiring knowledge. Participants in the study revealed that progressed learners require more guidance and mediation compared to non-progressed learners, and this method assists teachers in supporting their progress. Despite time constraints, participants acknowledged the significant benefits of this method.

Additionally, the findings indicate that collaborative writing, through discussion, group work, and peer learning, is an effective method for teaching writing to learners who have writing difficulties. Previous research by Berggren (2019), Jacob (2017), and Rafi et al. (2015) supports this claim. Additionally, shared reading was also identified as a strategy to support progressed learners in both reading and writing, in line with Cooney, Darcy, and Cosey's (2018) assertion that the two skills are interconnected. This is similar to the integrated approach revealed by participants. Reading plays a crucial role in developing learners' vocabulary, spelling, and grammar, which are mostly needed when writing. Additionally, guided reading was identified as one of the ways of supporting progressed learner's writing skills. Literature clearly states that writing can be separated from reading. A learner can learn reading from the peer and later be able to read independently, which will therefore develop his writing skills. Findings of this study address critical issues imposed by the progression policy and if attention be paid to these issues, then there would be a smooth implementation of the progression policy. Moreover, this study emphasizes the importance of supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills as writing is a complex and yet important skill.

4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

Data indicate that supporting progressed learners' writing skills is subjected to many challenges for teachers. Participants try to overcome these challenges by providing ideas and examples that can be used in similar contexts. The progression policy and its requirements is not well understood by teachers and school management. The policy itself is also lacking in sufficient concrete guidance for teachers and schools. The participants support the intent of the policy but see numerous problems with the implementation of progression given the realities of life on the ground in South African schools. So much so that the policy appears to have failed.

The challenges identified by the participants include: huge classes making it extremely difficult to give individual attention to the needs of the progressed learners; insufficient time in the scheduled lesson time to teach these large classes of progressed and non-progressed learners and attend to the needs of progressed learners; the progressed learners come with many serious language knowledge and skill gaps that require considerable work by both teacher and students; they also identified a serious motivation problem with many progressed learners who in part due to their own lack of confidence but also other factors often mean they

are not giving the needed attention to their work; related to this the participants point to the very limited and often complete absence of parental support and monitoring of progressed learner's work; and at the school level the participants point to limited or no monitoring of progressed learners, and at the district or regional level no workshops for teachers to educate and support their efforts and no material or human resources are made available to support this huge teaching and learning task of assisting and motivating progressed learners in grade 9.

However, the study reveals that despite these huge obstacles the teachers reported a quite remarkable array of actions they have been taking to try to assist progressed learners as best they can. In this study various teaching approaches, methods and strategies were employed by these teachers to support the development of writing skills in progressed learners. Their approaches include: the process approach, the writer's workshop approach, and the integrated approach. The methods used encompassed scaffolding, guidance and mediation, discussion, differentiation, group work, and peer learning. The findings suggest that stakeholders' understanding of roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the progression policy is key for successful implementation of the policy. Furthermore, progressed learners' language skills development needs to be enhanced as they are far below the expected grade 9 level of competency. Moreover, this study found that providing support to progressed learners should be prioritized, and collaborative teaching strategies should facilitate the inclusion of progressed learners in an English FAL classroom.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the analysis of data and discussion of findings. In this chapter I start by presenting a summary of the study followed by how data answered my research questions. Lastly, I discuss the limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. The main research question was identified as follows:

- What are the experiences of Grade 9 English FAL teachers in supporting the writing skills of progressed learners?

I formulated three sub-questions as follows:

- What challenges do Grade 9 English FAL teachers experience when teaching English FAL in a classroom with progressed learners?
- What are the perspectives of Grade 9 English FAL teachers concerning progressed learners' writing skills in English FAL?
- Which strategies do Grade 9 English teachers implement in their classrooms to support progressed learners?

In achieving this aim, I adopted an interpretive research paradigm to gain understanding of some of the subjective experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. I underpinned this research by a phenomenology research design which allowed me to get the experiences of grade 9 English teachers. The theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study were drawn from Cummins' and Vygotsky's theories of language learning. Data were collected from 5 grade 9 English teachers that were purposefully selected from two schools in the Chris Hani district of the Eastern Cape, South

Africa. All the participants had experience of teaching English FAL writing skills to progressed learners, hence they were found relevant for this study. The study design was preapproved by the appropriate UNISA research ethics committee (UNISA, 2014). After identifying the participants, I sought permission to conduct this study from the Eastern Cape department of education (see appendix A). After permission was granted, participants signed a consent form as an agreement to participate in the study (see appendix D). In this qualitative study, data were collected using semi-structured face to face individual interviews (see appendix F) and an open-ended questionnaire (see appendix G). The collected data were analysed through thematic data analysis (see appendix I and J) where data were coded, categorized, and grouped and allocated to 4 themes. I identified the following themes.

- Theme 1 -Teachers' perceptions of the progression policy.
- Theme 2 – Challenging aspects English FAL writing.
- Theme 3 – Support provided to progressed learners.
- Theme 4 – Pedagogy of Teaching English FAL writing skills.

The reporting, analysis, and discussion of these themes was continuously linked to and based on the literature review and the two theoretical frameworks of this study. All of which underlined and explained that writing is a complex set of skills that requires learners to be supported to master the skills. The findings suggest that stakeholders' understanding of roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the progression policy is key for successful implementation of the policy. Furthermore, progressed learners' language skills development needs to be enhanced as they are far below the expected grade 9 level of competency. Moreover, this study found that providing support to progressed learners should be prioritized, and collaborative teaching strategies should facilitate the inclusion of progressed learners in English FAL classrooms. I then summarized and concluded my study by giving the recommendation for further research.

5.3 ANSWERING MY RESEARCH QUESTION

As stated above the main research question of this study was: What are the experiences of Grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills?

Grade 9 English FAL teachers described their experiences in supporting progressed learners' writing skills in various ways:

First, the teachers have a positive view of the intent of the progression policy, even though they had a limited knowledge of the detail of the policy. They pointed to gaps in the policy, the main one being the absence of sufficient detail on how to implement the policy in the schools and classrooms. The teachers were not trained on the implementation of the policy, hence the limited understanding of the policy.

Second, they experience numerous obstacles when trying to support progressed learners' English FAL writing skills, to the extent that the success of the policy is seriously in question. Teachers report that they experience considerable hardship when supporting progressed learners' writing skills because progressed learners come to them with far below the expected level of competency of a grade 9 learner. The progressed learners have difficulties in spelling, a lack of vocabulary and problems with grammar usage. Moreover, rural progressed learners have challenges with speaking and understanding English and that affects their English FAL writing skills. Also, South African schools have long faced overcrowding even before the introduction of the progression policy. The teachers report that in the context of excessively large classes, consisting of unstreamed progressed and non-progressed learners, and the limited time of lessons, they cannot give attention to the learners who struggle with their writing skills. Teachers have trouble in supporting progressed learners in an inclusive classroom due to the overcrowding. The teachers feel that many progressed learners show a lack of motivation and so often do not attend extra classes because they have already given up.

Third, the experience of the teachers on the ground is a lack of the needed support from the school boards and the Department of Education to make the progression policy work. While the grade 9 English teachers reported concrete support from the school administration in one of the 2 school, the teachers felt that there was insufficient support from the school boards for the policy. The schools do not have School Based Support Teams to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of the progression policy contributing to the poor implementation of the policy. The experience of the teachers is that the department of education structures above the school level provide no or little support for the needs of the teachers and the progression policy in the form of material and human resources, training, and recognition of the hugely negative consequences of excessively large classes for supporting progressed learners, to make the policy work. Furthermore, the perception among the teachers is that the

department of education only pays attention to the grade 12s, ignoring the lower grades where foundations are meant to be laid.

Fourth, but despite these challenges and obstacles, these teachers show a remarkable array of classroom practices to support of these learners as best they can. Their approaches included: the process approach, the writer's workshop approach, the communicative approach, and the integrated approach. Among these approaches, the teachers found the process writing approach to be more effective in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. They felt its feature of also referring progressed learners to their peers for assistance and support in writing, had a positive effect. The methods used encompassed scaffolding, guidance and mediation, discussion, differentiation, group work, and peer learning. There was some use of remedial work during extra classes, and developing progressed learners' reading skills, and the use of code-switching.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focused on the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills. This study implies that writing is a critical skill that needs learners to be supported in order to master it. Cummins' and Vygotsky's theories underpin this study and show that as much as writing is a critical skill but with proper support and teaching strategies, progressed learners can master the skill. Different methodologies should be used when teaching writing in order to cater for progressed learners who need attention and remedial activities. This study further emphasises the importance of correct implementation of the progression policy so that only the eligible learners are progressed with support. The department of basic education needs to put in place monitoring strategies so that the policy can be implemented correctly.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the experiences of grade 9 English FAL teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. There are three main limitations of this study: Time was the biggest limitation to this study; hence the study is limited to only two schools in one district. The study was done on a limited budget. I could not reach schools that are far away but had to choose schools that were within my affordable accessibility. The study was further limited only to Grade 9 English FAL teachers in two rural Eastern Cape schools. The findings have limitations as they are specific to the context and cannot be extended to various other scenarios. They can

only be applied to schools facing similar issues in comparable settings. In addition, the results cannot be considered representative of the only experiences of English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following recommendations are based on the research findings as presented in Chapter 4.

5.6.1 Recommendations for the Department of Basic Education

The Department of Education should have workshops where the implementers of the progression policy will be trained on the implementation and understanding of the progression policy at the school and classroom and lesson levels, considering the realities of their large classes. The department should further ensure that each school has a functional School Based Support team made up of teachers and parents. Proper monitoring of the implementation of the policy should be done by the department to ensure that a learner does not move to the next grade without bridging the content gap. The GET phase should also be prioritized as the foundation of writing English is essential because English is a subject that is used across the curriculum. The department should not only support and monitor grade 12 progressed learners but also the ones in the lower grades should be monitored and supported to produce literate learners. A subject advisor should be employed to support teachers as they support progressed learners. Moreover, the policy on inclusive education should be reviewed as these schools in the rural areas revealed challenges imposed by these policies. School libraries should be revamped, and resources should be delivered to schools in rural areas. Additionally, reading should be considered when progressing a learner. A learner who cannot read should not be progressed as reading cannot be separated from writing and learning.

5.6.2 Recommendations for grade 9 English teachers

It is recommended that grade 9 English teachers read the progression policy and know all the principles the policy poses. Furthermore, they should try to stream learners according to their abilities. This will allow teachers to find more time to practice differentiation, where learners are given individual attention. Furthermore, teachers should promote the speaking of English FAL to develop the communicative skills of learners. Practice is a key to gaining fluency in any language. They should promote remedial work and continue with their teaching strategies

of supporting progressed learners. Grade 9 English FAL learners should be exposed to reading campaigns and reading clubs to develop their reading skills which will help in the development of their writing skills.

5.6.3 Recommendations to parents

Parents should be actively involved in their children's schooling. This has been shown the world over to be vital to their success at school. This should be done by all parents even the ones who are illiterate, who can and should encourage their children to do their school work and find someone to assist the child. Parents should visit the school and discuss the child's performance with the teacher and not wait until reports are issued.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The focus of this research was to investigate the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners writing skills. It was limited to just two schools in the Chris Hani East district, hence it would be proper to do a similar study in another part of South Africa. Furthermore, there is still very limited research on progressed learners in South Africa, so some comprehensive research and analysis is needed to see whether the progression policy is serving its purpose or not. Moreover, there is a need to check what can be done to get schools and the department of education to engage more in the support programs for progressed learners, as envisaged by the policy.

5.8 CONCLUSION

This phenomenological study revealed the experiences of grade 9 English teachers as support progressed learners' English FAL writing skills as challenging. This view is supported by the fact that teachers experience implementation and support challenges, and these challenges affect how they view the progression policy. Moreover, the challenging aspects of English FAL to progressed learners contribute to their poor level of competency. This study gave an insight into the importance of supporting progressed learners to improve their writing skills. Various sources of support, teaching approaches and strategies to be used to support progressed learners are revealed in this study. It can be concluded that the progression policy needs proper monitoring across all grades and support should be given to bridge the content gap in progressed learners and ensure their level of competency meets the requirements of the next grade. The

roles and responsibilities of stakeholders should be clearly stated to ensure the smooth implementation of the progression policy. This study further puts an emphasis on the importance of providing support to progressed learners and using collaborative teaching strategies to enhance writing of English FAL by progressed learners.

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER FROM EC DEP.OF EDUCATION



Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION



CORPORATE PLANNING, MONITORING, POLICY AND RESEARCH COORDINATION
Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex, Zone 6 Zwelitsha, 5608, Private Bag X0032, Bhisho, 5605 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA:
Enquiries: Ms. F. Pakade Tel: 040 608 7170/4001 . Fax :040 608 4372. Email: fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za
Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za Date: 29 August 2022

Mrs. Luyanda Buti
No.3 Kiwane Street Kidds Beach
Kidds Beach
East London
5200

Dear Mrs. Buti

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS RESEARCH: EXPERIENCES OF GRADE 9 TEACHERS IN SUPPORTING PROGRESSED LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

1. Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research involving two (02) Senior Secondary schools in Chris Hani East 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 seek parent's consent for minors;
 - d. it is not going to interrupt educators' time and task;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;
 - f. the research may not be conducted during official contact time, provided that an arrangement to do research at the school including getting inside a classroom has been arranged and agreed upon in writing with the Principal and the affected teacher/s;
 - g. 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;
 - h. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;



Customer care line: 086 063 8636
Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za





- i. 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: Corporate Strategy Management;
 - j. 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;
 - k. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary;
 - l. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management upon completion of your research;
 - m. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you;
 - n. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form);
 - o. You submit on a six-monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Corporate Strategy Management.
2. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there be non-compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE and/or legal requirements to do so.
 3. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
 4. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Mrs. Fundiswa Pakade on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email fundiswa.pakade@ecdoe.gov.za should you need any assistance.

T. MASOEU
CHIEF DIRECTOR: CORPORATE STRATEGY MANAGEMENT
FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2022/05/11

Ref: 2022/05/11/67130186/02/AM

Dear Mrs L Buti

Name: Mrs L Buti

Student No.:67130186

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2022/05/11 to 2025/05/11

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs L Buti
E-mail address: 67130186@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 071 024 5102

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof N.N. Mdzanga
E-mail address: Nokhanyo.Mdzanga@mandela.ac.za
Telephone: 073 905 1308

Title of research:

**Experiences of Grade 9 teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills
in English First additional language**

Qualification: MEd Curriculum 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 2022/05/11 to 2025/05/11.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2022/05/11 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 will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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3. 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.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2025/05/11**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number 2022/05/11/67130186/02/AM should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof Mpine Makoe
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN
qakisme@unisa.ac.za

 Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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Editing Certificate

17 November 2023

Thesis Author

Luyanda Buti

Thesis Title

Experiences of Grade 9 teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills in English first additional language.

This certificate serves to confirm that the aforementioned thesis was edited and proofread by an English first language and experienced South African thesis editor, Robert L. Kraft.

We guarantee the correctness of the English language of the text and have checked and corrected all identified language or typographical errors. Where we felt items of content were unclear suggestions were made to the author. The references were also checked, and the author was notified of any that were not also included in the reference list. The Harvard referencing style was applied. It was the responsibility of the author to either accept or reject our suggested corrections or points for clarification.

A review by the author of the reference corrections we have identified will be done over the coming two days and we will do a final check of these on receipt of her additions.

Yours sincerely



Robert L. Kraft - BA, BA Hon., PGCE, MSc

APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER

Date: 14 /02/2022

Title: EXPERIENCES OF GRADE 9 TEACHERS IN SUPPORTING PROGRESSED LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Luyanda Buti and I am doing research under the supervision of Mdzanga Nokhanyo, a Professor in the Department of education towards a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled STRATEGIES GRADE 9 TEACHERS EMPLOY TO SUPPORT PROGRESSED LEARNERS WITH ENGLISH AS FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE WRITING DIFFICULTIES.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could help English teachers support progressed learners with English writing challenges. Through this data the department of education would get feedback one whether teachers understand the implementation of the progression policy or not.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited because you are a grade 9 English teacher, who deals with progressed leaners and you can have a lot of useful information which talks to the title of this study. I obtained your contact details from the principal of your school. You are one of the 10 teachers who will be participating in this study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

Your role is to answer questions from semi – structured interviews. The interviews will be recorded and follow up questions will be asked where necessary. The interview schedule is attached in this consent letter. You will participate in this study until it is completed. I will visit you t school during break for one hour for 5 days.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

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.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give.

Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. If relevant, identify who will have access to the data and how these individuals will maintain confidentiality. *Please note that confidentiality agreements should be submitted to the Research Ethics Review Committee for consideration*]. Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in Cofimvaba or future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL

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

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Luyanda Buti on 071 024 5102 or email liabona9@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for five years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Buti L. @ 071 024 5102 or email@ liabona9@gmail.com and should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Mdzanga @ 073 905 1308.

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

Luyanda

APPENDIX E: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY Return slip



I, ____ (participant 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 semi-structured interviews and providing the researcher with learner's scripts.

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

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

Participant Signature Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

Researcher's signature Date

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Teacher's Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. The purpose of the study is to explore your experiences of teaching progressed learners and how you support their writing skills in English FAL. There are no right or wrong answers

This study aims to answer the following research question (RSQ)-:

1. Major Research Question

What are the experiences of grade 9 English FAL teachers in supporting the writing skills of progressed learners?

Research sub-questions:

What supportive environment do teachers provide for progressed learners during the teaching of English FAL writing curriculum?

Which teaching strategies do grade 9 teachers use to improve progressed learners' English FAL writing skills?

What sources of support do teachers expose progressed learners to in order to improve their writing skills provided to them?

General questions

What is your understanding of the progression policy?

Do you have learners who are progressed in your English FAL class? How many? What is your perception regarding the progressed learners?

How does the progression policy affect grade 9 learners' English FAL performance? Which teaching material do you use when teaching writing?

What challenges do you experience with progressed learners when teaching English FAL?

RSQ1: What do teachers experience in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills? What support strategies do you have for progressed learners.

What are your experiences in implementing these strategies?

What challenges do you experience with progressed learners when teaching English FAL?

What internal (school) issues contribute to the challenge of teaching writing skills to progressed learners in your classroom?

What external (home, government, policy etc) contribute to the challenge of teaching writing skills to progressed learners in your classroom?

How does the school support you when facing these challenges?

What support is given by the department of education in ensuring that grade 9 teachers support progressed learners?

RSQ2: What supportive environment do teachers provide for progressed learners during the teaching of English FAL writing curriculum?

How do you promote class discussion and peer interaction in your classroom especially that you have progressed and non-progressed learners during your teaching of writing skills?

How do you maintain a learning environment that is not exclusionary to progressed learners? What activities do you prepare for your lesson to accommodate progressed learners?

RSQ3: Which teaching strategies do grade 9 teachers use to improve progressed learners' English FAL writing skills?

How do you implement your teaching strategies? What activities do you give progressed learners?

What challenges do you face when implementing these strategies? How do you overcome those challenges?

RSQ4: What sources of support do grade 9 English teachers provide to progressed learners?

Writing is a difficult skill for all learners, how do you help progressed learners to catch up with those who are promoted?

Do you have a support programme or intervention strategy for such learners in your school?

What sources of support do you expose progressed learners to in order to improve their English FAL writing skills?

Which resources do you refer progressed learners to, as a way of supporting them?

How do you ensure that progressed learners get the maximum support when it comes to writing skills in English?

Concluding question

Anything else that you would like to share regarding your experiences of teaching progressed learners and how you support them to write better in English?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

APPENDIX G: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

TITLE: EXPERIENCES OF GRADE 9 ENGLISH TEACHERS IN SUPPORTING PROGRESSED LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' writing skills. This open-ended questionnaire is used to provide data on the challenges experienced by teachers when teaching English FAL to progressed learners and also provide data on the perspectives of grade 9 English FAL teachers concerning progressed learners writing skills in English FAL. Data acquired from this questionnaire will be used in a research project in fulfilment of a Master's degree in Education at University of South Africa.

Dear participant

I invite you to participate in this study by responding to the questions provided in this questionnaire. Your name will not be used to identify the person who has responded to the questionnaire. Please complete this questionnaire within three days and return it back to the researcher. **The main research question of this study is; what are the experiences of grade 9 English teachers in supporting progressed learners' English FAL writing skills? The main focus of this open-ended is to gather data which talks to the sub questions of this study. Section A is based on the perspective of grade 9 English teachers concerning progressed learners writing skills and section B is based on the challenges teachers experience when teaching writing to progressed learners. Lastly section C is based on the strategies Grade 9 English teachers implement in their classrooms to support progressed learners. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.**

1. SECTION A: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

1.1 According to your experience, how can you describe your progressed learners' level of English FAL writing skills?

When giving creative writing assessment to learners in your class, which questions do your progressed learners find challenging? For an example questions that require analysing, recalling, listing in order to produce a written text.

According to your view, which aspects of writing (essay, longer transactional text and shorter transactional text) do you find easy or challenging for learners in your class including progressed learners?

Comment on how well your progressed learners can speak English and how their level of fluency affects their creative writing in English FAL.

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Given the fact that the first language learners learn is the home language , in your view, what do you think is the contribution of your progressed learners' home language in the learning of writing English FAL?

1.6 In every subject there is a level of competency that is attached to a particular grade, for an example in grade one learners are expected to know parts of speech, present and past tense as well as simple sentence construction. According to your knowledge of the Curriculum Assessment Policy statement, what level of English proficiency (language skills and expertise) is expected from a grade 9 learner?

Section B: CHALLENGES TEACHERS EXPERIENCE

2.1 What do you view as challenges when teaching writing in a classroom with progressed learners?

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2.2 Comment on the challenges you encounter when supporting your learner's writing skills, especially the progressed ones.

2.3 In your view, what do you think teachers could do to support progressed learners in their teaching of English FAL, given the fact that they are also in a classroom with non-progressed learners?

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3. SECTION C: STRATEGIES

According to your view which teaching methods do you think are appropriate for teaching writing in a classroom with progressed learners?

With reference to your experiences, how do you integrate other skills developed in English FAL (listening, reading and language structures) to enhance the teaching writing to your learners and those that are progressed?

According to your experience which teaching approaches do you think are suitable for teaching creative writing to your learners including those that are progressed?

3.4. When you teach, for example, an essay, how much mediation and guidance do you provide to progressed learners compared to non-progressed learners?

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3.5 Comment on how you support your grade 9 progressed learners so that they master the writing of English FAL.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRECIOUS TIME

APPENDIX H: TURN IT IN REPORT

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APPENDIX I: STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS ANALYSIS

Questions	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Participant's profile	<p>ATr1 is teaching English grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 at School A. She has 22 years overall teaching experience and she has been teaching English in grade 9 for 5 years. She has an Advanced diploma in Maths and Science but is currently teaching English.</p>	<p>ATr2 is currently teaching English grade 8 up to grade 12 in School A. She has a Bachelor of Education obtained at the university of Fort Hare majoring in English and History. She has 6 years of experience. Currently she is doing her masters in Management and Leadership at university of Fort Hare.</p>	<p>ATr3 is a Grade 9A English teacher at School A. He has a Bachelor of Education, major subjects are History and English. He has 1 year teaching experience.</p>	<p>BTr1 is an English FAL teacher for grade 9 and grade 12. He has 9 years of teaching experience. He has a Bachelor of Education, major subjects are English and IsiXhosa</p>	<p>BTr2 is teaching grade 9, 11 and grade 12 English. She has been teaching for 5 years. She has a Bachelor of Education, her majors are English and Geography but for the past 5 years; she has been teaching English so her focus is solely English.</p>

<p>What do you understand about the progression policy?</p>	<p>Yes, I so understand the requirements that are required for a learner to progress to the next grade. Now in grade nine a learner must not repeat a grade twice, must repeat a grade once and then progress to another grade. And a parent is made aware of a learner, which is going to progress to the next grade.</p>	<p>My understanding of the progression policy is that, a learner is not allowed or cannot be allowed to repeat a phase twice. So for example, if a learner at GET phase, for example, if a learner failed in grade 7 that learner cannot be able or should not fail grade 8 and 9. They should be progressed to the next grade. If they failed grade 8 for example, they cannot repeat grade 9 as they have failed before. So they have to be progressed to the next class. The people that are responsible for the progression policy are the class managers. So the class managers of the GET phase will get together and then workout on who gets promoted to the next grade or</p>	<p>According to my understanding, the progression policy was a policy that was introduced by the department of education and it was in 2013. It was intended to assist learners who had been retained from a certain phase and also its aim was to reduce the number of dropouts.</p>	<p>The progression policy as it is stipulated in the PAM highlights that a learner will qualify to be progressed when the learner meets the requirements thus checking the absenteeism of the learner, so absenteeism is a crucial part that needs to be considered when a learner is going to be progressed. The second one, is the age and learners from deep rural areas, start school at a late age which then causes them to reach senior phase already old enough. So the age is also considered under progression policy. Then the third one is the number of years in the phase. It is not fair for a</p>	<p>The progression policy states that learners should not repeat a phase more than two times. There are requirements that a learner has to meet in order to qualify for being progressed. The first one is that a learners does not have to repeat the same grade 3 times. And also it focuses on the age that at a certain age, you are not supposed to be in a particular grade.</p>	<p>User Category: Understanding of the progression policy Code P1 – Understands the progression policy P2- Learners not allowed to repeat a phase twice P3- Reduce number of dropouts P4- requirements of the progression policy P5- should not repeat a phase twice Focus on age Category: Gaps in participant's understanding of the policy Code P1- no allowed to repeat a grade twice P2- class managers responsible for progression of learners P3 – introduced in 2013</p>
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APPENDIX J: OPEN- ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

Questions	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
According to your experience, how can you describe your progressed learners' level of English FAL writing skills?	Progressed learners have a low level of writing skills which are affected by their cognitive levels. Meaning that the level of writing is affected by the level of thinking.	I would describe their writing skills as mediocre, they are struggling to construct decent sentences. Which often requires me to step in and correct them a lot. Some of them cannot even start writing.	According to my experience I've noticed that the progressed learners in my class cannot write and even speak proper English. They usually get very low levels which isn't something I like to see from my learners as their teacher. And they do not really know how to construct proper sentences which is very wrong for a grade 9 learner.	It is merely fair as they try to construct sensible sentences and get the message across.	Their level of writing is very poor. They are unable to construct proper English sentences. They lack basic foundation of language. At times they mix tenses in one sentence. They use wrong pronouns. Generally what they write does not make sense.
When giving creative writing assessment to learners in your class, which questions do your progressed learners find challenging? For an	The most challenging question to my progressed learner are questions based on recalling. Where they	They often have problems with understanding essay topics and they tend to misunderstand the provided topics hence	All of the above. Since they cannot speak or understand English they will find it very hard to answer questions, especially when it	The learners have a hard time constructing a strong story line as they do not read or understand the topic correctly. Conveying emotion and	They find it hard to write essays and understand what is asked to do so this means they do not understand questions. Sometimes they struggle with

User

Code: Poor progressed learners' level of writing
P1 – low level of writing skill in progressed learners
P2 mediocre
P3 – poor
P4 – fair
P very poor

User

Code: Challenging questions in writing English FAL
P1 – recalling and putting ideas in sequence
P2 – discuss, understanding essay topic and questions that require interpretation, compare and contrast
P3 – do not understand English, recalling and interpreting
P4 – topic understanding challenge
P5 – topic understanding analysing an essay and recalling

example questions that require analysing, recalling, listing in order to produce a written text.	have too sequence the events in a written text	they end up writing something that is out of content. They also have issues with questions that require them to discuss, interpret and compare and contrast	requires recalling or listening in order to produce a written text. They find it hard to interpret what they have to say or answer a specific questions according to their marks.	feeling seems tricky as well as they mix different emotions for example anxious and joyful which do not align with topics.	the proper structure of the text they are required to write. Some are unable to analyze essays. When required to list they at least perform better. The problem is in analyzing and recalling.
According to your view, which aspects of writing (essay, longer transactional text and shorter transactional text) do you find easy or challenging for learners in your class including progressed learners?	All the aspects of writing affects them, it is not easy for them to write those pieces of writing in particular the essays. It starts from choosing the type of structure. The only chance the get or manage to cope with are genres in longer transactional and shorter.	I have observed that my learners struggle with shorter transactional text and essays. The problem is deeply rooted from the fact that they cannot interpret the topic/ questions given.	I find essays and transactional text challenging while shorter transactional texts for my learners. I've noticed that they do not really know how to write essays that make sense even their dialogues don't make sense even after you have taught them it shows that they are not really fond of essays.	I find shorter transactional text easier for learners as it they are clear with the context of advertising and writing instructions. Essays are the most challenging as they cannot adhere to the word- length as prescribed in the question.	Invitation card as a shorter text is easier to progressed learners. They sometimes find letters easier but the structure and lack of understanding the question becomes a challenge. At times they write a formal letter in the place of an informal letter. They find narrative essays easier than the other essays. The situation is worse when it comes to argumentative and discursive.

User

Code: Challenging components of writing

P1- all aspects of writing not easy

P2- struggle with shorter text

P3 – essays and longer transactional text challenging

P4-shorter text easier, essay challenging

P5 – Essay writing difficult