

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR READING AND WRITING SKILLS AMONG
GRADE 4 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN KLEIN
LETABA CIRCUIT**

by

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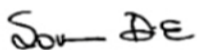
2022

DECLARATION

I, **DIANAH ESHAH SOMBHANE**, declare that this thesis entitled,

“Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Skills in English First Additional Language Grade 4 Learners in the Klein Letaba Circuit”

...is my work and all resources that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature: 

13 September 2023
Date:

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my loving late parents, Mr Hendric Boetiekie Nagel and Mrs Melita Mpellane Morongoa Sombhane, for having proficiently accomplished God's purpose for my birth. To my late grandparents, Mr and Mrs Ernest and Dorcus Modiba for your love and care after the death of my father. May their souls rest in perfect peace.

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ABSTRACT

The study intends to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in English First Additional Language (EFAL) in schools. It is assumed that Grade 4 learners cannot pronounce and write English words correctly. As such, learners fail to read English texts or stories for understanding. This is proved when they struggle to answer questions from the given texts. The study used a qualitative approach. The data analysis is descriptive, and the model used relied on content analysis. The content analysis included, among other things, the induction of themes, coding of those themes, elaboration of those codes, interpretation of those codes and checking of those interpretations. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentary studies. The key participants were a focused group of four EFAL teachers together with learners in each school, four school principals and the two EFAL curriculum advisors in the sampled public schools. Four primary schools in the Klein Letaba circuit were sampled for data collection. The study aimed at exploring the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills, to identify the role played by EFAL teacher, principals, and curriculum advisors in improving reading and writingskills and recommended strategies necessary to improve reading and writing skills among the grade four EFAL learners. The findings covered the broad concepts dealing with listening and hearing challenges, inappropriate strategies and methodology used by teachers, and teachers not following the teaching plan and lack of reading and writing activities. The study concludes that curriculum advisors as the curriculum coaches should regularly visit EFAL teachers to discuss subject – related matters, recommends that both EFAL teachers in the Foundation Phase (FP) and Intermediate Phase (IP) teachers should firmly teach English as the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) requires. Teachers have strong reading and writing skills for the learners to model after their examples. Learners be given plenty of written activities, critique their work and be shown how to fix their mistakes. Learners with speech and hearing impairments obtain remedial aid. Teachers training workshops be done regularly for teachers to be able to handle language skills challenge.

Keywords: Public school; Curriculum; English First Additional Language; Reading; Writing

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYM

ABET	:	Adult Basic Education and Training Certificate
ACE	:	Advance Certificate in Education
ATP	:	Annual Teaching Plan
CA	:	Curriculum Advisors
CA 1	:	Curriculum Advisor Numbers 1 and 2
CAPS	:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	:	Department of Basic Education
DoE	:	Department of Education
EEA	:	Employment of Teachers Act
EFAL	:	English First Additional Language
ESL	:	English as a Second Language
FAL	:	First Additional Language
L1	:	First language
L2	:	First Additional Language
Ln 1	:	Learner Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4
LoLT	:	Language of Learning and Teaching
MBESC	:	Minister of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
NCS	:	National Curriculum Statement
NEEDU	:	National Educational Evaluation and Development Unit
NPPPPR	:	National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotional Requirements
OBE	:	Outcomes – Based Education
PIRLR	:	Progress in International Reading Literacy Report
PIRLS	:	Progress of International Reading Literacy Study
PSRIP	:	Primary Schools Reading Improvement Programme
SA	:	South Africa
SASA	:	South African Schools Act
SLA	:	Second Language Acquisition

SMT	:	School Management Team
SMT	:	School Management Team
SPTD	:	Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma
STD	:	Secondary Teachers' Diploma
T1	:	Teacher Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4
ZPD	:	Zone of Proximal Development
P1	:	Principal

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the issues the country's primary schools face concerns learners in South African primary schools who are unable to read and write in English First Additional Language (EFAL). The National Curriculum Statement (NCS), which succeeded the preceding curriculum documents, was formulated by the Department of Education (DoE) as a solution to this problem. The NCS provided schools with the ability to teach thinking and reasoning, and language structure and use, which are integrated into all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) asserts that the knowledge of a person's home language should serve as the foundation for the instruction of literacy skills (CAPS, 2011:8). If a learner has sound home language background, it becomes easy for them to learn another language. Having said this, it implies that the learner becomes bilingual and therefore the home language is a foundation for the second or additional language introduced.

This type of bilingualism is known as additive bilingualism. Additive bilingualism is when children come to school, with the ability to speak their home language fluently and know several words and use this knowledge to learn an additional language. Learners in EFAL Grade 1 build on this foundation and learn to read and write when they start to learn a new additional language. To build a strong oral foundation, they need to hear a lot of simple, spoken English words which they can understand from the context. They listen to the teacher reading stories from books and this helps to support their emergent literacy development. Their understanding will then grow, and they will have plenty of opportunities to speak EFAL in simple ways. In the Foundation Phase, learners are introduced to English First Additional Language as a subject. If the subject is well taught in the foundation phase as per the policy, the learners would then have acceptable foundation in the subject

Therefore, this becomes the foundation for learning to read and write in Grades 2 and 3. In South Africa schools, learners start using EFAL as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in Grade 4. This only takes place after reaching a high level of competence in EFAL by the end of Grade 3. Learners must be able to read and write well in English. For these to be achieved, their progression in literacy must have been accelerated in Grades 2 and 3.

On the other hand, reading has proven to be difficult in the majority of South African schools since the Curriculum 2005 was first implemented in the country in 1997 (Department of Education, 2006:7). A study that was carried out by the DoE in 2006 reveals that the majority of students of all ages in the foundation and the intermediate phases struggle with their reading and writing skills (Department of Education, 2006:7). The majority of students attending schools in rural areas, villages, and townships had the lowest reading achievement when compared to students attending schools in cities, as stated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Report [PIRLR] (2016:11). As a result, the researcher decided to investigate this phenomenon.

It is for this reason that the researcher has decided to do a study in selected schools in Letaba Circuit. The researcher has worked in one of the schools for 25 years as an English teacher for both the Intermediate and Senior Phases. She attended various workshops. The problem regarding reading and writing skills is visible among Grade 4 learners. They are unable to pronounce and write English words correctly. Learners fail to read stories and texts for understanding.

This is demonstrated by students who have difficulty responding appropriately to questions based on reading. Due to the difficulty of this task, an enquiry into the factors that contribute to low reading and writing abilities, particularly in English, was undertaken.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has always been taken for granted that reading and writing skills come naturally as pupils are being taught in the class (Ontario Government, 2003 in Akubילו, 2015:38). Most learners in Grade 4 find it easy to recite the letters of the alphabet but fail to read, pronounce and write texts from the letters' alphabet. Because of poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners in schools in the Klein Letaba Circuit, several study issues that require to be answered have arisen.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1.4.1 To investigate the factors that contribute to poor skills in reading and writing in English First Additional Language.
- 1.4.2 To identify teachers', curriculum advisors' and principals' roles in improving reading and writing skills among Grade 4 English First Additional Language learners.
- 1.4.3 To recommend strategies that can assist Grade 4 English First Additional Language in improving reading and writing skills.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will seek to answer the following research questions:

1.5.1 The main research question

What factors contribute to the development of poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 English First Additional Language learners?

1.5.2. Subsidiary Questions

1.5.2.1. What roles do teachers, Grade 4 English First Additional advisors and principals play in improving reading and writing skills among Grade 4 English First Additional Language?

1.5.2.2. How are reading and writing to be conducted in Grade 4 English First Additional Language classroom?

1.5.2.3. Which strategies can be used to enhance reading and writing skills of Grade 4 English First Additional Language learners?

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Kivunja (2018:46) defines a theoretical framework as a construction that sustains a theory of a research study. It is not a researcher's view but a combination of the experts' views in the researcher's field of research. The researcher uses these experts' views to answer his/her research questions and make suggestions. This is reinforced by Varpio, Paradis, Uijtdehaage and Young (2020:10), who hold the opinion that a theoretical framework is a mirror of the theories that are mirrored in the work that a researcher does for a particular topic.

During the process of analysing and interpreting the data that were acquired, the researcher made use of the constructivism theory to get certain factors and points of view clear (Kivunja, 2018:45). This theory was used because it helped the researcher in predicting how learners learn and also determine if the teacher exposes the learners to an environment that helps them in their learning processes. During the observation as the teacher would be teaching and learning, the researcher will observe the environment and determine if it enhances the learning and teaching. During the interviews, the researcher would enquire about the social and cultural background of the learners and then use the theory to determine how the social and cultural background influences the learning process of the learners. The teacher would take

the cognitive growth of the learners into mind because it plays such a significant part in the students' learning. The primary goal of this section is to investigate factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL.

1.6.1. Constructivism

This approach is defined as an approach in which the central principles are that “learners can only make sense of few surroundings in terms of their existing understanding” (Naylor & Keogh, 1999 in Kouicem & Nachoua, 2019:64). Also, it is a theory related to learning, not only the theory of teaching, it is also about knowledge and learning, for it defines knowledge as temporary and socially and culturally intervened (Brooks & Brooks, 1993 in Kouicem et al., 2019:65).

Consequently, constructivism acknowledges that knowledge is actively produced by learners in response to interactions with the existing knowledge and environment. This means that teachers do not distribute knowledge but offer learners the opportunities and motivations to construct it (Kouicem et al., 2019).

1.6.1.1. Social Constructivism

Social constructivism has been proven by Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, who studied how knowledge is constructed in an individual's mind through social and cultural factors (Kouicem & Nachoua, 2019:64). The fundamental concept of Vygotsky's theory is that the development of the individual's cognition is first based on social interaction, then an individual's cultural development.

Lev Vygotsky (1978: 6), in the theory of social constructivism, argues that learning is not only a core process or inactive, but that culture and background are highly important in forming an understanding, hence is the beginning of deep learning. That is, learning is seen as the progress of a higher-level mental process taking place first on a personal level through social relations and then being internalised. He also presented the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is determined by self-governing problem solving and the level of potential development,

as determined by problem solving, adults' supervision or relationship with more talented peers. Vygotsky (1978:89) shares that ZPD is that noticeable area where best learning takes place and through a process of scaffolding in the ZPD. Learners can be prolonged beyond their present competencies to the extent of physical development process delays after the learning process. Brown (1994) opines with Vygotsky (1978:86) by viewing scaffolding of interest in terms of the 'weaving' symbol which develops the idea of scaffolding beyond the individual to the whole classroom where ZPD are operating simultaneously. Scaffolding is the process through which the teacher enhances learning and assists in the mastery of tasks by systematically building on students' experiences and knowledge as they learn a new skill. In this instance, the teacher provides not only scaffolding but is also the 'master waver who supports the learners' assimilations of ideas. Kaufman, (2004:304) further proclaims that Vygotsky's ZPD prescribes the tasks that a learner has not yet learnt but is capable of learning with proper motivation.

Learners talk and share problems and purposes in groups or pairs, with dependable activities supplied within a relevant framework to foster individual learning and boost cooperative teaching. Learning occurs as a result of this process. Makhubele (2015), suggests that the only way to improve poor reading and writing skills is through the use of cooperative learning. According to Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe (2011), the notion that underpins social constructivism is that students should be aided in the production of information that is relevant and helpful for them in their everyday lives. Not what is learnt by learners is what is crucial. Rather, it is how learners learn. The skills that they pick up are far more valuable than the information that they take in.

According to Warmouths (2004:55), language and society are inseparable, and that language is the primary medium through which social interaction takes place. In the process of teaching, a composite collection of attitudes is developed, each of which has the potential to affect the language used. According to Makhubele (2015:18), social constructivism is a theory that advocates for a learner-centred approach to education, promotes collaborative classroom instruction and through cooperative learning, learners' poor reading can be promoted.

1.6.1.2. Cognitive Constructivism

This is a theory about how the individual learner recognise things in terms of child-development stages and learning styles. From the cognitive constructivist perspective, knowledge is seen as actively constructed by learners based on their existing cognitive structures (Kouicem & Nachoua, 2019:64). Cognitive constructivism is a theory established by a Swiss specialist, Jean Piaget (1978) known for his studies of the intellectual development of children and his important theory of cognitive growth. Piaget identified four stages of normal intellectual growth from infancy to maturity.

He claimed that all children go through these stages to reach the next level of growth and each stage is a signal of times when children acquire new ways of mentally representing knowledge. One of Piaget's stages of intellectual growth is called the Concrete Operational Stage linked to elementary grade – years.

According to Piaget, children at this stage employ cognitive operations to solve problems related to actual things and occurrences (concrete), as opposed to solving difficulties related to abstract notions or hypothetical tasks (Kouicem & Nachoua, 2019:66-67).

In this study, the researcher intends to investigate the type of knowledge EFAL teachers offer to Grade 4 learners versus what the theory suggests or otherwise. Again, the researcher will observe how their classrooms look, which can help learners solve the problems they have with writing and reading. The theory is also used in this study to see how it improves teaching and learning.

According to Powell and Kalina (2009:242), Piaget (1953) links aspects of both cognitive theory and constructivism and contends that learning is a method of accommodation, integration and a sense of balance. Thus, where information is highly connected and difficult, many different demonstrations of content are needed to create deep learning. From the classroom or home, teachers or parents should transfer information on both reading and writing skills to learners, where information can be developed. Watson-George (2000:330) defines a language socialisation outline for Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as a new combination that contains a review of

mind, language and epistemology and respect start in social relations and is designed by cultural and socio-political methods.

Muhammed and Almas (2016) note that writing is a cognitive development that checks memory, intellectual and intellectual ability and oral understanding to effectively express ideas because the capable arrangement of a text shows effective learning of a SA. According to Mule (20:1418), the level to which individuals learn to read is mainly established by cognitive theories. Bandura (1986) in Mule (2014:16) assumes that a person's conduct and environment cooperate commonly. This view supports the social cognitive theory in that learning to read and write is linked to one's social environment. Yaakok (2015:17) maintains that both the concepts of writing self-efficacy and motivation are embedded in social cognitive theory, whereas Bandura (1986) shares self-efficacy as an individual's perception of his/her ability to achieve in each area. Learners enter school with a sense of self-efficacy for learning based on previous experiences and personal qualities (Schunk & Dale, 2006:236).

According to Schunk and Dale (2006:72), the meaning individuals give to a text depends on their languages, culture, experiences and particular social content. Yaakok (2015:17) posits that students' motivation changes from course to course, depending on their interest in the course efficacy for performing tasks in the course and other social and environmental factors. According to Bernita and Janet (2014:40), Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological system theory refers to the system of child progress and difficulties that respond to environmental contexts that affect learning.

1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

The present section discussed the views of the different scholars about factors which contribute to poor reading and writing skills, the role and strategies of teachers and principals in improving reading and writing skills in schools.

1.7.1 Factors Contributing to Poor Reading Skills

Akubילו (2015:01) pronounces the poor causes of reading as follows: socio-economic background, physical abnormalities, mental imbalance, a lack of interest and strangeness with symbols and teachers' inability to help children as the causes of deficiency in children. According to Mubashir (2015:05), the factors that cause poor reading in Pakistani are a poor command of vocabulary, the habit of cramming, and no interest to learn creativity in reading, only just to pass the examination. For Reid-Lyon (2015:42) in Akubילו (2015:42) maintains that children who are phonemically disabled, and not understanding alphabetic principles, are likely to have difficulties in reading.

1.7.2 Factors Contributing to Poor Writing Skills

According to Yaakob (2015:13), writing is a skill that is challenging to master, and for one to master it, requires a lot of training. Teachers face a great challenge to teach writing skills, as sometimes students find it unclear and challenging to understand or fail to create actual writing in English. Harmer (2007) in Yaakob maintains that writing is the most difficult and complicated skill, and its difficulty is displayed, not only in generating and arranging ideas but also, in decoding these ideas into comprehensible text. Bernita and Janet (2014:39) believe that writing is the most common method of communication and that it is a talent that may be taken for granted. Due to the complexity of the talent, children require the assistance of adults who are knowledgeable in order to perfect it. According to Dedman (2008) in Mpiti (2016:39), youngsters make spelling mistakes because they have issues with the relationships between the letters and their sounds; they forget spelling rules, and they write phonetically.

1.7.3 Teachers' and Principals' Roles in Improving Reading and Writing Skills amongst Grade 4 Learners

Kheiri (2013:28) attests that teachers should play a vital role in literacy improvement; motivation is one of many complex interacting factors that contribute to the acquisition of reading culture. Thus, teachers should motivate learners to read skills; they should make reading enjoyable to learners so that learners can develop the curiosity to read.

Akubulo (2015:40) posits that teachers should make reading fun for children; this can be done by singing and talking about reading and allowing them to read to you. According to McMahon (2002:36) in Nik, Hamzah and Rafidee (2010:53), students should be taught to think critically and creatively when they write. As managers of the schools, principals should assist, support and provide teachers with teaching and learning resources for the smooth running of teaching and learning in their schools. They should visit the teachers in their classes to see how learners are taught. They should check learners' work to see if teachers are guided by the Annual Teaching Plans/syllabi in their teaching. Mathipa, Magano, Mapotse, Matlabe and Mohapi (2014:368) maintain that effective principals are expected to provide teaching and learning materials that will ensure that educative activities take place well.

1.7.4 Curriculum Advisors' Roles in Improving Reading Skills amongst Grade 4 Learners

According to Toll (2005:04), as cited in Makhubele (2012:114), a literacy coach is someone who assists instructors in recognising their knowledge and talents, thus enabling them to make more efficient use of what they already know and who also motivates teachers to work hard.

1.7.5 Strategies to Improve Reading Skills amongst Grade 4 Learners

1.7.5.1 Reading skill

Mule (2012:10-12) states the four stages which were presented by the Institute of Reading Development as strategies that can be used by both teachers and curriculum advisors to improve the reading skills amongst grade 4 learners as follows:

Stage 1

- **Learning to Read**

This stage begins when a child is four to five years old. According to Dickison and Neuman (2006) in Mule (2012:10), children are exposed to books in their early years, and they learn to read without difficulty. They focus on interpreting meaning, learning



the alphabet and the phonics, learning to differentiate sounds in speech and learning to sound out words.

Stage 2

- **Developing Independent Reading**

This stage begins when children are in Grade 2. According to Moat (1991) in Mule (2012:11), children need knowledge of sound-method relationships and plentiful training to be fluent in word recognition.

Stage 3

- **Reading with Attention**

Children at this stage are in Grades 3 and 4. Chad (1987) in Mule (2012:11) asserts that children read to improve certain levels of fluency and understanding, then read for pleasure.

Stage 4

- **Critical Stage**

At this stage, children are at intermediate school, proceeding to high school and into maturity. According to Moat (1994:54), students have developed the ability to recognise how resources are organised, monitor comprehension and regulate reading rates or revise when necessary.

1.7.5.2 Writing skill

Yaakob (2015:11) suggests that writing is a complex skill to attempt, and teachers should persuade and encourage their students not to give up but increase their knowledge through reading. Hence, Kheiri (2013:12) highlights that “to read more equals to write better” when motivating her students to focus more on reading outside their classroom. Cowley (2004) in Yaakob (2015) maintains that teachers should give the students warm-up exercises and rewards that can increase students' motivation. Besides, Yaakob (2015) highlights that mind-maps and brainstorming ideas are recommended to trigger students' ideas where students gain knowledge through discussions in groups. Hence, it is the teachers' task to clarify to students how mind-maps and brainstorming ideas in gaining knowledge can improve their writing.

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

Concepts and terms to be used in this study will be defined to avoid ambiguities and obscurities (Brynard, Hanekom & Brynard, 2014:30).

1.8.1 Public Schools

Public schools in South Africa refer to state-funded schools (South African Schools Act, SASA of 1996:14). Most learners are seen as learners who have a challenge with reading. Their reading challenge is mostly seen in languages taught in these types of schools (PIRLS, 2016:3).

1.8.2 Curriculum

According to Coetzee (2004:219), curriculum is a Latin word. It means to run, track or racetrack made of learners on an educational track. It is seen as all the school subjects given to a school or a phase of schooling or a particular subject taught over several years (Lemmer & Badenhorst, 1997:259). Ross (2008:8) defines it as 'what to learn'. According to the findings of this study, the ability to read and write is considered to be an important component of the expanded curriculum for the instruction of EFAL in schools for learners entering Grade 4.

1.8.3 First Additional Language

According to CAPS (2012:8), First Additional Language (FAL) is defined as a language that is not a mother tongue, but that is used in society as a medium of learning and teaching or used for some communication. In South Africa, many children use their FAL, which is often English, as a LoLT in Grade 4.

1.8.4 Reading

Reading is very important for children who use English as the LoLT in Grade 4 (CAPS, 2011:10). For learners to be able to move on to other topics and make use of English textbooks in the Intermediate Phase, they need to have the ability to read and write. Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko and Hurwitz (2004:38) define reading as a complex process of the problem and a solution where the reader works to make sense of the text. Reading does not just involve words and phrases on a page, but ideas, memories and knowledge produced by those words and phrases as well (Schoenbach et al., 2004:38). In this study, reading is seen as a skill that learners need to have to read fluently, pronounce words correctly and understand the words they read. Proper reading skill is proven when the readers can answer questions on the content correctly.

1.8.5 Writing

Ching (2009:10) defines writing as a tool to create ideas and consolidate the linguistic system through interactive communication. Writing forces learners to think about grammar and spelling, when they want to write a range of creative and informative texts and use the writing process to produce texts that are organised and grammatically correct. Mpiti (2016:17) maintains that writing is an interactive process, as it results from the symbolic interaction between the author and the reader. In this study, writing is seen as a skill that learners need to acquire to write creatively, follow the writing process and write in an organised manner, with correct grammar and correct spelling. CAPS (2012:11) regards writing as a powerful communication tool that allows learners to construct and convey a message and ideas coherently.

1.9 RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study will explain the methods that could be used to collect data, explain how the respondents will be selected and how data will be analysed and lastly why a particular research methodology will be used. To understand factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL schools, the following research paradigm will be adopted:

1.9.1 Research Paradigm

Brynard et al. (2014) define a research paradigm as a form of commonly held theories or assumptions on models of both a scientific and sociological nature, which act as patterns or examples for a specific research topic, and which impact the results of the scientist.

The four mechanisms of the research paradigm are ontology, which denotes to the nature of our beliefs about reality (Richards, 2003:33) and epistemology which denotes to the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated (Gall & Borg, 2003:13).

The other two are methodology, which is concerned with the discussion of how a particular piece of research should be undertaken (Grix, 2004:32) and methods which are the specific means of collecting and analysing data, such as questionnaires and open-ended interviews (Grix, 2004:32).

Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2014:52) identify the research paradigm that can be used in a study as the positivist paradigm, anti-positivism or the interpretivist paradigm and the critical theory.

The study will be conducted within the anti-positivism paradigm. According to Cresswell (2003:9), the anti-positivist theory relies on the participants' views of the situation being studied and recognises the impact on the research of their backgrounds and experiences.

1.9.2 Research Design

Phenomenology is going to be used as a method of investigation for this particular topic. Phenomenology is an example of a qualitative research design. Phenomenology is a relevant design in this study, which is investigating poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners. According to Leedy et al. (2013:145), a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. Therefore, this study seeks

to understand factors that cause poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners.

1.9.3 Research Methodology

The research methodology to be used for this study is qualitative. The qualitative research methodology is appropriate for this study. What makes it relevant is that it deals with phenomena that occur in natural settings, and it also includes acquiring and studying the complexity of the phenomena (Leedy et al., 2013:139).

The phenomenon under study deals with problems of reading and writing EFAL by Grade 4 learners in schools. In this study, the researcher will use interviews, observations and document analysis as methods of data collection to investigate factors contributing to poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners in Klein Letaba Circuit.

1.10 SAMPLING

Creswell (2009:79) defines sampling as the act, technique or process of choosing a suitable sample or a representative part of a population to determine characteristics or parameters of the whole population. In this study, the following features will be addressed: sampling procedures, population and sample.

1.10.1 Population

In this study, the research population is composed of all 16 primary schools in Klein Letaba Circuit. According to Babbie (2010:169), the population of the study is an aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected. Similarly, Brynard et al. (2014:57) describe a population as the subjects, object, phenomena, events activities or cases which the researcher wishes to research in order to establish new knowledge.

1.10.2 Sampling Procedures

This sample size will be made up of 4 teachers and their learners, 2 EFAL subject advisors and 4 principals from 4 schools in Klein Letaba Circuit. The participants will be selected purposively. This method of sampling is supported by Sauders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:150) who said that sampling is a technique that provides a range of methods that enable the researcher to reduce the number of participants the researcher will need by considering only data from a sub-group rather than all possible elements.

1.10.3 Sample

A sample is a sub-group of a population of interest (Kumar, 2014:229). In this study, four primary schools will be identified, and participants will be selected purposively. Thus, 4 principals, 2 subject advisors, 4 teachers and Grade 4 learners for each school will make the sample of the study.

1.11 DATA COLLECTION

In this study, the collection of data will be based on primary sources (interviews) and secondary sources (written data), where the participants will transmit knowledge or information, about what they know or have experienced as the causes of poor writing and reading skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners. Besides, observations will be conducted when the EFAL teachers will be offering lessons to their learners. Primary sources include interviews, while secondary sources include written data. Primary sources include interviews.

According to Maree (2007:87), an interview is a two-way dialogue in which the interviewer asks questions of the participant to collect data and learn about the participant's thoughts, beliefs, perspectives, opinions and behaviour in relation to a specific issue. This point of view is backed by Bless and Smith (2001:34) who claim that an interview is the process of data collection in which a respondent is engaged in discourse. The act of observation requires the construction of a mental image of what

goes on during actual classroom activities (Henn et al., 2006 in Lumadi, 2016:10). The purpose of utilising a wide variety of approaches to data collection within a single investigation is to guarantee that the results of the study tell you what you believe they tell you (Saunders et al., 2000:99).

1.11.1 Instrumentation

Interviews were a key component of the data collection process. A researcher can supplement the information collected through responses with those gained from the observation of non-verbal reactions when conducting an interview. An interview is suitable for complex situations and effective for collecting in-depth information (Kumar, 1996:115). According to Creswell (2007:215), an individual interview is also known as a one-on-one interview. This type of interview is a method of data collection in which the researcher interviews only one participant at a time, asks questions and records their responses. A timetable for the interviews will be developed, and each session will be subsequently documented using both field notes and a voice recorder.

1.12 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis will be descriptive, and the model that will be used will rely on content analysis. The content analysis included, among other things, the induction of themes, coding of those themes, elaboration of those codes, interpretation of those codes and checking of those interpretations (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:56). The researcher will be able to organise the collected data and single out those that are relevant for interpretation in this manner (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:67). To analyse the data, the researcher will adhere to the procedures suggested by O'Connor and Gibson (2003:89), which are as follows:

1.12.1 Organising Data

The researcher will write down all the responses made by the people who participated in the interview while they are organising the data. To obtain the information that is required, they will be asked questions that are based on the criteria that are provided

in the interview schedule. This, in turn, will be helpful to the researcher in determining topics and themes that are pertinent to the study that they are conducting.

1.12.2 Finding and Organizing Ideas and Concepts

The researcher will read through a variety of responses that were given in response to a certain query to identify particular words or ideas that keep coming up. Words and concepts of this nature will be captured in writing, as the various responses are highlighted. The researcher will then categorise and sub-categorise the primary ideas and concepts that have been formed by these words and phrases.

1.12.3 Building Themes from the Data

The researcher will combine responses that had one or more connected themes into a single primary overarching topic to construct themes from the data. Only those themes will be condensed under a single subject that provides a more in-depth understanding of the data and the various categories.

1.12.4 Writing Report

Not only do the findings of the study appear in the reports on it, but so does an account of how the investigation itself was carried out. The summary of the findings, implications of those findings, recommendations, and the recommended tactics and areas for further research will all be included in the final report.

1.13 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

According to Drost (2011:105), the principles of trustworthiness and credibility are necessary in research as they contribute to the body of knowledge. The researcher is of the view that during the process of this study, credible sources of information will be consulted. Participants identified will be interviewed and observed. Appropriate methods and designs chosen will be used to investigate factors causing poor reading and writing skills in Grade 4 EFAL learners. The results obtained will be credible and trustworthy, such that another study could produce almost the same results. Cho and

Trent (2006:320) state that credibility can be achieved using appropriate research methods and techniques. This is to ensure that the information provided by the participants during the focus group interviews is of good quality.

The most important aspect of trustworthiness is the repetition of similar results obtained by utilising the same procedures. The literature review will be published in internationally recognised journals. Books and other articles, peer-reviewed before being published, will be consulted.

1.13.1 Credibility

Joppe (2000:45) indicates that credibility determines whether the research measured what it was proposed to measure; hence it seeks to establish the truthfulness of the research findings. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:22) share that credibility is based on the salutation that research is never based on a person 's feelings but addresses the fact that the findings should represent as far as is humanly possible, the situation being researched rather than biases of the research, pet theories or beliefs. To achieve confirmability, a study must show that the findings and data are linked.

1.13.2 Transferability

Halai (2006:278) and Maree (2012:305) state that transferability is when a study can be transferred to another context, a larger population or settings with reliance on its findings. In line with these definitions, after analysing and describing the data, the results will be transferred to schools, the circuit and the district to advance the sense of how learners could be taught to read and write EFAL.

1.13.3 Dependability

Dependability deals with how a study is conducted, which should be consistent across time, researchers and analysis techniques. Thus, the process through which findings are derived should be clear and repeatable as much as possible. This is achieved by

keeping an audit trail and through careful tracking of the emerging research design, which is a detailed chronology of research activities and processes, effects on data collection and data analysis, emerging themes models and analytic memos (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:1-22).

1.13.4 Conformability

Babbie (2001:278) defines conformability as the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the enquiry and not of the biases of the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (2005:94) refer to conformability as an adequate trail left to enable to determine if the interpretations, conclusion and recommendations can be copied to their sources and if they are supported by the enquiry.

In the study, to address the aspect of conformability, steps will be taken to guarantee that the research's findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the participants rather than the preferences and characteristics of the researcher.

1.14 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study will help provide information to schools in Klein Letaba Circuit and South Africa, in general, about the factors that produce poor reading and writing abilities of Grade 4 EFAL learners. The Department of Basic Education, which oversees policy), teachers, principals, parents of learners and curriculum advisors will all have access to data about learners' weak reading and writing skills. The results of the study could be interpreted in such a way as to provide a model for improving students' reading and writing skills in South African schools.

The findings from this study would be of great benefit to the DoE. The DoE as policymakers will include some of the findings from this study in the curriculum, to assist the curriculum advisors in training language teachers who have an underdeveloped understanding of teaching literacy in reading and writing. This claim is confirmed by a report published by the DoE (2008:08), which states that a large number of language teachers are ill-equipped to instruct their students in reading and

writing. Reading and writing are skills that can only be taught by teachers who have received extensive training and who have a solid grasp of phonics and writing processes. The findings from the study will be used by the curriculum advisers to train teachers in reading and writing skills that will assist students while they are enrolled in classes. Parents would be encouraged to help their children with their homework and to support their children's instructors in their efforts to educate their children in a manner that is beneficial to EFAL learners. EFAL learners could have dealt more clearly with knowledge contribution.

1.15 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The investigation will be carried out in four elementary schools in Klein Letaba Circuit of the Mopani-East Region in Limpopo Province. 16 primary schools make up the circuit. This will be done to cut expenditure, as the schools in the Klein-Letaba area of Mopani East are not that distant. The researcher will also find ways to decrease costs by conducting interviews and observations of EFAL teachers, learners, and principals who are dealing with similar difficulties of weak reading and writing abilities among Grade 4 EFAL learners.

1.16 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005:58), ethical issues are emphasised to protect participants from any harm or discomfort that may arise from being involved in an investigation. Therefore, the researcher's duty will be to explain the purpose and nature of the study to the participants to obtain their informed permission before conducting the interviews.

1.16.1 Informed Consent

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1997:84), informed consent is defined as the process in which participants choose to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would influence their decisions. This means the participants

are given a chance to choose whether they want to be interviewed or observed after they have been made aware of the objectives of the study and the results thereof.

The researcher will ensure that participants are fully informed about the nature of the research and that the research participants are not influenced in any way or manner to participate in the study. Every research participant will be given written consent by putting their signature on the provided declaration form.

1.16.2 Protection from Harm

The researcher will ensure that the research did not cause any physical and psychological harm to the respondents. During the research, participants might be exposed to emotional or physical harm (Strydom, De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2002:63). The onus rests on the researcher to protect the research participants from any harm.

1.16.3 Honesty to Professional Colleagues

The researcher will make sure that all the sources of literature are credited. To accomplish this goal, the authors of the sourced literature will be acknowledged in the text, as well as in the list of references that will follow it. This will require both the writing up of the research report and the recording of the study results so that it can be made accessible to both researchers and the people who participated in the research. According to Strydom, De Vos, Fouche' and Delpont (2002:72), the research report ought to be written clearly, objective and free of ambiguity, and it must include all of the pertinent material. In addition, to prevent plagiarism at all costs, additional sources of data that will have been used must be recognised at all times.

1.16.4 Confidentiality

Even though privacy and confidentiality go together, privacy implies an element of personal privacy, whereas confidentiality means handling the information collected confidentially. Strydom, De Vos, Fouche and Del port (2002:67) state that the privacy of the participants can be infringed when the researcher uses a tape recorder or hidden

camera without the participants' consent. The integrity and the right to privacy of the respondents will be respected in order to receive relevant information and to ensure that there was better cooperation throughout the study. Besides, the researcher will ensure that the respondents remain anonymous, and their identities are not revealed. Their identities or names will not be included in any research report or documentation.

1.16.5 Plagiarism

According to Bless et al. (2006:14), institutions of higher learning continue to face plagiarism difficulties. Theft of educational opportunities might be equated to instances in which the original author of a point is unacknowledged. The researcher will give the authors proper credit for all the works used in the research report's compilation. This will be done as part of the current investigation.

1.17 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The research was divided into chapters. Below is a concise chapter overview with annotations:

Chapter 1 discusses the rationale for the study and provides a concise but detailed summary of the problem that prompted the research. In addition to the problem statement are the aim, research questions, the definition of central concepts, theoretical frameworks, research design and research methodology to collect data. The chapter includes an approach to data analysis, and a discussion of validity, reliability, trustworthiness, significance, delimitation and ethical considerations. Besides, this section outlines a general overview that includes the problem statement, objective, research questions and definition of central concepts.

Chapter 2 outlines the conceptual framework of the study by discussing sources, such as professional journals, reports, government policies, documents and pertinent extracted dissertations. The chapter focuses on the literature regarding the influence of parent-teacher relationships on the education of children.

Chapter 3 examines research design, methodology, population and sampling, as well as data collection and analysis processes, validity and reliability and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents a qualitative, descriptive presentation and analysis of the data obtained through interviews and observations.

Chapter 5 gives conclusions and recommendations for further research.

1.18 SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the introduction and background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the aim and questions of the study, the theoretical frameworks, a preliminary review, definitions of key concepts, a research paradigm, design and methodology, sampling, data collection and data analysis. Besides, it captures the trustworthiness of the research, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, ethical considerations and the outline of the study. The next chapter will focus on the literature review aligned with this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, the researcher discussed the background of the study, as well as its goals and objectives. In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the theoretical framework associated with the study, paying particular attention to the constructivist approach to research.

This chapter captures various studies that have been conducted nationally and internationally concerning the roles played by EFAL teachers, principals and curriculum advisors (CA) in improving reading and writing skills amongst Grade 4 learners, as well as the strategies that have been used to improve reading and writing skills. The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL in schools.

2.2 INVESTIGATION OF VARIOUS STUDIES CONDUCTED GLOBALLY

The researcher investigated studies which dealt with factors which contribute to poor reading and writing skills, the role and strategies of teachers and principals in improving reading and writing skills in schools. The researcher did this to get insight on how other authors have handled this problem before.

2.2.1 Importance of Reading

Reading is a procedure of thinking dynamically in order to solve or comprehend the knowledge that an author articulates (Akubילו, 2015:38). It is a receptive skill, which contains the ability to understand or translate written symbols (Mubashi, Mehwish & Bahram, 2015:1). Mubashi et al. (2015) further attest that reading is essential, for it is a stepping rock in the walk of knowledge. The language programme in Pakistani considered it as a linguistic skill of learning and research. Akubילו (2015:38) attests

that the learning of reading starts from the mastery of the alphabet of the language and the skill necessary for learning reading. The skill should be taught for it is valuable to anyone who wishes to discover the world for earning a living. According to Kheiri (2013:12), reading more is equivalent to writing better, when trying to motivate students to put more emphasis on reading outside their classrooms. This means that if one wants to become a better writer, the individual needs to read more.

Mule (2014:14) perceives reading as a vital skill for academic attainment, hence, learners should be immersed in reading in their early years of schooling. He went on to say that in the language programme announced by the Minister of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC, 2005a) in Namibia, learners in the Lower Phase (Grades 1 to 3) are to be taught via their mother language, after which Grade 4 is a transitional stage from the Lower Phase to Upper Phase, learners should be moved from learning to read but reading to learn (Mule, 2014:14). Reading is seen as a psycho-linguistic guessing game. In reading, readers must first know a variety of linguistic signals, such as letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues and discourse (Brown, 1994:284). Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko and Hurwitz (2004:38) state that reading is a complex procedure of problem-solving in which the reader works to make sense of a text, not just from the words and sentences on the page but from the ideas, memories and knowledge aroused by those sentences and words. Reading is a social practice that is literacy is a very important aspect of people's lives and equips them with vital skills and knowledge to interact effectively in society (Linake & Mokhele, 2019:199).

2.2.2 What it Means to Write

Writing is considered a support that was previously done to strengthen grammar acquisition, support memorisation of language structures and emphasise even oral competence as in grammar-translation, audio-lingual and communicative methods correspondingly. Writing also supports memorisation of language structures (Mpiti, 2016:37). According to Darus and Hei Ching (2009:10), a learner's writing is not only used to evaluate his or her competency in the English language, but it is also utilised to evaluate the learner's comprehension of other disciplines, including Economics,

Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. According to Mpiti (2016:37), writing is seen as a tool for the generation of ideas, as well as the conveyance of information in an interactive manner. Because writing is a process that comes from symbolic interaction between the writer, the text, and the reader, by definition, writing is an interactive activity. Writing is a skill that requires the instruction of several intricate rhetorical and linguistic procedures to be successful (Mpiti, 2016:37).

Mpiti (2016:37) believes that for a piece of writing to be effective, the author must make use of a vast number of different formal structures to better assist the reader in grasping the meaning that was intended. Therefore, if a writer is unable to apply these structures appropriately in their work, ellipses and ambiguity are likely to be the results. Nik, Hamzah and Radefee (2010:54) claim that learning how to write well is one of the most challenging skills for students to acquire. Because the reader must interpret what has been read, teachers and lecturers should play an essential part in the education of learners and provide them with plenty of time to practice writing.

Cunningman (1988) and Emmons (2003) in Nik et al. (2010:54) advocated that writing is absolutely “hard work”, as it causes several problems for learners and teachers. According to Cunningman (1988) and Emmons (2003) in Nik et al. (2010) it is difficult to master writing, for it requires many conventions and skills, such as writing readiness and grammatical rules for the learners to become skillful and effective writers. Teachers face great challenges when teaching the skills and conventions where learners find it confusing, and difficult to understand and write effectively in English.

Cunningman (1988) and Emmons (2003) in Nik et al. (2010) stress that writing is not just putting a pen on paper or writing down concepts, rather, it is how these thoughts are presented or stated efficiently. Yaakob (2015:5) states that writing skill is necessary for enduring learning, without appropriate writing from the primary level, learners will encounter complications when pursuing higher education. The DoE (2012:10) defines writing as a powerful tool of communication that allows learners to construct and communicate pieces of understanding and ideas logically. According to Hense and Markovi (2012:10), a lack of vocabulary knowledge might prevent English as a Second Language (ESL) learners from completing activities and can also

slow down their academic development. Regarding writing communication, having a limited vocabulary might be a significant obstacle, and learners may end up making incorrect lexical selections and blunders in their writing because of it.

2.2.3 Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Skills

Curriculum is one of the factors contributing to poor writing and reading skills. Macintosh (2003) in Blease and Condy (2014:37) maintains that South Africa needs its native solution to its native problems arising from curriculum development. Introducing an unfamiliar system such as Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) fails to account for not addressing the difficulties of our country and culture. According to Bloch (2009:58), schooling in South Africa (SA) is a national catastrophe. Most of our schools are simply not producing excellent results.

Reading and writing skills are universal challenges. Different academics have struggled and are still exploring the source of this challenge to date. In South Africa, according to the DoE (2008:08), many teachers have an underdeveloped understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing. The teachers do not differentiate how to instill reading and writing skills. Moreover, often teachers know only one method of teaching the reading and writing style of all learners. This has been confirmed in a survey conducted PIRLS in Spaul (2013:3-4). Lumadi (2016:23) maintains that the acquisition of reading and writing skills goes with problems; learners cannot pronounce, punctuate and spell words correctly. In most cases, a misunderstanding of a written message is not hindered by errors in spelling or capitalisation, as well as by the breaking of well-established rules about punctuation and capitalisation. Instead, they have the potential to negatively influence the judgement of the reader and make the piece of writing appear awkward (Harmer, 2007 in Mpiti, 2016:187).

The most challenging activity for learners learning English as a Second Language (L2) is writing in English. This challenge manifests itself in both the gathering and organisation of thoughts, as well as the translation of those ideas into writing that is understandable. In line with this view, Putri (2009) in Mpiti (2016:194) explains that

learners usually lose interest in the exercises and do not finish them, even when the tasks are of the simplest variety. Learners of a language often lack the desire necessary for successful language acquisition, since writing is so difficult. This difficulty also influences the attitudes that teachers have towards writing, and as a result, it is accountable for the lack of enthusiasm that teachers have in teaching writing. According to Richard and Renandya (2003) in Mpiti (2016: 208), new English speakers write words in the same way that they sound, since they are not yet familiar with the English phonological system. Some of the teachers emphasised to the learners that they should write the words as they hear and 'sound' them. Learners will occasionally omit the final consonants of a word or generate more sounds than are necessary in a word in order to perfect their pronunciation. In addition to this, individuals can transfer the letter pronunciation habits of their First Language (L1) into their First Additional Language (L2). According to Mpiti (2016:208), some of the writing done by learners demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the questions and instructions. Most of their work displays a high level of intelligence, but it has a low standard of quality, since they hand in unfinished assignments with poor spelling and a lack of understanding of high order questions. Learners make spelling errors due to difficulty with letter–sound relations; they ignore spelling rules and write phonetically (Blease & Condy, 2014:38). Writing problems are made worse when letters are formed incorrectly, and extra lines and curls are added where they are not needed. It is difficult for readers to grasp what the writer is trying to say because of inadequate word and letter spacing, uneven slanting of letters, poor line quality, uneven letter size and inappropriate positioning of letters. Incorrect spelling, improper use of grammar and improper capitalisation are the three writing issues that learners struggle with the most frequently (Mpiti, 2016:38).

According to Mpiti (2016), learners are unable to identify and describe concepts in a meaningful manner if they use language of which they do not have sufficient knowledge. The language that is utilised to evaluate one's level of knowledge is extremely significant; if learners are tested in a language that is difficult for them to comprehend, the results of the examination may be unreliable. According to Seferoglu (2008) in Lumadi (2016:23), learners orally perform poorly in the language that they do not comprehend. This pertains to reading in a second language. Learner's

deficiencies in alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, and oral reading fluency are the most important supporting skills and strong determinants of later reading achievement (Paris, 2005 in Lumadi, 2016:23). According to Tatkovia (2005), as cited in Lumadi (2016:24), the lack of sufficient knowledge of English sounds and patterns renders learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) incapable of recognising, differentiating, and employing sounds in their speech. Learners will have a difficult time sounding out printed words because of these failures, which will lead to reading challenges. According to Du Plessis and Naude (2003), O' Connor and Geiger (2009) in Makhubele (2015:35-36), parents' limited contribution to their children's schoolwork, discipline and behavioural problems are some of the reasons are various of the main poor reading skills, and these findings are supported by Du Plessis and Naude's (2003) findings. According to Blease and Condy (2014:40), emotional, physical, social, cognitive, and language components that contribute to the writing process, as well as the obstacles that they present are discussed next.

2.2.4 The Role Teachers Play in Improving Poor Reading and Writing Skills amongst the Grade 4 Learners

According to the National Report (2012) published by the National Educational Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU), learners in the Foundation Phase should be writing four times a week, including one extended piece of writing. According to this study, the following was supposed to be the criteria for determining a learners' grade in writing: learners in Grade 1 were tasked with writing sentences; the learners in Grade 2 were to compose paragraphs, and the learners in Grade 3 were to write extended paragraphs. Writing is a skill that may be efficiently instilled in learners by teachers, but only if those teachers have the necessary skills. As a result, they are required to understand the subject matter, knowledge of the curriculum and knowledge of how to teach the subject. The development of reading and writing skills should not occur in isolation from the development of other skills. If one wants to teach language effectively, all linguistic abilities must be incorporated (Burns, 2001:89).

Msanjila (2005:16) argues that from a pedagogical standpoint, writing is one of the four fundamental language abilities, which are speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Because it is not an inherent skill, one must learn how to teach these skills. In addition, according to Stubbs (2014:87), the following is the order in which formal aspects of written language are determined; Writing: spacing between words; punctuation, including comments; the font, including style of typeface, italicisation, underlining, upper and lower case, capitalisation to show sentence beginnings and proper nouns; inverted commas, for example, to indicate that a term is being used critically (chimpanzees' "language" is...); graphics, including lines, shapes, borders, diagrams, tables, abbreviations; logograms, for example; and layout, including paragraphing and margin. This demonstrates that writing is a skill that requires the instruction of a lot of challenging verbal and linguistic processes in order to be successful (Msanjila, 2005:17). Therefore, for writing to be effective, any author needs to make use of a significant variety of formal qualities in order to assist his or her readers in comprehending the meaning that was intended. Certain compositions suffer from ambiguity, ellipses and vagueness as a direct result of improper utilisation of these qualities (Msanjila, 2005:17). Learners should always be made aware that certain themes in writing fit settings and conform to certain standards. About developing writing as a communicative ability, writing should be viewed as a skill that should be developed. Therefore, it is the responsibility of language teachers to instill in their pupils not only a command of the language itself but also of the standard language, free from grammatical faults, which are used in official settings. According to Lightbown and Spada (2000:176), when errors are persistent, particularly when they are shared by almost all the learners in a class, it is beneficial for teachers to bring the problem to the attention of the learners. According to Mpiti (2016:189) and Nuana (2001:87), it is the responsibility of the teachers to compile a list of all the frequently occurring errors that are made by the learners when they are writing and to remind them of these errors as frequently as is humanly possible so that the learners will make a great effort to avoid them.

2.2.5 The Role Principals Play in Improving Poor Reading and Writing Skills among Grade 4 Learners

Van der Merve (2002:35) argues that the roles of the principals become more active when the principal and the SMT work closely together. Mule, Pitso and Van der Niekerk

(2013:257) concur that in a school where teamwork is practised, then, the production of quality education would prevail. Together, they must be able to provide for the staff members in whatever activities they are involved. According to DoE (2002:24), the principals ought to see that their schools are fun professionally, effectively and proficiently daily. Instruction of leadership, according to Bush and Clover (2010), Cawood and Gibbon (1985) and Kruger (2010), emphasises mainly the realisation of effective teaching and learning in school.

2.2.6 The Role Played by the Curriculum Advisors in Proving Poor Reading and Writing Skills

Curriculum/subject advisors are the new development by the democratic government as the tool to support effective curriculum delivery in schools. Their role as per the Employment of Teachers Act (No. 76 of 1998) is to provide support, leadership and assist in the effective implementation of the curriculum in schools (Mbanjwa, 2014:1).

According to Zepeda (2008) in Mbanjwa (2014:3), a subject advisor's role is to lead, supervise, manage, and strengthen the quality of teaching and learning presented to learners. They offer a reassuring environment for improving performance where the required standards are unmet and improve the capability of teachers to apply the curriculum management skills needed in their positions. They are influential and play an important role in assisting teachers to deliver the curriculum (Schneider et al., 2009 in Mbanjwa, 2014:10). They support the subject teacher to develop and improve the instructional materials for the subject and give constructive feedback on how teachers are implementing those materials and how effective the materials are.

2.2.7 Strategies for Reading and Writing Skills

Writing and reading skills form a strong relationship with each other. They are regarded as tools for achieving effective written communication (Sadiku, 2015:29). Cole and Feng (2011:5) concur with Sadiku that learners need adequate time to develop their reading and writing skills so that they can read and write proficiently.

Developing learners' competencies in reading and writing needs exposing them to slowly thought-provoking reading resources and writing tasks.

Writing has been seen as an essential skill in English language acquisition. It is essential because it strengthens grammatical structures and vocabulary that teachers struggle to teach their learners (Cole & Feng, 2015:5). According to Sadiku (2015:29), teachers are permitted to use different strategies and methods of learning and teaching to suit the needs of learners in different classes. They associate these methods and strategies during the learning processes and adjust according to the increasing development of linguistic competence and independence of learner development. Sadiku (2015) further argues that writing is a seed to pick. An individual with good writing skills is always successful in articulating oneself. Hence, teachers, as the source of information to learners, must teach learners writing skills.

Teachers should engage learners in pre-writing activities for these activities open doors to effective writing where one brainstorms nearly everything under the theme or topic given. Learners' ought to be taught to find the topic, narrow it and consider the purpose and spectators as well as the form of writing. Ismail (2011). in Cole and Feng (2015) maintains that exposing learners to the writing processes through various avenues is an excellent way to reach their writing goals.

According to Sadiku (2015:31), the writing process starts with the first draft, which is a gathering of our random thoughts. This is where words, sentences and paragraphs are formed. Revision means "seeing again" here; you improve the ideas in the learners' arrangement. Thus' re - read the rough draft, sharing the rough draft in a writing group and revision mean feedback. In revision, one improves or replaces thoughts and words. Editing is the next big step in writing. It cleans up processes where the confusion is cleared, and ideas are permitted to shine. Then, you put the piece of writing into its final form, and you adjust your work by concentrating on correct punctuation, capitalisation, grammar, usage, and paragraphing. The aim here is to make your writing understandable. The last step is publishing or final writing. Each step of writing is fixed and can be done as many times as possible until your writing is perfect.

Kramel (2007) in Ntsala et al. (2017:260) indicates that the DoE demands teachers to focus on the components of reading, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, to improve reading skills. Intensive in-service training is arranged by the DoE as a solution to enhance the teachers' knowledge of these reading components. The DoE ought to address the problem of unlimited knowledge on reading components among the teachers and ensure that the teachers' training curriculum for languages is appropriate (Ntsala et al., 2017:260).

Wharton- McDonald and Swiger (2009:512-513), explain teaching comprehension strategies to learners as explaining the purpose of the reading strategy to be used, where when and how to use it and model the strategy to the learners. The DoE (2007:16) requires teachers to make learners read frequently and read the texts that appeal to them. Teachers must engage and model to learners the different types of reading.

One of the ways to improve learners' fluency is to repeat word study (Staudt, 2009:149; Palumbo & Sanacore 2009:277). DoE (2007:17) recommends the following tips to the teachers to improve fluency: overcrowding the class with reading materials, re-reading the text, motivating and explaining to the learners about fluency, encouraging independent reading and explaining the importance of silent reading and turning their classroom to be reading environment by making a specific corner in the classroom as a library corner.

2.3 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the literature review, paying attention to the theoretical frameworks supporting this study for the researcher wanted to explore how the theories used in this study are applied. Besides, the thrust was to investigate various global studies regarding the factors that contribute to the learners' poor reading and writing skills and the strategies recommended by other researchers to improve these skills. The next chapter will deal with the research paradigm, design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH PARADIGM, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 of this study, the researcher did a literature review on the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills for Grade 4 EFAL learners. This review was the focus of the researcher's attention. Numerous sources were investigated to get insight into how prior researchers addressed the problem of weak reading and writing abilities exhibited by Grade 4 learners, as well as how teachers, principals and curriculum advisers have assisted in perfecting these skills. In this chapter, the researcher will articulate the research design and methodology that was used to answer the research questions that direct the study, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Mpiti (2016, 76) defines a research paradigm as a theoretical framework that offers the means through which research is carried out. It is internationally recognised systematic success that provides a time model of problems and solutions to the community of the population. Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2014:52), classify the research paradigm that can be used in a study as the positivist paradigm, anti-positivism or the interpretivist paradigm and the critical theory. In this study, the interpretive paradigm was seen as the most appropriate because Naicker (2000 and Vaco 2004 in Mpiti) maintain that interpretive paradigm beliefs on the perceptions of the study participants and the way the researcher comprehends these perspectives.

According to Cole (2006: 26), interpretive paradigm research maintains that knowledge of reality is obtained through societal structure such as language awareness, documents, shared meaning, tools and other objects. The use of interpretive paradigm was valuable to accomplish the study 's objectives because the researcher was able to acquire the factors that cause poor reading and writing skills

in the Klein Letaba circuit. This section dealt with frames of references which the researcher used to reason and observe the challenges of poor reading and writing in schools.

3.2.1 Research Design

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2005) in Chauke (2017:29), a research design can be defined as a procedure or strategy that is to be followed during the investigation and that is utilised to address research questions for that study. It acts as a directing instrument that strives to produce the most valid data and delivers answers to research questions in relation to the research method, as well as the procedures that are used. The researcher, investigated numerous sources to get insight of how the prior researchers addressed the problem of poor reading and writing skills among the grade 4 learners as well as interviewing experienced teachers, principals and the curriculum advisors on how they are dealing with these skills; observed EFAL teachers teaching the skills to their learners; the learners' writing books were asked to be seen in trying to see how they write and learners' record sheets were also used to see how learners perform in these skills.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Brynard, Hanekom and Brynard (2014:37), research methodology is the show of collecting and processing thereof within the framework of the research process. This study will use the qualitative approach. The qualitative research methodology deals with phenomena that occur in a natural setting; and it also involves capturing and studying the complexity of the phenomena (Leedy et al., 2013:13). The phenomena under this study deals with the problems of reading and writing EFAL by Grade 4 learners in schools. In this study, the interviews, observations and document Analysis was used as a method of data collection to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL in schools.

According to Miller (1986) in Chauke (2017:29), a qualitative approach is described as the specific conventional method in social sciences that primarily relies on watching people in their language on their terms. This definition was found in Miller's (1986)

work. A qualitative approach is greatly influenced by the behaviour of both the research and the title of the study (Krefting, 1991 in Chauke, 2017). Krefting maintains that behaviour is influenced by the realistic review, such as physical, social-cultural and psychological environment, as well as subjective meanings and perceptions of the subject's unobservable enquiry. A qualitative approach can be used to provide an understanding of a specific phenomenon because the researcher relates to the respondents over a period (Wet, 2010 in Chauke, 2017:29).

In this study, the researcher used qualitative research to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL in primary schools. A qualitative research approach allows the researcher to develop the theory and enables the researcher to interact actively with the participants and get their views. According to Mathipa, Magano, Mapotse and Matlabe (2014:370), the researcher uses a qualitative research method to get in-depth knowledge about the teachers who teach a particular subject. In this qualitative research, the researcher used semi-structured interviews with teachers, principals and subject advisors to collect qualitative information regarding the subject under study (Mwangi & Bwire, 2020:64).

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) as cited in Mpiti (2016:94), documents are pre-produced texts that the researcher was not responsible for gathering. Ciesielska and Bostrom (2018:33) argue that the observation method is the most significant research method in social sciences and the most diverse. It may be regarded as the basis of everyday social life for most people; researchers carefully observe behaviour, and surrounding resources, evaluate, draw assumptions or make observations on connections and relations.

3.3.1 Population

Population is the whole group of individuals and cluster of objects and procedures the researcher intends to gather information and draw decisions (Van Rensburg, 2010 in Makhubele, 2015:64). McMillan and Schumacher (2006) in Mohammed et al.(2018) concur that decisions should be made by the researcher about the teachers to be selected to provide information on the factors contributing to poor reading and writing

skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners. In this study, the target population is EFAL teachers, principals and EFAL curriculum advisors in Klein-Letaba Circuit.

3.3.2 Sample

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:129), a sample is a selection of individuals from a larger population made by a researcher for gathering information. According to Iqbal, Kazemian and Noor (2015:3), research participants should be selected purposefully from each school for the collection of data. In this study, 4 EFAL teachers, 4 principals and 2 curriculum advisors from Klein-Letaba Circuit were selected. EFAL teachers were interviewed on the challenges they experience when developing reading and writing skills while the principals and curriculum advisors were interviewed about the challenges and support they give to teachers to improve on poor reading and writing skills.

3.3.3. Sampling techniques

This researcher purposely and randomly selected the participants based on the researcher's knowledge of the teachers' qualifications and experience in EFAL in the selected primary schools. The researcher has observed that in general learners in grade 4 are unable to read for meaning, this also supported by the PIRLS results. Then the researcher purposively and randomly selected primary schools in the Klein Letaba circuit in which she teaches to investigate if she and other teachers experience the same problem, and also to find out how they deal with it. The researcher used purposive and random sampling to select 4 teachers, 4 principals and 2 curriculum advisors in the study. This method of sampling is supported by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:150) who said that sampling is a technique that provides a range of methods that enable the researcher to reduce the number of participants the researcher will need by considering only data from a sub-group rather than all possible elements.

The sample of 10 participants were selected to provide diverse perspectives on factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL grade 4.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

According to Mpiti (2016), the act of gathering information relevant to research is referred to as data collection. This process entails discovering sources of data and selecting methodologies. According to Leedy and Omrod (2005), as cited in Mpiti (2016:107), a researcher conducting a study needs a procedure and a strategy for collecting data that will enable him or her to find answers to all the questions that are being asked. In this study, multi-method data collection procedures like interviews, document analysis and observations were utilised. This method of data collection is called triangulation (Bogdan & Biklien, 1992; Saunders et al., 2000 in Chauke, 2017:30). Triangulation is the use of different data collection methods within one study in order to validate or tell what you think they are telling you (Saunders et al., 2000 in Chauke, 2017).

3.4.1 Interviews

Coolican (2009:150) argues that an interview method is regarded as a method that involves people asking people direct questions. Mkandawire (2017:65) attests that face-to-face interview is when a researcher asks a sampled group of population-specific questions about the subject of the study. Mohammed and Amponsh (2018:275) opine that semi-structured interview, where face-to-face in depths individuals' interview for data collecting method occurs. In this study, the researcher would employ an interview guide with EFAL teachers, principals and curriculum advisors. Mohammed et al. (2018) maintain that it is an advantageous approach as the respondents are similar and their interactions yield the best information.

3.4.2 Interview Guide

Formally, before an interview is conducted, the interviewer should make some preparations for the interview to be productive. The preparation involves the

arrangements with the interviewees and the preparation of the questions to save time for both the interviewer and interviewees (Chauke, 2017:40).

3.4.3 Individual Interviews

An individual interview or a face-to-face conversation was with EFAL teachers at each of the sampled schools, as well as with the principals and the curriculum advisors. The interview was beneficial in this form of the interview because it clarified questions if the interviewees did not have a good understanding of what was asked of them.

3.4.4 Observation

According to Ciesielska (2017:33), most people consider observations to be the fundamental component of their day-to-day social lives. They watch behaviour and the materials around them, make judgments based on their findings, come to conclusions and comment on the dynamics of relationships and interactions. Observation is a method of information collection that involves paying attention to patterns of behaviour and the unfolding of events (Cohen et al., 2007 in Mpiti, 2016:92). According to Mpiti (2016), having observations in the classroom provides the researcher with an accurate depiction of the opinions that teachers and students have regarding the teaching and learning environment.

The researcher's goal in this investigation was to investigate the phenomenon at a close range while considering as many associated variables as possible. This was only accomplished using observation. The researcher wanted to completely submerge herself in the research setting and observe its facets, therefore, the researcher employed a variety of methods to collect data from the environment. She relied on audio-visual and written notes to compile the information she gathered. The observation took place once for only one hour at each school.

The researcher observed the appearance of the EFAL classrooms, as well as the resources that are being utilised to teach reading and writing skills. The researcher also observed how EFAL teachers teach reading and writing skills.

- Do they engage learners in the various reading approaches and stages?
- How do teachers instill reading skills in learners?
- How are teachers and learners experiencing writing to sharpen their writing skills?

- Do teachers divulge or expose writing skills and the writing processes to learners?
- What is the most dominant language used in class for teaching and learning?

The use of various methods of data collection assisted the researcher during the analysis of the data at a later stage.

3.5 DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS

Documents analysis is referred to as documentary secondary data (Saundres et al., 2000 in Chauke, 2017:40). This author maintains that documentary data is also called archival research; hence it has a historical meaning but does not mean research could not employ data. This is maintained by Tesch (1990) in Mkandawire (2017:65-66) who upholds document analysis helps check on the information already there relating to the study. In this study, the researcher asked permission to peruse the EFAL records sheets from the principals to gauge the performance of learners in the reading and writing tasks.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis is descriptive, and the model that was used was the one that relied on content analysis. Content analysis included, among other things, the induction of themes, coding of those themes, elaboration of those codes, interpretation of those codes and checking of those interpretations (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:56). The researcher was able to organise the collected data and single out those that were relevant for interpretation in this manner (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:67). For analysing the data, the researcher adhered to the procedures suggested by O'Connor and Gibson (2003:89), which are described next.

3.6.1 Organising Data

The researcher reordered all of the responses made by participants in the interview while she was organising the data. To obtain the information that was required, the

participants were asked questions that were based on the research topic, those that were helpful to the researcher in determining topics and themes that were relevant to the study that the researcher was conducting.

3.6.2 Finding and Organising Ideas and Concepts

The researcher read through a variety of responses given in response to the problem from the participants' ideas, thoughts, or feelings. The relevant ideas were separated from irrelevant ideas according to the research questions. The researcher then categorised and sub-categorised the primary ideas and concepts that had been formed by these words and phrases.

3.6.3 Building Themes from the Data

The researcher combined responses that had one or more connected themes into a single primary overarching topic in order to construct themes from the data. Only those themes were summarised under a single subject that provided an in-depth understanding of the data and the various categories.

3.6.4 Writing Report

Not all the findings of the study appear in the reports, but only those that were answering the research questions of the study were highlighted as an account of how the investigation itself was carried out. The summary of the findings, implications of those findings and recommendations were included.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

According to Drost (2011:105), the principles of trustworthiness and credibility are necessary in research, as they contribute towards the body of knowledge. The researcher made sure that during the process of this research, credible sources of information were consulted. Participants identified were interviewed and observed. Appropriate methods and designs were chosen as well for this study. The results

obtained were credible and trustworthy, such that another study done after this could produce almost the same results. Cho and Trent (2006:320) state that credibility can be achieved using appropriate research methods and techniques.

The most important aspect of trustworthiness is the repetition of similar results obtained by utilising the same procedures. The literature reviewed and published in internationally recognized journals and consulted dissertations was compiled following acceptable social research steps. Even books published before this study and related to this study were consulted.

3.8 TRIANGULATION

In this study a number of data collection approaches, for example, interviews, observation and document analysis, were used to collect data. This is called triangulation according to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Leedy (1997). Saunders et al. (2000:99) define triangulation as, ‘the use of different data collection methods within one study in order to ensure the data are telling you what you think they are telling you.’ This is supported by Yin (2003) in Mpiti (2016), as he contends that triangulation is used in social study to include the use of several approaches and actions of an experiential phenomenon in order to gather multiple perceptions on the similar issue to gain a complete understanding of the phenomenon.

The use of triangulation according to Mouton (2009) is likely to influence the findings’ credibility and reliability. This means that the data collection methods supplement one another in such a way that the disadvantage of one is uplifted by the advantage of another one. Mouton (2009: 156) opines that by supporting one another, ‘their respective shortcomings can be balanced out.’

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the research paradigm, research design, methodology, data collection, document analysis and the trustworthiness of the study. The next chapter will focus on the outline of the schools observed, classroom arrangement, EFAL



teachers' portfolios, presentation and analysis of data, a reflection of the participants' responses, observations and documentary analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The information necessary to carry out this investigation using a qualitative research approach was presented in detail in the preceding chapter. This chapter's objective is to present and analyse the data that were gathered through direct observations, semi-structured interviews and documentary research. The primary data were utilised in order to answer the primary objective of the study, which is to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills among the learners in Grade 4 in KleinLetaba Circuit.

To provide the readers with some information about the people who participated in the study, some data like the participants' gender, home language and subjects taught, qualifications and teaching experience were considered. The researcher visited the four sampled primary schools in Klein Letaba Circuit and conducted interviews with four Grade 4 EFAL teachers, the four principals, and two language curriculum advisors. Additionally, the researcher observed teachers and learners at these schools.

To encourage adherence to ethical considerations, such as anonymity, privacy and confidentiality, as attested in the preceding chapter, the researcher utilised pseudonyms for the identities of schools, teachers, learners, principals and curriculum advisors. This was done in order to protect the data. The four EFAL teachers are referred to as T1, T2, T3 and T4; Learners as Ln1, Ln2, etc., principals as P1, P2, P3 and P 4, while curriculum advisors are referred to as CA1 and CA2. The researcher observed and interviewed one male teacher and three females as well. The teachers were observed teaching their learners in their classes. The researcher interviewed two female and two male principals as well. Both curriculum advisors who were interviewed were males.

The direct quotations from the transcripts of both lesson observations and interviews will be provided as proof for the readers to assess if the findings are correct or not.

4.2 THE OUTLINE OF THE SCHOOLS OBSERVED

The sampled schools are in Mopani East district in Klein Letaba Circuit. School A has two hundred and seventy-four learners, with thirty-one Grade 4 learners; school B has five hundred and ninety-two, with eighty Grade 4 learners. School C has five hundred and seventy-six learners, with one hundred and six Grade 4 learners and school D has one thousand and seventeen learners, with hundred and six Grade 4 learners. The languages of teaching and learning from Grades 4 to 6 are English First Additional Language and Xitsonga, and the latter is the learner's mother tongue. All schools run from Grades R to 7. Schools A and B are run by female managers, while schools C and D are run by male principals.

4.3 CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENT

On the first day of the observations in all four schools, the researcher arrived at different times as arranged by the researcher and the principals. EFAL teachers introduced the researcher to the Grade 4 learners.

4.3.1 School A

The classroom was neat, and the learners were arranged in pairs on a desk to observe COVID-19 rules. The teacher's table was in front of the learners' desks but on the left-hand side, next to the window, thus facing the classroom door.

4.3.2 School B

The learners were also made to sit in pairs at a desk. The teacher's table was in front of the learners' tables, on the left-hand side, facing the classroom door because this classroom was overcrowded.

4.3.3 School C

The EFAL learners were also grouped in pairs. The teacher's table was in front of the learners' desks, also on the left-hand side, facing the door, and this class was also overcrowded.

4.3.4 School D

The learners in this class were grouped into the above-mentioned schools, but this class was the most overcrowded of them all. The teacher's table was in front of the learners' desks, close to the chalkboard and on the right-hand side, next to the right window.

4.4 EFAL TEACHERS' PORTFOLIO

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this study aims at investigating the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL in schools. During the observation lessons, the researcher desired to observe how the EFAL teachers teach reading and writing activities to the learners, to observe the EFAL classroom environments and ascertain the dominant language in their teaching and learning environment.

Table 4.1: The Profile of the EFAL Teachers

Pseudonym	Gender	Home-language	Subjects Taught	Teaching Experience	Qualifications
T1	Female	Tsonga	Life Orientation English Life skills	17 years	STD
T2	Female	Sepedi	Social – Sciences and EMS English, Social Sciences and Life Skills	29 years	SPTD, ACE & ABET
T3	Male	Tsonga	English, Technology & Social Sciences	26 years	SPTD
T4	Female	Tsonga	English & Natural sciences	11 years	SPTD, ACE & B HONS in Management

The table above explains that teacher 1 (T1) is female, with 17 years of teaching experience in the Intermediate Phase. Her mother tongue is Xitsonga. She offers Life Orientation, EFAL, Life Skills and Social Sciences. She obtained Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD) in education, which qualified her to teach in secondary school. Teacher 2 (T2) is female, with 29 years of teaching experience in the Intermediate Phase. Her mother tongue is Sepedi. She offers EFAL, Social Sciences and Life Skills. She obtained a Senior Primary Teacher Diploma (SPTD) in education, which qualified her to teach in the Intermediate Phase. She furthered her studies and obtained an Advance Certificate in Education (ACE) and Adult Basic Education and Training certificate (ABET). Teacher 3 (T3) is male, with 26 years of teaching experience in the Intermediate Phase. His mother tongue is Xitsonga. He offers EFAL, Technology and Social Sciences. He obtained an SPTD in education. Teacher 4 (T4) is also female, with 11 years of teaching experience. Her mother tongue is Xitsonga. She offers EFAL and Natural Sciences. She also obtained an SPTD in education, furthered her studies and obtained ACE and Honours in Management.

4.5 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The researcher analysed data from the participants (EFAL teachers, principals, and the curriculum advisors) interviewed and observed in selected schools in Klein Letaba Circuit. The responses of the participants have been defined in the following tables, for example, Table 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. The researcher used tape-recorded data, recorded teaching observations, interviews, learners' exercise books and EFAL record sheets of the sampled schools. Then, within the data collected, the data which had common responses were recorded once to avoid duplication.

4.6 REFLECTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES

4.6.1 Reflection on Teacher's Responses

The total number of participants were ten. Each of the ten participants was asked question 1 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**Which of the 4 skills in EFAL are your learners challenged with?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

4.6.1.1 Skills Challenging Learners

Table 4.2: Skills Challenging Learners

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES				
		Listening, speaking, writing, reading	Reading, writing	Reading, speaking and writing	Writing, speaking	Reading
Teachers	4	3	1	0	0	0
Principals	4	0	2	1	1	0
Curriculum Advisors	2	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	10	3	4	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, 40% indicated that skills that challenges learners are reading and writing, and 30% indicated all 4 skills.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 1, which deals with skills challenging learners, reveal that most learners struggle with reading and writing skills. But there were also learners who could not fairly handle listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. It is therefore prudent for teacher to teach learners reading and writing skills. All the responses given in Table 4.2 above show that there is a need for a strategy that would be used to address challenges of reading and writing in schools.

4.6.1.2 Challenges in skills

The total number of participants were ten. Each of the ten participants was asked question 2 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**Explain the challenges that your learners have in these skills**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several sub-themes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.2: Challenges in Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Learners unable to write meaningful words, they write words without vowels struggle to read	They have challenges in pronouncing words. In writing, they don' space and they write out of out of lines	They seem to have hearing and vision problems. They lack writing vocabulary, spell words incorrectly	They are unable to read with understanding and unable to write
Teachers	4	0	4	0	0
Principals	4	0	4	0	0
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	10	1	8	0	1

Of all the participants interviewed, 80% indicated that learners have challenges pronouncing words and in spacing words as they write.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 2, which deals with challenges that learners have in these skills reveal that most learners struggle with pronouncing and writing skills. But there were also learners who are challenges with other skills. All the responses given in Table 4.3 above show that there is a need for a strategy that would be used to address pronunciation for the sake of teaching reading and writing in schools.

4.6.1.3 Challenges in teaching reading and writing skills

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 3 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) ('**What challenges do you have in teaching reading and writing skills**'). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.3: Challenges in Teaching Reading and Writing Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Teachers are not thoroughly trained to teach reading and writing	Learners lack concentration in reading.	learners are having hearing and vision problems if words are written in small letters.	Learners have hearing problems. Learners cannot read.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they have challenges in handling all skills.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

Teacher 1 said she has challenges to teach reading and writing skills because she is not thoroughly trained to teach language because she is a secondary teacher, at her school there is a program called PSRIP which assists her to teach. Teacher 2 said her learners lack concentration in reading, most of her learners cannot understand English word and they cannot write English words. Teacher 3 said that learners lack writing vocabulary, they have poor spelling, vision and hearing problems, T3 went on to say that his learners also have vision problems because they fail to read words written in small letters; they lack writing vocabulary; poor spelling; then Teacher 4 said it is difficult for her teach them because they cannot read. One teacher out of the two remaining said her learners lack concentration in reading; they cannot understand English words and they cannot write English words, while the other teacher feels she is incompetent to teach reading and writing because she is a secondary teacher, and she is not thoroughly trained to teach language in primary school. Lastly, Teacher 4 said her learners are having hearing problems, learners who cannot read create a problem.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 3, which deals with challenges teachers have in teaching reading and writing skills reveal that all teachers struggle with teaching and writing skills. All the responses given in Table 4.3 above show that there is a need for a strategy that would be used to address teachers' challenges regarding teaching and writing skills.

4.6.1.4 Factors contributing to poor reading and writing skills

The total number of participants were ten. Each of the ten participants was asked question 4 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) ("**What factors contribute to poor reading and writing skills**"). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.4: Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Age cohort	Lacking concentration to reading/ Lack Writing Skills	Hearing and vision Challenges	Overcrowding in Classrooms
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
Principals	4	1	2	1	0
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1	0	0
TOTAL	10	3	4	2	1

Of all the participants interviewed, 40% indicated that they have challenges in concentrating while reading and that they lack writing skills. About 30% of participants blamed the age cohort.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

About lack of concentration, Teacher 4 (T4) explained that most of the learners are unable to read comprehension passages and those who can read, read without understanding and some are unable to write.

Teachers (T1) and (T4) reported that their learners have difficulties with all four language skills, except for reading. They get disinterested in what they are hearing

during listening lessons. Additionally, (T4) asserted that some of her learners are unable to read comprehension passages, while others cannot write, and those who can read appear to have little knowledge of the text they were reading.

The researcher went on to ask the participants to specify the challenges that they have in teaching reading and writing skills.

Teacher (T1) said that she has problem in teaching reading and writing because she is from secondary school, she not thoroughly/ effectively trained to teach language but fortunately, her school is selected for (PISRIP) program, and the program helps a lot. More especially for the gifted children but for the slow ones, it's really difficult to teach them.

Teachers (T1) is teaching at a primary school, but she is a secondary trained teacher, thus she was not properly trained to teach language at the primary school level. As a result, she had difficulty teaching reading and writing skills to primary school learners.

Teacher (T2) believed that the learners are unable to concentrate during reading classes, although the learners are in the foundation part of the curriculum. She explained that her learners lack concentration when reading because Grade 4 is a transitional zone where these learners are from Grade 3, most learners cannot understand English words and they cannot write English words.

Teacher (T3) claims that he has difficulties with teaching reading and writing because learners lack writing abilities and have poor spelling skills as well. Teacher (T3) said in the beginning of the year, his learners had a problem because even after model reading to them, they used to read something that was not in the story or text read. He also mentioned that is learners have vision and hearing problem, more especially when reading text written in small letters. He said that in short, his learners lack writing vocabulary and have poor spelling. Teacher (T4) explained that

the main problem is that most learners have hearing problems, and it is difficult for them to read and write.

Teacher (T4) holds the same beliefs as Teacher (T3) with regards to learners who have hearing difficulties. The participants were asked to explain what they think might be the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills.

Then, Teacher (T1) placed the blame on the Department of Education, stating that the "Age Cohort" system, which allows learners to advance from one grade to another even if they are not proficient, is one of the factors that contribute to the problem of poor reading among these learners.

Teacher (T2) believed that these learners' reading and writing skills are suffering from a lack of concentration. Some of them write on lines rather than between the lines, which is common.

Teacher (T3) believed that learners' poor vision, hearing challenges and a lack of writing vocabulary are the main causes.

Teacher (T4) claimed that overcrowding in the classroom makes it difficult for teachers to attend to the needs of learners who are struggling with reading and writing skills.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 4, which deals with factors which contribute to poor reading and writing skills reveal that learners, especially those who have come of age struggle with concentration while reading and lack writing skills. All the responses given in Table 4.4 above show that there is a need for a strategy that would be used to address reading with concentration, hearing and vision amongst learners, and shortage of writing skills.

4.6.1.5 Teaching spelling to learners

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 5 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How do you teach spelling to**

your EFAL learners?). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.5: Teaching Spelling to Learners

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Use of phonic chart; write different letters and sound them to the learners; ask them to sound after	Give search words in the dictionary; give them chance to dictate words and sentences to be able to write	Use of vocabulary words from stories read; make flash cards; show them and paste on the chalkboard;	Write words on the chalkboard, spell the words loudly; explain meanings of the words,
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they teaching spelling to EFAL learners by writing words on the chalkboards, spell words loudly, explain meanings, give search words in the dictionaries and sounding phonic charts.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

Teacher 1 (T1) said that She uses a phonic review chart, write different sounds on the chalkboard, pounces the sounds three times for the learners, draws a table for words sounds, pounces them for them, asks them to read after her, asks them to build words with those sounds. T2 said that she lets her learners search words in the dictionary, then dictate those words and sentences. T3 said that he

uses vocabulary words to make flash cards, he raises each word up quietly and pastes them on the chalkboard, reads them two times, spells them and gives them a chance to spell them. T4 said that she writes the words on the chalkboard, spells the words loudly, explains their meaning.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 5, which deals with teaching spelling to your EFAL learners reveal that teachers teach spelling to the learners, but from the four sampled schools, T1 and T3 use similar methods of teaching spelling while T2 and T4 use different methods of teaching spelling from each other. This tells teachers in the Klein Letaba Circuit are not trained to teach the language skills the same way.

4.6.1.6 Teaching reading to the learners

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 6 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How do you teach reading to your learners?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.6: Teaching Reading to the Learners

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Read topic, sub-topic of the story and explain its meaning, ask learners to look at the pictures and title or subheading, ask them to look at picture and topic predict what the story will be about.	I chose the story to read about. If it has pictures, I give them a chance to predict what the story will be about. Write difficult words on the chalkboard, read the words, give their meanings, I read the story for them, give them a chance to read and	Ask them to turn to page of the story, ask questions about the pictures and title to predict what the text will be about, let them read the text	This requires a teacher who is willing to help learners to teach reading.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they are teaching reading to EFAL learners by using story books, read the topics and explain the meanings.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

Teacher 1 said that she first reads the title of the story to the learners and explains its meaning. Asks learners to look at the pictures of the story and lets them predict what they think the story will be about. Asks them to identify the words they do not understand their meaning. She writes those on the chalkboard, explains the words to them. Asks them to write the words and their meaning in their personal dictionaries. She models reading to them first, explains the story read. Asks them questions about the story to check understanding. T2 said that she chose the story to be read for her learners. If it has pictures, she also lets them predict as Teacher 1 did, writes difficult words on the chalkboard, asks them to give its meanings, if they fail, she assists. She also models reading for them, gives them chance to read and lastly asks them questions about the story. T3 introduces the theme of two weeks to the learners. Writes vocabulary words about the text on the flash cards, asks the learners to turn to the page of the text to be read, asks them questions about the pictures if they are there and uses the title and pictures to let them predict the text, lets them read the text silently. He models reading to them following three steps for reading, so that they can be able to pronounce words correctly, be fluent. Lastly, he asks them questions about the text. T4 said that teaching reading requires a teacher who is willing to teach learners reading.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 6, which deals with teaching reading to your EFAL learners reveal that teachers teach reading to the learners, but use similar way of teaching reading, they train their learners to follow a process of reading, for example they let their learners read the title, pictures, let learners predict what they think the story will be about, look for difficult words from stories and explain those words, model reading for their learners, give chance to the learners to read while they listen to how they read, at the end ask them questions to check their understanding. One teacher

did not explain how she teaches reading to her learners. With the above-mentioned information, the researcher assumes that teachers in Klein Letaba are trained to teach reading, but they seem not trained the same.

4.6.1.7 Reasons to teach reading

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 7 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**Why do you do teaching?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.7: Reasons to Teach Reading

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		To be able to express themselves in writing different genres.	To gain understanding, develop their minds and improve their listening skills.	Encourage them to read different reading materials and reading for fun.	For phonic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they teach to make learners to be aware of phonics, as vocabulary development, to encourage them to read, develop their minds and to assist learners to express themselves in EFAL.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

Teacher (T1) said that she teaches reading to her learner because she needs them to be able to express themselves in writing different genres. T2 said that she wants them to gain understanding, Teacher 1 (T1) said that she teaches reading to her learners develop their minds and to improve their listening skills. T3 said that he wants to encourage them to read different reading materials and to read for fun. T4, she wants her learners to have phonic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and to be fluent in reading.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 7, which deals with the purpose of teaching skills to EFAL learners reveal that all four teachers have reasons for teaching reading to their learners. T1 teaches reading because she wants her learners to become writers. T2 needs her learners to improve their listening skills and gain knowledge, T3 wants to motivate his learners to read different books, read for enjoyment and T4 needs her learners to read so that they can be fluent, reading for understanding and gain English language vocabulary.

4.6.1.8 General performance to descriptive writing

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 8 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How are your learners' overall performance to descriptive writing?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.8: General Performance to Descriptive Writing

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Most learners have problems, but some learners enjoy it.	The performance low hence they need to be helped, some are good.	In the beginning of the year, they were not good but now they are getting there.	Moderate performance.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that their learners are low, moderate and good in descriptive writing in EFAL.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

Teacher 1(T1) said that most learners have a problem in descriptive writing, but some enjoy it. T2 said that their performance is low, they need to be helped but some are good. T3 said that at the beginning of the year they were not good but now they are good. T4, said that they perform moderately.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 8, which deals with learners' performance in descriptive writing are that learners in most schools in Klein Letaba have a challenge with descriptive writing as a result they need help from their teachers.

4.6.1.9 Teaching descriptive writing

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 9 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How do you teach descriptive writing?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they teach descriptive writings to make learners have basic writing skills, writing model in EFAL.

Table 4.9: Teaching Descriptive Writing

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		There is a problem in teaching descriptive writing, but the program PSRIP helps a lot. I'm using writing frame, demonstrate to them how they should write descriptive writing.	I introduce the topic of the writing to write on, draw two columns, the questions and answers.	I model writing for them, show how to write an address, sometimes I leave out some words on the address and let them complete them.	I teach them basic writing skills and encourage them to read literature that is written in a descriptive way.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

T1 stated that she has a problem to teach descriptive writing but since her school is piloted to PSRIP program. Then the program does wonders, most of her learners enjoy it a lot. She uses a writing

frame and demonstrates to the learners how they should write. She introduces the topic to write on, draws two columns e.g., on the left-hand side she writes some guiding questions and, on the right, hand side she writes the answers to the questions, then uses the answer to write a paragraph. T2 said she gives them a topic to discuss, leading them to discussion in the form of questions. T3 said that he models writing for them, shows them how to write an address. Sometimes he leaves out some words on the address and lets them complete them. T4 said she teaches them basic writing skills and encourages them to read descriptive literature.

FINDINGS: The findings of question 9, which deals with how to teach descriptive writing reveal that T1 and T2 use the similar method to teach descriptive writing to their learners. T3 reveals that teacher model by leaving out some spaces to let learners complete what was left out. T4 does not tell how she teaches her learners, but she says that she teaches the learners basic writing skills and encourages them to read descriptive text. The findings also show that teachers in the Klein Letaba Circuit do not receive the same training to teach the language skills.

4.6.1.10 Reasons to teach writing

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 10 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**Why do you teach writing?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.10: Reasons to Teach Writing

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		They are expected to express themselves to write essays and letters	To teach them to write sentences and able to communicate with writing	So that they can become responsible citizen. To become books writers and encourage them to write for fun.	To make them better understand vocabulary concepts.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that the reasons for teaching writing were that learners should write sentences, letters and essays and to have a better understanding of vocabulary concepts.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

T1 said that she teaches them writing because they are expected to write letters and essays. T2, said that they are to write sentences, T3 said that so that they have writing foundation to write books for living and write for fun, T4 says that she wants them to have a better understanding of vocabulary concepts.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that learners were taught to improve their writing skills.

4.6.1.11 Giving your learners reading activities

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 11 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How often do you give your learners reading activities?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.11: Giving your Learners Reading Activities

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES		
		We let them read twice weekly.	Reading is a daily activity.	Reading activities are given very often.
Teachers	4	1	2	1
TOTAL	4	1	2	1

Of all the participants interviewed, 50% indicated that they give learners reading activities as reading is regarded as a daily activity, but it is done differently.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

T1 said that she engages her learners in reading twice a week and

T4 said that she engages her learners in reading always.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teachers give their learners reading activities, but they do it differently, most of them engage learners in reading daily, some twice, others always.

4.6.1.12 The overall performance for reading activities

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 12 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How is your learners' overall performance to reading activities?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.12: The Overall Performance for Reading Activities

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Lots of learners struggle to read, even if they are assisted.	They differ, some are better readers, moderate and under performers. Most can read.	They are now good but before they were not good.	They will receive more reading activities.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 12 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How is your learners' overall performance to reading activities?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that the performance of reading activities varied, as some are good, better and there are also those who struggle.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

T1 said that her learners struggle to read even if she assists them, T2 said that her learners are not the same, most are good, some moderate and others struggle. T3 said that now he is confident that they are good but earlier, they were not good. T4 said that they need to receive more reading activities.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that the performance of all learners is not optimal in reading given activities, hence most of them need to be taught reading. Kind of support received from the subject advisors to improve reading and writing skills.

4.6.1.13 Kind of support received from the subject advisors to improve reading and writing skills

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 13 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What kind of support do you get from subject advisors to improve your learners' reading and writing?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.13: Kind of Support Received from the Subject Advisors to Improve Reading and Writing Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		They give us materials, worksheets, booklets to give learners'	They arrange workshops, organised spelling competitions.	They visit our schools to teach us how to teach these skills. Send us a video on how to teach.	Sometimes support, advise me to teach more reading and writing.
Teachers	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they get advice, training, workshops and spelling competitions and they are given materials, worksheets, booklets and questions to give to learners.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

T1 said that the curriculum advisors give them the materials to teach with, T2 said that they train them and organised the completions, T3 said that they visit to his school, give them materials to teach with, T4 said that they advise her to engage her learners in reading and writing skills.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teachers are trained to teach the four language skills, but they are trained or supported differently. To most schools, teachers are

trained, given resources, to some school's teachers are only trained but not given some resources to help them.

4.6.1.14 Strategies to improve reading and writing skills

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 14 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.14: Strategies to Improve Reading and Writing Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES				
		Prediction, visualise, search words, summarise text. Able to make connections from the story to real life situation and evaluate.	Give learners reading and writing activities, homework and reading for fun, give words search or puzzles, can improve their reading and writing skills.	Teaching learners' phonics, teaches them to cut long or difficult words into syllables so they can be able to read them, exposing learners to reading for fun. In writing, engaging them to write for fun, those who have spelling mistakes,	Get a paragraph and let them copy it, according to how it is several times then control the writing.	Grouping learners, they choose a group leader who will teach them in reading and writing.
Teachers	4	1	1	0	1	1
Principals	4	1	1	1	1	0
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	10	3	3	1	2	1

Of all the participants interviewed, 30% indicated that strategies to predict, visualize, search words, summarize text, reading and writing texts could be used to improve reading and writing skills. And 20% indicated that making learners copy given paragraphs several times could as well assist.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

T1 revealed the strategies she uses at the beginning of year as, lets learners predict, visualise, search words, summarise the text read, making connections from the story to learners' real-life experiences and evaluation at the end seem helpful to them. T2 suggested that giving learners reading and writing activities, such as homework's, essay writing, lets them read for fun, do some word search or puzzles can improve their reading and writing. T3 suggested the teaching phonics, cutting long or difficult words into syllables, will make them read. For writing, he suggested that learners be encouraged to write for fun, poor spellers, be given a paragraph to copy it until they write it correctly and their writing be controlled. T4 suggested that learners be grouped, a group leader helps the weaker learners.

Teacher (T1) shared that reading can be improved if the learners are engaged in a reading activity or lesson, and they predict, visualise, search words, summarise the text, make connections from the story to their real-life situations and evaluate at the end of the lesson through reading. Learners must be given a chance to prove that they can read, even if they are asked questions about what they have been reading, they should be able to answer those questions. Teacher (T2) said that giving learners reading and writing activities, such as homework, engaging them in essay writing, letting them read for fun and doing some word searches/puzzles can improve their reading and writing skills.

Teacher (T3) believed that to improve reading, one should teach phonics, and teach learners to cut long or difficult words into syllables to be able to read them. There is a need to expose the learners to different books to read. To improve writing skills, one should encourage the learners to write for fun. For the learners who have poor spelling, they should be given a paragraph and let them copy it numerously. If a learner continues to copy it wrongly, teachers should let the learner copy it until he/she copied it correctly. Teacher (T4) reported that grouping the learners in their different abilities and then choosing a group leader who will help those who fail to read and write can be useful in improving reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners.

In summary, the EFAL teachers in the Klein Letaba circuit maintained that reading and writing skills can be improved if:

- Learners are taught phonics, to cut long or difficult words into syllables so that they can read them with ease.
- Expose learners to different books to read.
- Group learners into their different abilities, and then choose a group of learners who will assist those who fail to read and write.
- Learners should be given writing activities, such as homework and essays.
- Engaging learners to read for fun and doing some word searches can improve their reading and writing skills.
- For learners with poor spelling, teachers should get a paragraph and let the learners copy the paragraph as many times as possible, and then teachers give themselves time to control the learners' writing. If a learner continues to make mistakes, then that learner needs more chances to re-do the task until they reach perfection.

A similar question 6 was asked to the principals. The two principals (P1 and P 2) supported the idea that teachers should focus on teaching letter sounds, phonics, letters of the alphabet.

Principal SMT1 further said that learners be made to read every day and be engaged to the several types of reading. E.g., group and

individual reading. P2 further suggested that to improve reading and writing, learners should be taught to differentiate between the vowels and consonants within the letters of the alphabet, combine vowels and consonants to produce a certain sound. P3 suggested that the words and paragraphs taught to the learners should be left on the walls for them to always remember what they have taught previously. P4 suggested that if teachers were willing to help the struggling learners even after their teaching hours, then reading and writing would improve.

In response, Principal (P1) said that teachers should be encouraged to teach English as a subject of teaching and learning. Teachers should motivate learners to speak and give answers in English. Another way is to start competitions, dramas, debates, and reading at the school and circuit levels. Learners should be encouraged to read many books.

Principal (P2) suggested that learners should be helped to differentiate the letters of the alphabet and phonics. They should be made to know that letter 'C' is pronounced as 'c' cat, cut and cup.

Principal (P3) said that if it were possible, Grade 3 learners are supposed to be taught all subjects in English, except their mother tongue, so that when they start Grade 4, they would be used to the occasional use of English. She further suggested that at the school level, drama should be introduced to make this language fun for the learners. Teachers should be patient with the learners when teaching them reading and writing because they are still young and take time to comprehend a newer concept. Principal (P4) suggested that the Department of Education should review its promotional policy, where learners are made to progress even if they are not ready to progress.

In summary, regarding the strategies that can be implemented by Grade 4 EFAL teachers, the principals shared some of the following points:

Teachers should teach the learners to differentiate the letters of the alphabet and phonics, by making the learners aware that the letter 'B', for example, is pronounced as 'b' for book, boot and boat.

Grade 3 learners should be taught all subjects in English, except their mother tongue so that the learners get used to the English language. The teachers should be patient and dedicate their time when teaching these learners, for they are still young. The Department of Education should evaluate the promotional policy, where learners are made to progress from one grade to another grade even if the learner is not ready to advance.

The same question 6 was asked to the curriculum advisors:

The Curriculum Advisors (CA1) suggested that learners be given enough time to practice, teachers be patient with learners and give them work that is interesting to them with visuals. CA2 said that teachers must understand the reading and writing steps, where he mentioned that in reading and viewing, listening skill and in writing activities e.g., planning, drafting, editing and final writing.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that both teachers, principals and curriculum advisors are aware of how to improve the learners reading and writing skills. Most teachers, principals and curriculum advisors mentioned that the teaching of letters of alphabet, phonics, reading steps, engaging learners to different types of reading and encouraging them to read for fun can be used to improve reading skill while teaching of writing processes, encouraging them to write for fun and teachers control their writing can be used to improve the writing skills.

4.6.2 The Challenges of Reading and Writing Skills as Alluded to by the principal in Selected Schools

The principals as were also interviewed on the challenges of reading and writing to grade 4 EFAL learners.

4.6.2.1 Individual opinions about overall performance of reading and writing skills

The total number of participants were four. Each of the four participants was asked question 1 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**Are you happy about the overall performance of the grade 4's reading and writing skills activities?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several sub-themes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.15: Individual Opinions about Overall Performance of Reading and Writing Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Not happy, only a few learners can read with understanding.	Learners fail to write and respond to the questions asked.	Learners write English words in Xitsonga language.	General promotional policy, age cohort.
Principals	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they are not happy as only a few learners can read and write, some learners fail to respond to questions given, learners seem to memorise what they did with teachers and learners were writing English words in Xitsonga language.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

Both principals revealed that they are not happy with the overall performance of the learners. P1 elaborated that only a few learners can read with understanding, most learners read without understanding, they are unable to write and fail to respond to the questions asked. P2 said that learners seem to memories what they did with their teachers. P3 most learners write English words in Xitsonga while P4 maintains that learners are unable to read and write. He further mentioned that the general problem is promotional policy, age cohort.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that all the principals and curriculum advisors were not happy with overall performance of reading and writing skills for the learners in the Klein Letaba Circuit.

4.6.2.2 Times to support Grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 2 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How often do you give support to the grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.16: Times to Support Grade 4 Teachers in Teaching the Four Language Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Almost every day because I am also teaching the learners.	Every second week of the month.	Every day I talk to the teachers.	Once quarterly.
Principals	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that they support teachers, every day, weekly, every second week and quarterly.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

P1 said that she supports them almost every day. P2 said that he supports them every second week of the month. P3 revealed that she every day she talks with teachers. P4 said that teachers are supported once quarterly.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that all principals support the grade 4 teachers in teaching reading and writing skills in this circuit, but the support is not regularly.

4.6.2.3 Support given to the Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 3 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**what kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.17: Support Given to the Grade 4 Teachers in Helping them to Acquire Language Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Engage learners in reading and writing and check how	Encourage to attend workshops.	Encourage to help in reading and writing,	Reading activities
Principals	4		2	1	1
TOTAL	4		2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, 50% indicated that they control learners' work, and also encouraged teachers to attend workshops,

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

P1 said she supports Grade 4 by engaging the learners to read and write during her lesson, because she is also teaching the learners, she also encourages them to attend the workshops for their subjects, she ensures that teachers have necessary teaching materials to

teach the learners and visits teachers in their classes to check how they teach. P2 said that they encourage teachers to help learners to read and write English language because it is a language in which if learners fail to read and write, they perform badly in other subjects. P3 explained that they do reading lessons at the school assembly and give teachers the resources. P4 revealed that they do internal workshops at school where teachers are supported, on most Wednesday and Fridays, the school has reading lessons at the assembly in support of teachers, and they also control learners' books.

FINDINGS: The **findings reveal that** most principals support their Grade 4 teachers in conducting workshops and controlling of books.

4.6.2.4 Language skills Grade 4 learners have challenge with

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 4 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.18: Language Skills Grade 4 Learners have Challenge with

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		Speaking, reading and writing skills	Reading and writing skills. Writing and reading skills.
Principals	4	1	3
TOTAL	4	1	3

Of all the participants interviewed, 75% indicated that learners struggle with reading and writing skills.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

Ps1, 2 and 4 revealed that their learners have challenges in their reading and writing skills. P 3 said that her learners have challenges in writing skill. P1 further mentioned that her learners also have a challenge in speaking skill.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that most learners in the Klein Letaba Circuit have a challenge of reading and writing skills. But they are those learners that have a challenge of speaking and listening skills.

4.6.2.5 Teachers contribution to Grade 4 learners' poor acquisition of language skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 5 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contribute towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in Grade 4?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.19: Teachers Contribution to Grade 4 Learners' Poor Acquisition of Language Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Teachers are trying their best, but learners are confused by the teachers' rotation in the intermediate phase which is not there in the foundation phase.	Teachers do not instil English language to the learners but ask questions to the learners in Xitsonga but set question papers in English.	learners are not the same, some are fast, and some are slow.	Teachers focus on seven hours. no extra time to assist the struggling learners.
Principals	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that teachers do not have extra time to work with slow and struggling learners and use Xitsonga to teach English language and confuse learners when they rotate classes.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

P1 said that teachers try their best to teach the learners but these learners are from the Foundation Phase, where they were used to be taught by one teacher, in Grade 4 teachers rotate so this situation frustrates the learners. P2 said that teachers in the Grade 4 teach learners in Xitsonga claiming that learners do not understand English, but they set the questions to the learners in English, this makes learners to have problem in language skill. P3 said that teachers try themselves to help learners, but these learners are not the same intellectually, teachers give them homework, engage to

different reading types. P4 blames the teachers for not giving themselves extra time to teach the struggling learners but stick to the seven teaching hours.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teachers are trying to teach learners, but the teaching situation in most schools whereby the foundation phase learners are used to be taught by one teacher but when they progress to Grade 4 intermediate phase, teachers start to rotate frustrate these learners and the learners' different intellectually are the contributing factors to can be blamed. And that teachers are using incorrect method to instill English language vocabulary to these learners, because they teach English language to the learners in their mother tongue (Xitsonga) claiming that learners do not understand English but expect them to perform well in English tests, and that teachers do not sacrifice their time to assist the struggling learners, but they stick to their seven working hours even if they have struggling learners in the language skills.

4.6.2.6 Strategies to improve reading and reading skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 6 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.20: Strategies to Improve Reading and Reading Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		To reading and writing, learners should know the letters of alphabet, be able to differentiate vowels and consonants from letters of alphabet.	Be able to combine the consonants with vowels to produce a certain sound. They should know phonics and read a lot.	To write words and paragraphs, teachers leave the taught lesson the wall to let learners always remember what.	Parents must also help their children.
Principals	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that strategies such as teaching of letters of alphabet, phonics and engaging learners to too much reading will assist.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

The two principals P1 and P2 attest that in improving reading and writing skills, teachers should focus on teaching letters sound, be able to differentiate between the vowels and consonants within the letters of alphabet, be able to combine vowels and consonants to produce a certain sound and read a lot. P3 said that lessons taught previously should be left on the classroom walls foot learners to always remember what they did previously. P4 maintains that if teachers were willing to assist struggling learners after teaching hours, then reading and writing skills should be improved.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teaching of letters of alphabet, phonics, engaging learners to too much reading, lessons taught to learners previously be exposed to them on the classrooms' wall to remind them and teachers' willingness to assist learners can improve learners' reading and writing skills.

4.6.2.7 Understanding teaching receptive and productive skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 7 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.21: Understanding Teaching Receptive and Productive Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Reading and listening, engaging to letter sound than letters of alphabet.	Learners must be taught to listen attentively, learners to receive and produce, must be good listeners	writing frames, sentences are used.	Paste ting lots of words on the walls.
Principals	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that learners are supposed to listen to produce what they have listened to and answer questions. And that learners should receive receptive skills from teachers to produce in writing form, sentences and paragraphs, when given words to read, and that stories that learners read should be interesting, with pictures.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

P1 reveals that teaching of receptive and productive skills deals with reading and listening, engaging letters sound instead of letters of alphabet. P2 reveals that for learners to receive and produce, they should be able to listen attentively and answer questions orally. Then they can produce what they have listened to and write or speak what they have heard. P3 reveals that receptive skill is reading skill, the information the teachers give learners give. Then productive skill is writing skill, where frames, sentences and paragraphs are used. P4 reveals that these are words that teachers paste on the wall for the learners to read. Teachers should give learners interesting stories with pictures. Parents should also assist teachers.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that learners are supposed to listen so that they can be able to produce what they have listened to and answer questions. And that receptive skill is reading skill, learners should receive from teachers and produce in writing form, they write sentences and paragraphs, when given words to read, and that stories that learners read should be interesting, with pictures.

4.6.2.8 What to do to improve the Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 8 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What do you think should be done to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.22: What to do to Improve the Grade 4 Learners' Acquisition of Language Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES			
		Starts competitions such as dramas, debates reading.	Learners are helped to differentiate the letters and phonics.	Grade 3 learners be taught all subjects in English except Xitsonga.	review their promotional policy (age cohort).
Principals	4	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	1	1	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that competitions such as dramas, debates reading should be started and learners to be helped to differentiate the letters and phonics. Grade 3 learners to be taught all subjects in English except Xitsonga and review of their promotional policy (Age Cohort).

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

P1 said that teachers should teach English as the subject of teaching and learning. Teachers motivate learners to speak and give answers in English. Teachers start competitions like dramas, debates, reading at schools and circuit level and learners are encouraged to read more books. P2 said that learners in Grade 4 be helped to differentiate the letters of alphabet and phonics. P3 suggested if it is possible the Grade 3 learners be taught all the subject in English except Xitsonga so that the time, they get to Grade 4 be used to

language English. P4 suggested that the Department of Education review the promotional policy (age cohort).

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that language skills can be improved if all teachers teach English language as the subject of teaching and learning, teachers motivate learners to speak and give answers in English language. Teachers start dramas, debates and reading competitions from schools to circuits level, they encourage learners to read more books, learners are helped to differentiate letters and phonics, the Grade 3 learners are taught all the subject in English except Xitsonga and the Department of Education review the promotional policy (age cohort).

4.6.3 The Curriculum Advisors were also Interrogated to Give their Opinions on what they Think could be Done to Improve Grade 4 Learners' Acquisition of Language Skill

The researcher interrogated curriculum advisors to get factors which contributed to poor reading and writing of EFAL grade 4 learners.

4.6.3.1 Personal opinions about learners' overall performance on reading and writing skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 1 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**Are you happy about the overall performance of the Grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several sub-themes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.23: Personal Opinions about Learners' Overall Performance on Reading and Writing Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		Not all, it is not pleasing. Learners cannot read and it affects them Performance negatively.	No, learners are struggling to read and write. However, there is progress because of PISRIP in some schools.
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1
TOTAL	2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that learners cannot read and write.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that he is not happy about learners overall performance because learners cannot read. CA2 maintains that he is also not happy because learners are struggling to read and write but they have progress because they follow the strategies by PISRIP in some schools in the circuit.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that the learners' overall performance was not pleasing in the Klein Letaba Circuit because learners cannot read and write.

4.6.3.2 Giving support to Grade 4 teachers in teaching language skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 2 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**How often do you give support to the grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?**). The responses are

included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.24: Giving Support to Grade 4 Teachers in Teaching Language Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES		
			Once a semester or per term. They are supported when programs are given to them.	At the beginning of term, teachers are workshopped face to face or virtual. PISRIP has lesson plans, worksheets and trackers that help teachers.
Curriculum Advisors	2	0	1	1
TOTAL	2	0	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that teachers are workshopped once per term or at the beginning of the semester.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that teachers are supported once per term or semester, and they support teachers when they are given a program. CA2 said that teachers are workshopped at the beginning of each term, they workshop the virtually or face to face. To some schools that fall under PISRIP project, teachers are given resources like lesson plans, worksheets, and trackers.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that that teachers are workshopped once per term or as curriculum advisors are given program to workshop teachers on. To some schools which fall under the PISRIP project, teachers are given resources to help them.

4.6.3.3 The kind of support given to teachers to acquire language skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 3 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.25: The Kind of Support Given to Teachers to Acquire Language Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		Virtual meeting on all skills or specific skills.	Workshop on how to teach specific topics.
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1
TOTAL	2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that teachers are supported on all or specific skills and to teach specific topics.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that teachers are supported on virtual meetings, supporting them on all or specific skills. CA2 said that teachers are supported through routines on how to teach a specific topic.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teachers are supported on all or specific skills and to teach specific topics.

4.6.3.4 Challenging skills to the learners

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 4 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) **(From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?)**. The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.26: Challenging Skills to the Learners

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		Reading and writing	Reading
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1
TOTAL	2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that learners did not complete the coding and phonics programme in the Foundation Phase.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that learners are challenged by reading and writing skills.

CA2 said that these learners are challenged by reading skill because they did not complete the coding and phonics programme in the Foundation Phase.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that learners' reading challenges was caused by the fact that they did not complete the coding and phonics programme in the Foundation Phase

4.6.3.5 What teachers are not doing that contribute to poor language acquisition by the Grade 4 learners

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 5 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) **(From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in Grade 4?)**. The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.27: What Teachers are not doing that Contribute to Poor Language Acquisition by the Grade 4 Learners

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		Teachers are not giving enough work to the learners because they are overloaded and not well trained.	Teachers do not follow the ATPs and PISRIP project after the training, they pick any topic and teach learners.
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1
TOTAL	2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that teachers do not follow ATPs and do not give enough written work.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that teachers are not giving learners enough work, they are overloaded because they are not well trained. CA2 blamed teachers for not following ATPs and PISRIP project after they have been trained but picking any topic and teaching the learners.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teachers are blamed for not following the annual teaching plan and PISRIP project manual, but other curriculum advisor maintains that they are overloaded because the training given to them is insufficient.

4.6.3.6 Strategies to improve reading and writing skills among learners

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 6 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.28: Strategies to Improve Reading and Writing Skills among Learners

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		The activities given to learners must be interesting. Learners must be given enough time to practice	Teachers must be well prepared
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1
TOTAL	2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that teachers should be well prepared, and learners should be given enough time to practice.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that learners must be given enough time to practice what they have been taught. Teachers must be patient with learners and give them work that is interesting to them with visuals. CA2 said that teachers should understand the reading steps and writing processes when teaching the learners.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that that before the teachers teach reading and writing activities to the learners, they should make sure that they are thoroughly prepared, for example in reading they understand the type of reading to teach to learners, reading steps to follow. In writing, they should also understand the process of teaching them to learners. Learners should be given enough activities, enough time to practice the activities and the activities given to them should be interesting to them.

4.6.3.7 Comment on the approach in receptive and productive skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 7 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.29: Comment on the Approach in Receptive and Productive Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		Teachers need to be empowered and see to it that the skill given to the learners must be lifelong.	In listening, teachers must prepare the learners by explaining what should be done on a said day.
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1
TOTAL	2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that teachers needed to be empowered and that teachers must explain what should be done to learners on the said day.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that teachers need to be empowered and make sure that the skill they give to learners must be a long life. CA2 said that in teaching listening skills, teachers must prepare learners by explaining what should be done on the said day, they must get a buy in of the learners first.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teachers should be supported to instill the love of both reading and writing in learners, so that they help other learners who are unable to read and write, to read, write for their parents, to read, and write for fun, to read, and write for information.

4.6.3.8 What to do to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills

The total number of participants were two. Each of the two participants was asked question 8 in the interview schedule (Appendix C) (**What do you think should be done to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?**). The responses are included in Appendix E. In analysing the responses, several subthemes were identified as can be seen in the table indicated below.

Table 4.30: What to do to Improve Grade 4 Learners' Acquisition of Language Skills

RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	RESPONSES	
		Teachers should start teaching from the learning basics skills. Teachers need moral support and incentives.	Teachers must teach learners in language structures in context. For example, a verb is a doing word. Teachers should use the story read to show a verb in that story.
Curriculum Advisors	2	1	1
TOTAL	2	1	1

Of all the participants interviewed, all indicated that teachers should teach learners from the start, they should teach learners from the letters of alphabet, show learner how letters are sounded, blended to form words, how words are blended to form sentences and paragraphs.

The researcher's findings are supported by the utterances made by some of the participants who said the following:

CA1 said that teachers should start teaching learners from the language basics. Teachers need to be supported morally they need to be given some incentives. CA2 revealed that language structure must be taught within the context, e.g., a verb is a doing word. Learners should be shown a verb within a sentence in story read. The Department of Education must introduce PISRIP to all schools in the district and circuit. School must receive all the resources and videos implemented with the project.

The curriculum advisor (CA1) said that teachers should start teaching from the start, letters of the alphabet. Teachers should show learners how words are formed by merging different letters to build words. They should model pronunciation for the learners. The government should incentivise primary school teachers so that they become motivated to teach. It is a common belief that a happy person spiritually, the body receives. According to curriculum advisor (CA2), language structures and conventions must be taught in context, for example, a verb is a doing word within a sentence. Teachers must use the text to show a verb in a sentence in the text. Besides, the programme PSRIP must be introduced to all schools within the district and circuits. The resources of PSRIP must be given to all schools.

Summary of curriculum advisors' input is as follows:

Teachers should start teaching from the start; they should teach the letters of the alphabet to the learners. They should show learners how words are formed using different letters and how such words are pronounced (Phonic awareness).

Government needs to support primary school teachers through incentives.

Teachers should teach language structures and conventions in context, that is, when learners are taught parts of speech, they must be taken from the text. Learners should be shown such aspects in sentences, and not in word form. They must be taught the meanings of these parts of speech and be able to identify them within a sentence.

Programmes like PSRIP in some schools in Klein Letaba Circuit must be offered to all schools in the district and circuits. Its resources must be beneficial to all schools.

FINDINGS: The findings reveal that teachers should teach learners from the start, they should teach learners from the letters of alphabet, show learner how letters are sounded, blended to form words, how words are blended to form sentences and paragraphs. The Department of Education should teachers' incentives so that they can teach learner been happy.

4.7 OBSERVATIONS

The researcher observed all the sampled schools but on different days. Each school was observed once due to time constraints. The observation lasted for about sixty minutes in each school. All the classroom observations were audio recorded. In observed schools, all teachers preferred to engage the learners in reading activities. The first school observed was school C, followed by school B, and school A and the last one was school D. This order was made according to the researcher and the principals' agreement.

4.7.1 Lesson Observed – School A

The teacher introduced his lesson, and it was about the story “Slithering snake”. The teacher first asked the learners to look at the title of the story and tell what they think the story might be about. He gave the learners time to think and discuss the title.

Then one learner attempted to answer:

Learner (Ln1): *“I think it will be about a snake.”*

Teacher (T3): *“Where do we find snakes?”*

After that, different learners answered: “in the garden, in the forest”. Then, the teacher motivated them to give the answers in sentence form.

Teacher (T3): He wrote unfamiliar words on the chalkboard: season, breath, activate, slithering and relieved. He read each word and spelt each of them and then asked the learners to do as he did. He told them that he was going to read the story and they should look and point out the words that he would be reading. I suspected the idea was to make them concentrate.

Teacher (T3): He read the story to the learners while they listened to him and pointed at the story's words. As he was reading, at times, he would stop and ask some questions. He did that just to check if they were following.

At times, the teacher would stop and write some words on the chalkboard. The word he wrote was an example of a proper noun and he started writing it in small letters, and then one learner told him that he wrote it incorrectly. Instead, he should start it in capital letters because it is the name of a person.

The lesson was so interesting. Most of the learners were following although some were unengaged. After he finished reading, he asked the learners to read as well.

ALL learners: Read as a group, in pairs and lastly individually.

Teacher (T3): He gave them classwork to answer the questions based on the story read.

FINDINGS: The researcher found that during teaching, unfamiliar words were displayed, read and spelled, but their meanings were not explained to the learners. Learners were also given an opportunity to engage with the teacher when they correct incorrectly written words on the chalkboard. Learners were given a chance to read as group, in pairs and individually and to write about the story read. This exercise was done to test learner's poor reading and writing skills

4.7.2 Lesson Observed – School B

The teacher introduced her lesson, and it was about the title “Spider queen” by Russell Reibock.

She displayed the unfamiliar words on the chalkboard: reward, relax and land, to mention a few. Then, she asked the following questions to the learners as an introduction to the lesson.

Teacher (T2):

“What type of an animal is the spider?”

“How many legs does it have?”

“Where does it live?”

Then, the learners answered the questions as follows:Learners:

“They did not give an answer”

“Six, eight legs”

“In toilet, house.” Then, she advised them to answer in sentence form.

Teacher (T2): She explained that she was going to model reading to them and as she read, they must point at the words. As she reads, deliberately, she could read the word incorrectly to check if they were following her. At times, she would stop reading to let them complete the reading, thus showing that they were reading together.

Learners: The learners read the story as a group, but some learners were not reading. The researcher thought that these were those learners who were unable to read. Then, she wrote some questions on the chalkboard to let them answer the questions orally.

T2: She asked them questions, and the learners answered in word form, but the teacher instructed them to answer in sentence form.

“Where was the spider?” In cupboard.

“Who has seen the spider?” Betty.

“Where was Betty’s mom?” Looking for a dog.

“Did Betty like the spider or not?” Betty liked the spider.

FINDINGS: The researcher found that when learners were asked questions about the title of the story, learners answered in a word form instead of a sentence form. The teacher read the story pointing at the words so that learners may not get lost, checking if they were following by reading some words incorrectly, some learners corrected her and somewhere during her reading, she would stop for them finish reading. That showed that most learners were engaged in reading, but difficult and challenging words about from the story were not given, and their meanings were not explained. The learners were asked to read as a group, even though some learners were not reading, and at the end of reading, they were asked oral questions about the story.

4.7.3 Lesson Observed – School C

T1: The teacher first pasted the chart of words on the chalkboard and asked the learners to open their storybooks on page 13.

The title of the story was “Slithering snake.” She then asked the learners to read the title and they tried to read it, but they read it wrongly. Then, she helped them. She continued asking them questions:

“What do you think this story is going to tell us about?”

Ln: 1 *“snake”*

Teacher (T1): The story is going to be about snakes. Let us answer in sentence form:

The teacher read the words on the chalkboard to the learners and asked them to read after her.

Learners: They read after her, but when she asked them what those words meant, they tried but failed.

Teacher (T1): She asked them to underline words they did not understand in the story.

Learners: Some produced words such as: Spit – to pass out liquid from the mouth.

Venom – poison

Fang – long sharp tooth

Zoo – a place where animals are kept

Venomous – poisonous

Teacher (T1): She helped them to pronounce some words and give the words some meanings. She asked them the questions.

“Where have you seen a snake?”

“Are you afraid of a snake?”

“Why are you scared of snakes?”

Learners: Answered the questions as:

“Home.”

“Yes”

“Bites.”

Then, the teacher encouraged them to answer in sentence form. Teacher (T1): *“What type of story is this?”*

Learner (Ln): *“Fiction”*

Teacher (T1): *“Answer in sentence form!” “This is a fiction story because it is an untrue story.”*

Then, she explained to them that she was going to read to them and as she read, they should point at the words.

For the first reading, she read the whole story without stopping. Then, for the second reading, she stopped, asked questions, and gave some explanations. For the third time, she asked the learners to read after her. They followed her reading. Lastly, she let them read alone.

Learners: Pointed at the words.

Learners: The learners read alone and as a whole class.

(Teacher) T1: She asked the learners to answer the questions about the story orally.

FINDINGS: The researcher found that learners were engaged in reading and the teacher prepared words about the story. Learners were given chance to read and give meanings of words prepared by the teacher, and where they fail, they were assisted. Learners were encouraged to answering in sentence form. The teacher modelled reading to the learners and they read after her. Learners were asked oral question at the end of the lesson and most learners were doing well.

4.7.4 Lesson Observed – School D

The teacher asked the learners to turn their workbooks on page 44. The story was titled, ‘The Shadow girl to the rescue’. As an introduction, the teacher asked the learners to read the story silently, and as they read, she asked them to underline with a pen or pencil the words that they did not know their meanings. Then, the teacher asked them to read the words they had underlined. *“Children, today, school, girls,*

Lindy and old.” As learners mentioned the words, the researcher recognised them as they could read.

The teacher explained the words to the learners in their mother tongue.

Teacher (T4) read the story to the learners in English, but the sentences were in the learners’ mother tongue for them to understand what the question meant (Mother tongue interference).

Teacher (T4): The teacher read the story, while the learners were reading after her. After the first reading, all the girls were asked to read as well. Of course, they struggled to read.

Then, it was the boys’ turn to read and they struggled as well. Individual learners were asked to read, and they struggled too. Some learners could read without observing punctuation marks.

After that, the learners were asked some questions about the story. Considering that after every reading, the teacher re-told the story in their mother tongue, hence, the learners managed to give some correct answers:

E.g., 1. What is the title of the story? Shadow girl to the rescue.

Who is the main character in the story? Lindy

Who is Lindy’s friend? Wendy

What problem did Lindy solve? Rescue a child

Where did the story happen? School

Learners were answering the questions in word form, but the teacher encouraged them to answer in sentence form. One of the findings from the class observations in

some schools in Klein Letaba Circuit is that learners are engaged in the reading lessons, but the methodology used for reading is improperly done, as in schools.

Learners are asked to identify unfamiliar words from the story, but the meanings of those words are not explained to them.

Some teachers also recognise words that they think might be difficult for the learners to comprehend but not all teachers give meanings or explanations to those words to the learners.

Some teachers seem unprepared; they do not give themselves time to read the story before they read it to the learners. They hardly read the story attractively for the learners to copy or imitate how they read. If the story has two or more characters, they do not vary their voices to show that the story is told by different characters.

Some teachers prefer teaching English in the learners' mother tongue, instead of sticking to English as a language of teaching and learning. That could be the reason why learners struggle to read English stories, teachers should explain.

English words in the English language and speak and write well-structured sentences in English, to name a few.

Learners are also not taught to summarise the story read.

FINDINGS: The researcher found that learners were asked to read the story silently in order to identify challenging words, but the teacher did not display the words which she had identified challenging when she read the story in preparing her lesson, for her to explain its meanings to help learners so that they should understand what the story talks about. The words identified by the learners are explained in their mother tongue instead of the language of teaching and learning, EFAL. Learners are not given chance to talk about the title, pictures in the story as a way of arousing the learners' attention to reading. The teachers do not model reading to the learners, for the learner to copy reading form her (process of reading, 1st read, read the story for the learners, while

they listen to how you pronounce words, react to different punctuation signs, how to vary your voice to different characters in the story, etc. 2nd read, read the story, while read stop and ask question to check if they are following, 3rd read give summary of the story/ ask, etc.). Teacher asks learners questions about the story, for them to get correct answer, the questions must be explained in their mother tongue, English vocabulary is not instilled to these learners. Learners are not encouraged to give answers in sentence form. Learners were given chance to read but because the teacher did not demonstrate reading to them, learners were struggling in their reading.

4.8 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

After the EFAL teachers' classrooms were observed, the researcher requested the learners' classwork books to look at the different work given to the learners. The researcher did this because she wanted to look at how the learners do and perform in written work. The written activities considered included comprehension passages, language structures and conventions and writing and presenting activities. Besides, the thrust was to try answering some of the following questions: Do EFAL teachers instill writing in the learners? Do they look at or correct learners' errors in writing, such as punctuation, spacing, spelling and sentence constructions? Do teachers teach or model the process of writing to these learners? Do teachers use the correct tools (rubric) for making any longer pieces of writing? The researcher also requested the EFAL record sheets from the principals to check the learner's performance in the above-mentioned activities.

FINDINGS: The researcher found that in some schools, EFAL teachers gave their learners different writing activities, but most of them seem not to check the learners' writing mistakes. Learners make spelling, punctuation, spacing and sentence construction errors. However, teachers do not underline learners' mistakes, and sometimes, even corrections are not done. Teachers will put a long tick (√) on top of learners' mistakes and with a comment, Seen.

Learners' descriptive writings seem not to have been read and marked according to the official rubric.

Most teachers are engaging their learners in some writing processes like the mind map and drafts, but the learners' work is not marked accurately using a relevant marking tool.

The findings from the learners' record sheets of most schools depict that learners perform poorly in the summary writing activities.

4.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter, descriptive statistics were presented compiled from the responses obtained from the interviews, classroom observations and documentary analysis. The qualitative research approach was employed in this investigation of the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners in Klein Letaba Circuit. EFAL teachers, the principals, and the curriculum advisers all contributed to this data collection. Every single copy of the data was read, processed, and interpreted accordingly. The study's findings, suggestions and conclusion will be offered next.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an outline of the summary of this study, as well as the findings from Grade 4 EFAL learners, teachers, principals and curriculum advisors. This chapter includes the recommendations and conclusions as well.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This research is broken up into five different chapters. The history of the issue being investigated was presented in the first chapter. Both the issue's nature and the reason for conducting the investigation were clarified. Both concepts discussed in the study and the research methodology used were defined and described. The following were the main foci of the study:

- To investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 learners in Klein Letaba Circuit.
- To identify the role that teachers, principals and curriculum advisors play in promoting reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners.
- To recommend strategies to help Grade 4 EFAL learners improve reading and writing skills.

Chapter 2 presented the theoretical framework supporting this study, where the researcher wished to see how social and cognitive constructivism theory is connected or influences teaching and learning. Literature review on how global studies were reviewed to explore the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills amongst EFAL learners was used in this study.

Chapter 3 outlined the research design and methodology. The population, sample,

data collection and document analysis were outlined.

Chapter 4 focused on data presentation, and analysis of the data was described qualitatively.

Chapter 5 outlined the findings, recommendations, and conclusion of this study in relation to the research aims and questions. The findings of the factors that contribute poor reading and writing skills in an EFAL context emanate from the interviews, lesson observations and documentary analysis conducted from the four sampled primary schools in Klein Letaba Circuit.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings in this study seek to respond to the main and sub-research questions stated in chapter one of this study. Findings from research questions, observations and document analysis were collided into one list, and they are also followed by a list of recommendations significant to the study.

The research questions were as follows:

- What are the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners in Klein Letaba Circuit?
- What roles do teachers, principals and curriculum advisors play in promoting reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners?
- Which strategies can be used to enhance the reading and writing skills of Grade 4 EFAL learners?

The research objectives were as follows:

- To investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills in EFAL.

- To identify teachers, principals, and curriculum advisors' roles in promoting reading and writing skills amongst Grade 4 EFAL learners.
- To recommend strategies that can assist in promoting reading and writing skills among Grade 4 EFAL learners.

The following findings were raised by the EFAL teachers, principals and curriculum advisors as participants in this study from the interviews, and from observations and document analysis as contributory factors in poor reading and writing by learners:

- Learners who struggle to read and do not understand descriptive writings,
- Learners who struggle to pronounce English words
- Teachers who struggle to teach reading and writing, and often used different teaching methods
- Teachers who were unprepared and not trained properly in teaching reading and writing, and were not aware of different strategies such as prediction, visualizing and summarizing, which can be used to teach reading and writing
- Teachers, Principals and Curriculum Advisors who were aware of the shortcomings and do not intervene organizing workshops and controlling books.
- Teachers who taught learners to achieve different outcomes while doing reading and writing activities
- Learners who lack concentration while reading and writing
- Teachers who do not follow ATPs and teach reading activities differently
- Learners with sight and hearing problems
- Inappropriate methodology to teach reading and writing skills
- Learners who did not complete coding and phonics programme in the Foundation Phase
- Cram work among the learners
- Teachers not giving learners enough work due to inadequate training
- Lack of English language vocabulary, but resorting to Xitsonga language.
- Learners who were not taught to read sentences.

5.3.1 Recommendations

Considering the above research findings, the research makes the following recommendations:

1. EFAL teachers in the foundation phase should strictly teach English as the ATP requires of them. This will be handy when these learners progress to Grade 4 because they would have gained English language foundational content.

EFAL teachers in Grade 4 should instruct learners in the English language when teaching the English language as a subject. This is helping learners become accustomed to speaking English.

2. The learners should be used to listening and speaking, reading, and viewing, language structures and conventions and writing and presenting activities in Grade 3.
 3. When conducting listening and speaking activities in the Grade 4 classes, the teacher should prepare the activity thoroughly and present it interestingly. Questions about the story to check if learners are following and explaining meanings for difficult words.
 4. When working in groups, group members should be of mixed abilities so that the bright ones can assist the weak ones.
 5. Learners should also be taught that any word can be broken down into its component letters and sounds.
 6. Learners must be made aware that the words they read and write are built from the alphabet letters.
 7. The walls of classrooms should have a lot of printed material for learners' easier referencing.
 8. The learners should read a variety of books written in the English language to improve their vocabulary and their understanding of the language.
 9. Teachers should allow sufficient time for learners to scan or skim material, make predictions about it, and discuss their thoughts about it.
 10. Teachers need to have strong reading skills since learners will model their work after their examples.
- The learners should be allowed time to read as the teachers listen to them

so that the teachers can assist the learners in areas in which they are having difficulty.

- Learners can only be taught to write well if their teachers give them plenty of writing assignments, critique their work, and show them how to fix any mistakes they make while writing.
- Teachers should identify learners who have speech and hearing impairments and quickly share that information with the relevant stakeholders for quick remedial action.
- Teachers should stand guided by the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) in teaching the skills that promote reading and writing skills.
- The Department of Education's promotional policy needs to be reviewed because even learners who are glaringly lacking in foundational content in Grade 3 progress to Grade 4.
- Teacher training programmer in higher institutions must pay attention to reading and writing skills so that they will not struggle when they become full-time classroom practitioners.
- Workshops for EFAL teachers should be conducted regularly so that teachers are made aware of ways to handle language skills, notably, reading and writingskills.
- Curriculum advisors should constantly visit EFAL teachers in their schools to discuss subject-related issues including how to manage reading and writing activities for Grade 4 EFAL learners.
- For learners who struggle reading and writing, be encouraged to read and write for fun. Do words search or puzzles that can help improve their reading and writing skills.
- Teachers train learners to predict, visualize, search words, summarise the text read.

5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter gave the findings from the participants to address the research's primary questions in Chapter One. They were also captured in this chapter. The chapter

outlined a concise overview of all the other chapters. The research led to the discovery of the elements that lead to the learners in Grade 4 having poor reading and writing skills. The measures that can be implemented to improve the language ability acquisition of learners in grade 4 were suggested as part of the recommendations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: UNIVEN ETHICAL CLEARANCE

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Ms DE Sombhane

STUDENT NO:
18016556

PROJECT TITLE: Factors Contributing towards Poor Reading and Writing skills in English First Additional Language Grade 4 Learners in the Klein Letaba Circuit.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: SEDU/20/CSEM/21/2104

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr SL Tshikola	University of Venda	Supervisor
Dr MP Tshikhawe	University of Venda	Co - Supervisor
Ms DE Sombhane	University of Venda	Investigator – Student

Type: **Masters Research**

Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment**

Approval Period: **March 2021 – March 2023**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - Withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

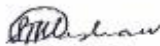
ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE


Date Considered: February 2021

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof Takalani Mashau

Signature:




APPENDIX B: LIMPOPO EDUCATION ETHICAL CLEARANCE



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

**MOPANI EAST DISTRICT
CONFIDENTIAL**

REF : 2/2/2 ENQ: Nkanyani H.G EMAIL: NkanyaniHG@edu.limpopo.gov.za Cell: 0796930085

TO : SOMBHANE D.E

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: *FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR READING AND WRITING SKILLS IN ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE GRADE 4*

- The above matter refers.
- The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct the research on the above mentioned Topic has been approved.
- Your focus should only be limited to the institutions listed hereunder as per your request:

No.	School	Circuit
1.	Muninginisi Primary School	Klein Letaba Circuit
2.	Nghatsani Primary School	Klein Letaba Circuit
3.	Pfunani Primary School	Klein Letaba Circuit
4.	Thomo Primary School	Klein Letaba Circuit

- The following conditions should be considered to:
 - Arrangement should be made with the selected schools and note that you are not allowed to do your research during the 4th term of the school calendar since schools are engaged with exams.
 - The research should not be conducted during working hours.
 - During research, applicable research ethics should be adhered to, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
 - Upon completion of the research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
 - The research should not have any financial implications to the Department of Education Limpopo Province.

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5. Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter to any person and offices where you intend to conduct your research since it will serve as proof that you have been granted permission to conduct the research.
6. The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make in improving the education system and wishes you success in your research.



pp **DISTRICT DIRECTOR**

30.08.2021
DATE

APPENDIX: C. INTERVIEW GUIDE: LANGUAGE TEACHER (LT)

Language Teachers (LT)
1. Which of the four skills in EFAL do your learners have challenge with?
2. Explain the challenges that learners have in these skills.
3. What challenges do you have in teaching reading and writing skills?
4. Can you please explain what you think might be the factors contributing to poor reading and writing skills?
5. How do you teach spelling to your EFAL learners?
6. How do you teach reading to your learners?
7. Why do you teach reading?
8. How is your learners' overall performance to descriptive writing?
9. How do you teach descriptive writing?
10. Why do you teach writing?
11. How often do you give your learners reading activities?

12. How is your learners' overall performance to reading activities?
13. What kind of support do you get from your Subject Advisors to improve your learners' reading and writing?
14. What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)

Principals (SMT)
Are you happy about the overall performance of the grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.
How often do you give support to the grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?
What kind of support do you give grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?
From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?
5. From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in grade 4?
6. What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?
7. What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

8. What do you think should be done to improve grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE: CURRICULUM ADVISORS (CA)

Curriculum Advisors (CA)
Are you happy about the overall performance of the grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.
How often do you give support to the grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills? RESPONDENT:
RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you give grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills? RESPONDENT:
RESEARCHER: From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with? RESPONDENT:
RESEARCHER: From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in grade 4? RESPONDENT:
RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners? RESPONDENT:

RESEARCHER: What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

RESPONDENT:

RESEARCHER: What do you think should be done to improve grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

RESPONDENT:

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORMS

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Contact No. _____

Email Address: _____

I (Participants' full names) hereby confirm that **Ms Sombhane** has requested me to take in her research and has explained to me the nature of and procedure for the research as well as my rights to volunteer or withdrew from the study at any stage of the interview.

The information obtained from the interview will be treated as confidential and my identity will not be revealed to anyone. Anonymity is guaranteed as no personal details that could identify me and my school would not be included in the study. She promised that the results of the study will be used only for academic purposes.

I have read and understood the aim of the study explained to me. I have had sufficient time to ask questions about the research. Then I am prepared to participate in the study. I agree/ disagree to the use of audio-recording of the interview and I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

.....

Participant's full names (please print)

Signature.....

Date.....

Interviewer 's full names (please print

Signature.....

Date.....

APPENDIX G: RAW DATA

Language Teacher (LT)

RESPONDENT: LT (O1)	
1.	<p>RESEARCHER: Which of the four skills in EFAL do your learners have challenge with?</p> <p>RESPONDENT: they have challenge with listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills.</p>
2.	<p>RESEARCHER: Explain the challenges that learners have in these skills.</p> <p>RESPONDENT: Learners from the Foundation Phase are unable to write meaningful words. They write words without vowels, in reading too they struggle. In listening skills, they lack concentration.</p>
3.	<p>RESEARCHER: What challenges do you have in teaching reading and writing skills?</p> <p>RESPONDENT: Reading and writing skills because I am from secondary school, I am not thoroughly trained to teach language but fortunately our school is selected for Primary Schools Reading Improvement Programme (PSRIP) Program and this program helps me a lot. More especially the gifted once but the slow once it is difficult to teach them.</p>

4. RESEARCHER: Can you please explain what you think might be the factors contributing to poor reading and writing skills?

RESPONDENT: Age Cohort where learners progress from the Foundation Phase to Intermediate Phase due to Age cohort.

5. RESEARCHER: How do you teach spelling to your EFAL learners?

RESPONDENT: I use the phonic review chart – I write sound on the chalkboard, pronounce it three times, use a frame/table for words sounds – pronounce those words for the learners three times. Ask them to read the sounds after me. Ask them to use the words in the frame / table to build as many words as the can. To reading and writing, some learners enjoy a lot.

6. RESEARCHER: How do you teach reading to your learners?

RESPONDENT: I read topic/ title, layout, sub - headings of the story and explain its meaning. Ask them to look at the pictures of the story, let them predict the story using pictures and the titles. Ask them to identify the words they do not understand their meanings. Write the meanings of those words on the chalkboard and explain the meanings for them then ask them to write those meanings in their personal dictionaries. First reading, explain to them to understand the text, ask the questions to check if they understand.

7. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach reading?

RESPONDENT: I teach reading because I want them to be able to express themselves in writing different genres.

8. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: There is a problem, but some enjoy it.

9. RESEARCHER: How do you teach descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: There is a problem with writing a descriptive writing. But PSRIP helps a lot. Some learners enjoy the way we are doing it. We are using a writing frame and I also demonstrate to learners how they should write it. I introduce the topic of writing to learners, draw two columns e.g., left, and right, on the left-hand side I write the questions and on the right-hand side I write the answers to the questions then use the answers to write a paragraph.

10. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach writing?

RESPONDENT: Writing is important for them, for eventually, they are expected to express themselves by drafting essays and letters.

11. RESEARCHER: How often do you give your learners reading activities?

RESPONDENT: We let them read twice weekly. E.g., Shared reading and group guided reading, read the side words.

12. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to reading activities?

RESPONDENT: Lots of learners are struggling to read. Even if they are helped but they cannot. When it is their time to read, they will just look at me.

13. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you get from your Subject Advisors to improve your learners' reading and writing?

RESPONDENT: They see us twice a year, sometimes when we experience challenges, we communicate with them through WhatsApp. They give us materials. E.g., worksheets – booklets questions to give to our learners as classwork. And the worksheets do wonders because we see progress.

14. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: The strategies I made at the beginning where I said before reading, learners must predict, visualise, search words, summarise the text, be able to make

connections from the story to their real-life situation and evaluate at the end are helpful to us.

RESPONDENT: LT(O2)

1. RESEARCHER: Which of the four skills in EFAL do your learners have challenge with?

RESPONDENT: My learners have challenge in reading and writing skills.

2. RESEARCHER: Explain the challenges that learners have in these skills.

RESPONDENT: In reading, they have challenge in pronouncing words. In writing some are not writing in lines. When writing, they are unable to space their words.

3. RESEARCHER: What challenges do you have in teaching reading and writing skills?

RESPONDENT: My learners, lack concentration when reading because Grade 4 is a transactional zone, where learners are from Grade 3, most learner cannot understand the English words. They cannot write English words.

4. RESEARCHER: Can you please explain what you think might be the factors contributing to poor reading and writing skills?

RESPONDENT: They lack concentration in reading. They lack writing skills- some write on lines, and some cannot space when writing.

5. RESEARCHER: How do you teach spelling to your EFAL learners?

RESPONDENT: I give search words in the dictionary. Let them dictate words and sentences so they can write correct spelling.

6. RESEARCHER: How do you teach reading to your learners?

RESPONDENT: I choose the story first. If the story has pictures, I give them a chance to predict what the story will be about. I write difficult, new/ vocabulary words from the story on the chalkboard, read the words, give the meanings, and ask them to read if they fail then I assist them. Then read the story for them, give them a chance to read the story themselves and lastly, I ask them questions about the story.

7. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach reading?

RESPONDENT: I teach them reading because I want them to gain understanding, develop their minds and to improve their listening skill.

8. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: Their performance is low hence they need to be helped. But not all of them, some are good, moderate.

9. RESEARCHER: How do you teach descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: I give them a topic to discuss on. I lead them in the discussion in the form of questions. I will also give examples of descriptive writing.

10. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach writing?

RESPONDENT: I give them a topic to discuss on. I lead them in the discussion in the form of questions. I will also give examples of descriptive writing.

11. RESEARCHER: How often do you give your learners reading activities?

RESPONDENT: reading activity should be done every day. In their classroom and even at homework.

12. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to reading activities?

RESPONDENT: They are different, some are better readers, some are moderate even some are underperformers/ they struggle. In general, I can say most of them can read.

13. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you get from your Subject Advisors to improve your learners' reading and writing?

RESPONDENT: They arrange workshops for us, they also organize for learner's spelling bee.

14. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: I think giving learners reading and writing activities, such as homework, engaging them to essays writing, let them read for fun and some word search/puzzles can improve their reading and writing skills.

RESPONDENT: LT(O3)

1. RESEARCHER: Which of the four skills in EFAL do your learners have challenge with?

RESPONDENT: Reading, learners cannot spell, read, and write words.

2. RESEARCHER: Explain the challenges that learners have in these skills.

RESPONDENT: Most learners have hearing and poor vision problems because I model reading and writing to them but when it is their chance to read, they read something different from what is written in the text. They spell words incorrectly; in grammar they cannot construct sentences in English. This might be caused by the fact that they are from Grade 3 /Foundation phase, where most subjects were taught in the mother tongue. Overall, they lack writing vocabulary.

3. RESEARCHER: What challenges do you have in teaching reading and writing skills?

RESPONDENT: At the beginning of the year, they had a problem because even after model reading to them, they used to read something that was not in the story or text. They lack writing vocabulary and poor spelling. They were having vision and hearing problems if words were written in small letters.

4. RESEARCHER: Can you please explain what you think might be the factors contributing to poor reading and writing skills?

RESPONDENT: Most learners have vision, hearing challenges and lack writing vocabulary.

5. RESEARCHER: How do you teach spelling to your EFAL learners?

RESPONDENT: I start by vocabulary words, make flash cards. Raise them up or paste them on the chalkboard. Then read those words first, once, or twice. Spell the words to them. Give them a chance to spell words to their classmates.

6. RESEARCHER: How do you teach reading to your learners?

RESPONDENT: Introduce the theme to theme for two weeks, e.g., Food. Write vocabulary words about the text on flash cards. Ask them to turn to the page of the text to be read, ask questions about the pictures, and use the picture and the title to let them predict what the story would be about. Then let them read the story or text silently. Model reading to them (follow the three steps for reading) so that they can be able to pronounce, fluency and lastly ask them the questions about the text.

7. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach reading?

RESPONDENT: Encourage them to read several types of reading materials E.g., books, newspapers. I teach them to read for fun.

8. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: Now they are getting there but before they were not good.

9. RESEARCHER: How do you teach descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: I model writing for them. I show them how to write an address. Leave some words to let them complete writing.

10. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach writing?

RESPONDENT: So that they can become responsible citizens. Some eventually they may be book writers and draft books to get money. Give them the foundation of writing. Encourage them to write for fun.

11. RESEARCHER: How often do you give your learners reading activities?

RESPONDENT: Reading is a daily activity.

12. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to reading activities?

RESPONDENT: They are good but before they were not good. Admission years, some are still young. For some scare for us because in the Foundation Phase were used to be taught by teachers.

13. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you get from your Subject Advisors to improve your learners' reading and writing?

RESPONDENT: They used to visit our school and teach us how we should teach these skills (reading and writing skills) they sent us videos for teaching several types of reading. They also advise us that children have different abilities, so we use groups of them so they can help each other.

14. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: To improve reading, one should teach phonics. Teach learners to cut long or difficult words into syllables to be able to read them. Expose your learners to different books to read. To improve writing skills, encourage the learners to write for fun. For those learners who have poor spelling, get a paragraph, and let the learners copy it according to how it is. Then control their writing.

RESPONENT: LT (04)

1. RESEARCHER: Which of the four skills in EFAL do your learners have challenge with?

RESPONDENT: Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

2. RESEARCHER: Explain the challenges that learners have in these skills.

RESPONDENT: Most of the learners are unable to read comprehension passage and who can read do not with understanding; some are unable to write.

3. RESEARCHER: What challenges do you have in teaching reading and writing skills?

RESPONDENT: The main challenge is that most learners are having hearing problems. It is difficult to teach them. The learners who cannot read create barriers.

4. RESEARCHER: Can you please explain what you think might be the factors contributing to poor reading and writing skills?

RESPONDENT: Overcrowded, covering all learners is impossible.

5. RESEARCHER: How do you teach spelling to your EFAL learners?

RESPONDENT: Write the words with your hand on the chalkboard, spell out words loudly and explain their meaning. Written words should be written in such a way that all learners see what is written on the chalkboard. Explaining words is important.

6. RESEARCHER: How do you teach reading to your learners?

RESPONDENT: This requires a teacher who is willing to help learners to teach reading.

7. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach reading?

RESPONDENT: This requires a teacher who is willing to help learners to read, teacher must use the reading cards to let learners pick words of their choice and use phonic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency.

8. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: Moderate performance.

9. RESEARCHER: How do you teach descriptive writing?

RESPONDENT: Teach them basic writing skills and encourage them to read descriptive literature.

10. RESEARCHER: Why do you teach writing?

RESPONDENT: Better understanding of vocabulary concepts that will enable better understanding.

11. RESEARCHER: How often do you give your learners reading activities?

RESPONDENT: Very often, give learners more reading activities.

12. RESEARCHER: How is your learners' overall performance to reading activities?

RESPONDENT: They will receive more reading activities.

13. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you get from your Subject Advisors to improve your learners' reading and writing?

RESPONDENT: Sometimes, they do support, they advise me to teaching more work on reading and writing skills is concern.

14. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: Group the learners in a group of learners then have group leaders who will help others in reading and writing.

Principals

RESPONDENT: Principal (P 01)	
1.	<p>RESEARCHER: Are you happy about the overall performance of the Grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.</p> <p>RESPONDENT: To be honest not happy, only a few learners can read with understanding. Most read without understanding, this is seen when they are unable to write and fail to respond when they are asked the questions.</p>
2.	<p>RESEARCHER: How often do you give support to the grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?</p> <p>RESPONDENT: Every day, for I am also teaching Grade 4.</p>
3.	<p>RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?</p> <p>RESPONDENT: I am also teaching Grade 4, I am teaching Mathematics, so during my lesson I let them read and write what I teach them. At the same time, we also encourage our teachers to attend the relevant workshops for their subjects. Buy teaching materials for them and visit them in their classes to check on how they teach.</p>
4.	<p>RESEARCHER: From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?</p> <p>RESPONDENT: Reading, speaking, and writing skills.</p>
5.	<p>RESEARCHER: From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in Grade 4?</p> <p>RESPONDENT: Teachers are trying their level best but since these learners are coming from the Foundation Phase where they are used to be taught by one educator and in the Intermediate Phase see lots of teachers, changing periods and this I think make them not to cope with the situation.</p>
6.	<p>RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?</p> <p>RESPONDENT: We talk to our teacher to focus on letters sound, on phonics and read every day. Our school has been selected for the PISRIP project, which is</p>

about teaching learners the basics – where learners are taught sounds and engaged to several types of reading. E.g., group, individual reading.

7. RESEARCHER: What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

RESPONDENT: Reading and listening, engaging to letter sound instead of letters of alphabet.

8. RESEARCHER: What do you think should be done to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

RESPONDENT: We encourage our teachers to teach using English as the subject of teaching and learning. Motivate learners to speak and give answers in English. Start competitions, dramas debates, reading at school level and Circuits levels if they are such. Also, to engage our learners to read more books.

Principals

RESPONDENT: Principal (P 02)

1. RESEARCHER: Are you happy about the overall performance of the Grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.

RESPONDENT: Not happy about the overall performance, these learners memorise what they did with their teacher. For if one asks them new things/questions different from what they did with their teacher, they fail to give the right answer/ they are blank.

2. RESEARCHER: How often do you give support to the grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?

RESPONDENT: Every second week of the month, we sit with teachers and look at the theme they are doing with the learners in a two-week cycle.

3. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?

RESPONDENT: We encourage them to assist learners in reading, because English is the language in which without reading it, learners perform badly in all the subjects.

4. RESEARCHER: From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?

RESPONDENT: reading and writing. One cannot write if she/he fails to read.

5. RESEARCHER: From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in Grade 4?

RESPONDENT: Teacher in Grade 4 teach English to learners in their mother tongue claiming that the learners do not understand English. They teach mother tongue and set the question papers in English, so learners are bound not to have language skill because the skill is taught incorrectly.

6. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: To improve reading and writing, one should know the letters of the alphabet, be able to differentiate between the vowels and consonants, combine consonants with vowels to produce a certain sound, know phonics and read a lot.

7. RESEARCHER: What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

RESPONDENT: With these two skills, for learners to be able to receive and produce, then they must be good listeners so that they may be able to answer questions orally. Then thereafter they be able to produce what they have heard or listened to. Learners must be taught to listen attentively so that they may be able to write/speak what they have heard.

8. RESEARCHER: What do you think should be done to improve grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

RESPONDENT: Learners should be helped to differentiate the letters of alphabet and phonics, for example letter 'C' is pronounced as 'c' for cut, cat, and cow.

RESPONDENT: Principal (P03)

1. RESEARCHER: Are you happy about the overall performance of the Grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.

RESPONDENT: Not happy, most learners at the beginning of the year for they are coming from Grade 3, where they were taught most subjects in their mother tongue (Xitsonga) write English words in their mother tongue.

2. RESEARCHER: How often do you give support to the Grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?

RESPONDENT: I see the learners' book. Every day I talk to the teachers. I read the learners' book.

3. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?

RESPONDENT: in the beginning of the first term, we do base line assessment. We do read lessons at the school assembly and give the resources in the beginning of the first term.

4. RESEARCHER: From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?

RESPONDENT: Learner's struggle with writing skill, they have spelling mistakes, mix English words with mother tongue words when writing but in reading is not that much with the help they get from teachers. In reading and listening they do not have much challenge with the help of the teachers

5. RESEARCHER: From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in Grade 4?

RESPONDENT: Teachers try to help learners, but these learners are not the same. Some fast and some slow. They give them homework, engage them in several types of reading.

6. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: Words and paragraphs. Teachers should leave the lessons they have taught on the walls to let the learners always remember what they have been taught previously. And the help of their parents.

7. RESEARCHER: What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

RESPONDENT: Receptive are reading skills and listening skills. The information teachers give to the learners. Productive skill is the writing skill where frames, sentences and paragraphs are used. Write words, from words write sentences then paragraphs.

8. RESEARCHER: What do you think should be done to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

RESPONDENT: If it was possible, learners in Grade 3 were supposed to be taught all subjects in English except their mother tongue. So that when they came to Grade 4, the language English be the language they are used to. Introduce dramas to make the language to be fun for the learners. As teachers we should invest more time in them because on them for, they are still younger and easily tired.

RESPONDENT: Principal (P04)

1. RESEARCHER: Are you happy about the overall performance of the Grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.

RESPONDENT: Not happy; most learners cannot read and write. General problem, promotional policy age cohort where learners are promoted due to age cohort even if they are not ready to progress.

2. RESEARCHER: How often do you give support to the Grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?

RESPONDENT: Teachers are supported once quarterly due to the pressure the school is facing. We control learners' books when seeing problems, we sit with teachers and assist.

3. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?

RESPONDENT: Internal workshop is organized where teachers are supported, most on Wednesday and Fridays we have reading lessons. Learners' exercise books are controlled by the principals .

4. RESEARCHER: From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?

RESPONDENT: Learner's struggle with reading and writing skills. In reading, those learners would have problems with writing.

5. RESEARCHER: From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in Grade 4?

RESPONDENT: Teachers only focus on seven teaching hours. They do not give themselves extra time to assist the struggling learners.

6. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: If teachers were willing to assist the struggling learners even after hours, then the problem of reading and writing would be improved.

7. RESEARCHER: What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

RESPONDENT: Paste lots of words on the walls, if learners always see these words on the wall, then they can be able to read. As teachers we should give the learners more stories with interesting pictures. Parents should also assist us.

8. RESEARCHER: What do you think should be done to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

RESPONDENT: The Department of Education review their promotional policy. Whereby if learners are not ready to progress, they must not be progressed.

Curriculum Advisors (CA)

RESPONDENT: CA (01)

1. RESEARCHER: Are you happy about the overall performance of the Grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.

RESPONDENT: No at all, it is not pleasing, our learners cannot read. And it is affecting their performance negatively.

2. RESEARCHER: How often do you give support to the Grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?

RESPONDENT: It was supposed to be as constant as possible, but resources have not allowed us, we support them once a semester or a term. We support them as and when programme is given to them, DBE priorities interfere with our plans,

3. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?

RESPONDENT: Virtual meetings on all skills or specific skills to teachers

4. RESEARCHER: From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?

RESPONDENT: Reading and writing.

5. RESEARCHER: From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in grade 4?

RESPONDENT: They not giving enough work as they are overloaded/overburdened and because they were not trained.

6. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: Learners must be given enough time to practice. Teachers must be patient with learners and give them work that is interesting to them with visuals.

7. RESEARCHER: What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

RESPONDENT: They need to be empowered and see to it that the skills given must be life long.

8. RESEARCHER: What do you think should be done to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

RESPONDENT: Teachers are overloaded and not doing as much as expected. Let us start from the start- practice for learner's basic skills acquisition. Teachers need moral support and incentives.

Curriculum Advisors (CA)

RESPONDENT: CAR02

1. RESEARCHER: Are you happy about the overall performance of the Grade 4's reading and writing skills activities in this circuit/school? Please elaborate.

RESPONDENT: No, many learners are struggling with reading and writing. However, there is progress as we have the following strategies, PISRIP in some schools

2. RESEARCHER: How often do you give support to the grade 4 teachers in teaching the four language skills?

RESPONDENT: Introduced of PSRIP that has resources: Lesson plans, worksheets and trackers that help teachers, at the beginning of each term we workshop teachers face to face or using virtual

3. RESEARCHER: What kind of support do you give Grade 4 teachers in helping them to acquire language skills?

RESPONDENT: We take teachers through routine during workshops on how to teach a specific topic.

4. RESEARCHER: From your experience, which skills do you think the learners in this grade struggle with?

RESPONDENT: Reading, because in the foundation phase they had not completed the e.g., Coding and phonics. PISRP helps in helping struggling learners.

5. RESEARCHER: From your experience, what is it that teachers are not doing that contributes towards poor acquisition of language skills by learners in Grade 4?

RESPONDENT: After the training at the beginning of the term, teachers who do not follow the ATP and PISRP project, they just pick any topic, so teachers must start with listening and speaking skills.

6. RESEARCHER: What strategies do you think could be used to improve reading and writing skills among your learners?

RESPONDENT: Teachers must understand steps/methodology and reading and viewing in managing reading, listening, and writing- planning, drafting, editing, final report, pre and post reading activities plus modeling by the teachers and learner participation.

7. RESEARCHER: What is your comment on the approach in teaching receptive and productive skills?

RESPONDENT: Listening- the teacher must prepare the learners by explaining what is to be done on the said day, the teacher must get a buy-in of the learners first.

8. RESEARCHER: What do you think should be done to improve Grade 4 learners' acquisition of language skills?

RESPONDENT: Language structures must be taught in context e.g.; verb is a doing word within the sentence. Teachers must use the text and show a verb within the sentences. The Department of Education must introduce PSRIP to all schools within the district and circuits. Schools must receive all resources and videos implemented within the project.

APPENDIX H: LETTER TO DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Enq: Sombhane D.E

Cell: 0786428350

PO BOX 2272

GIYANI

0826

16 July 2021

The District Director

Mopani East District

GIYANI

0826

Dear Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS IN YOUR DISTRICT, IN KLEIN LETABA CIRCUIT

- The above matter bear's reference.
- I am a master's degree student at the University of Venda.
- The title of my study is **“Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Towards Grade 4 Learners in Klein Letaba Circuit.”**
- The EFAL teachers would be observed teaching reading and writing skills and interviewed.
- One of the SMT members would also be interviewed. Hope for a positive response.

Yours faithfully

Sombhane D.E

APPENDIX I: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Enq: Sombhane D. E

Cell: 0786428350

PO BOX 2272

GIYANI

0826

31 August 2021

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS AT YOUR SCHOOL

- The above matter bears reference.
- I am a master's degree student at the University of Venda.
- The title of my study is **“Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Towards Grade 4 Learners in Klein Letaba Circuit.”**
- The EFAL teachers would be observed teaching reading and writing skills and interviewed.
- One of the SMT members would also be interviewed.

Hope for a positive response.

Yours faithfully

Sombhane D.E

APPENDIX J: LETTER TO CURRICULUM ADVISORS

Enq: Sombhane DE
Cell: 0786428350

PO BOX 2272
GIYANI
0826
11 October 2021

ATT: Mr/Mrs/Ms/ Dr _____

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH: YOURSELF

- The above matter bear's reference.
- I, **Sombhane DE** a post graduate student doing a Master of Education degree at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) would like to request you to be part of my study titled **“Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Skills Towards the Grade 4 Learners in Klein Letaba Circuit.”**
- The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writing skills amongst the Grade 4 learners and to identify the strategies that can be used to improve reading and writing skills amongst the Grade 4 learners.
- I therefore ask you for your consent to participate in the interview.
- I am looking forward to your positive response.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Sombhane D.E

APPENDIX K: LETTER TO EFAL TEACHERS

Enq: Sombhane DE

Cell: 0786428350

PO BOX 2272

GIYANI

0826

11 October 2021

ATT: Mr/Mrs/Ms/ Dr _____

AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH: YOURESLF

- The above matter bear's reference.
- I, **Sombhane DE** a post graduate student doing a Master of Education degree at the University of Venda (UNIVEN) would like to request you to be part of my study titled "**Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Skills Towards the Grade 4 Learners in Klein Letaba Circuit.**"
- The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that contribute to poor reading and writingskills amongst the grade 4 learners and to identify the strategies that can be used to improve reading and writing skills amongst the grade 4 learners.
- I therefore ask you for your consent to participate in the observations and interview.
- I am looking forward to your support.

- Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Sombhane D.E

APPENDIX L: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

Registered with the South African Translators' Institute (SATI)

Reference number 1000363

SACE REGISTERED

23 August 2022

TITLE: Factors Contributing to Poor Reading and Writing Skills among Grade 4 English First Additional Language Learners in Klein Letaba Circuit

This serves to confirm that I edited substantively the above document including a Reference list. The document was returned to the author with various tracked changes intended to correct errors and to clarify meaning. It was the author's responsibility to attend to these changes.

Yours faithfully



Dr. K. Zano

Ph.D. in English

kufazano@gmail.com/kufazano@yahoo.com

0631434276

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APPENDIX M: TURN-IT-IN REPORT

DE SOMBHANE

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