

**GUIDELINES FOR INVESTIGATING AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES OF
GRADE 8 LEARNERS STUDYING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN
LEJWELEPUTSWA, FREE STATE**

by

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DECLARATION

I, **TIFFANY MARKS**, identity number: _____ and student number: _____, hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the Degree: Master of Communication in Language Practice, is my own independent work and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology (CUT), Free State and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any person in fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

SIGNATURE OF THE STUDENT

25 May 2025

DATE

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DEDICATION

To my loving mother, Robyn Wagner, who is always proud of me no matter what. Also, to my late father, Charles Anthony Wagner, who I know would have been overjoyed at my achievements.

ABSTRACT

English is an extremely valuable language to learn, as it is mostly spoken worldwide. Learners studying English First Additional Language (FAL) may encounter challenges in the classroom that inhibit their acquisition of English proficiency. This study aims to determine the challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners face in the classroom and to find possible solutions for these challenges.

This study used the social constructivist theory to determine and understand the possible challenges that Grade 8 learners face in secondary school English classrooms. This study employed a mixed-method approach. Interviews were conducted with open-ended questions for Grade 8 English FAL teachers at Nanabolela Secondary High School and Lestsete Secondary High School. Questionnaires were distributed and completed by Grade 8 English FAL learners at the above-mentioned secondary schools. Qualitative data was analysed using the positivist research paradigm, and quantitative data was processed and analysed through MATLAB.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data results indicated that Grade 8 English FAL learners struggle with many aspects of learning English, including parts of speech, such as pronouns and tenses, sentence structure, spelling, and reading in English. The results also indicated a need for extra time allocated to teaching English reading to learners, as well as extra time for teaching other elements of English as well. The qualitative data collected via the interviews indicated that there is an extremely crucial need for fully qualified English teachers that have a proper command of the English language. These results suggest that the employment of fully qualified English teachers would benefit the Grade 8 English FAL learners. Additionally, both the qualitative and quantitative results indicated that there should be a time slot allocated daily to learners for a class with an English teacher that focuses solely on reading to develop this crucial skill in Grade 8 English learners.

Key terms: English First Additional Language, Teachers with English Language degrees, reading skill, time allocation, Positivist paradigm, Social Constructivist Theory.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curricular and Assessment Policy Statements
CAPS SP	Curricular and Assessment Policy Statements Senior Phase
EFAL	English First-Additional Language
ERT	Emergency Remote Teaching

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the topic of the study *Guidelines for investigating and overcoming challenges of Grade 8 learners studying English as a First Additional Language (FAL) [also referred to as English as a second language throughout this study] in Lejweleputswa, Free State* is presented. It is apparent that English FAL learners struggle with the acquisition of English because many English FAL speakers still make errors with regards to tense and pronouns after they have finished high school and while they are studying further at a university. This observation let the researcher to conduct a study to investigate what challenges English FAL speakers face in the Grade 8 classroom. The reason the researcher chose to conduct a study with Grade 8 English FAL learners was to determine what these learners are taught about English as a language in the first year of high school. In accordance with this topic, this chapter will include the study's background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, and aim are presented. Literature on the concepts of the study is provided, followed by the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin it. An overview of the research methodology, population, and sample is provided, as well as the data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are explicated, together with the expected outcomes. This chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters in the document.

1.2 Background to the study

Across the globe, English is used as the medium of communication because it is the language that is most widely used (Rao, 2019). Rao (2019) further states that English is the *lingua franca* of many countries including South Africa. There are several reasons for this, one being that although South Africa has 12 official languages, determining which indigenous African language should have prevalence over another in schools is not only arduous, but could also lead to many conflicts between different cultures. For this reason, English has been chosen as the medium language throughout the country to manage the perceived conflicts (Rao, 2019). However, English is a complex language, and without the correct tools in the classroom, many learners could struggle with the acquisition of English. For example, language

techniques used in the English FAL Grade 8 classroom will affect a learner's ability to acquire English as a second language. These tools, such as using targeted worksheets and repetition of tenses and pronoun usage in the classroom for learning, can be the teacher's ability to effectively teach the learners, as well as the learner's ability to grasp what they are being taught about English, which can determine the level of proficiency that a learner is able to acquire. According to Probyn (2009), learners in South African schools are not able to acquire English to a proficient level with the curriculum they are given. Additionally, teachers that also share the same home language as many of the learners will use code-switching in the English classroom with the intention of benefitting learning (Probyn, 2009). However, this use of code-switching can inhibit learning because the proper English terms or forms are not being taught (Probyn, 2009). Therefore, it is important to conduct a study in which the difficulties and issues that Grade 8 English FAL learners face in the classroom are researched to find a solution.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Sirisilla (2023), a problem statement establishes the specific issue under investigation. A problem statement should also be focused and specific to create the foundation of the study by clearly defining the problem that will be researched (Sirisilla, 2023). In this study, the researcher will identify the challenges faced by Grade 8 learners in secondary school FAL classrooms. These students face several problems, including the incorrect use of tense and pronouns when speaking or writing in English in general. Such usage is a problem because it affects the student's ability to acquire English proficiently.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to collect data and analyse it effectively, research questions are needed to guide the process (Litosseliti, 2024). Litosseliti (2024) likens research questions to a compass needle, which swings and points one in the right direction. Through this comparison, research questions are vital to guide a study. The following research questions are presented and light the way to determining the problems that English FAL learners experience in the Grade 8 classroom:

1.3.1 Main research question

What are the challenges experienced by Grade 8 learners studying English as a second language in secondary schools?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

1. How do the challenges of tense errors, pronoun errors and teacher education affect grade 8 learners from acquiring English as a second language in secondary schools?
2. Which challenges do Grade 8 English second language teachers face in the classroom in secondary schools?
3. In what way can these challenges be addressed to produce solutions?

1.4 Pre-supposed Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were postulated:

- Grade 8 English FAL learners struggle with the adjustment of work from primary school to high school.
- Grade 8 English FAL learners do not have enough support when it comes to learning English as a second language.
- Grade 8 English FAL teachers are not fully equipped or qualified to teach English as a second language.
- To address the challenges, qualified English teachers that are proficient in the English language need to be employed.

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

1.5.1 Research aims

The aim of the study, which clarifies what the researcher would like to achieve with their research (Sreekumar, 2023). Research objectives outline the strategies for achieving the aims, including the formulation of research questions (Sreekumar, 2023). The English language is highly important in any school because it serves as the primary medium of instruction in the country. In addition, schools teach most subjects, for example science or biology, in English. Therefore, it is crucial to effectively

teach English as a subject to learners so that they can excel in their other subjects in school as well. The aims and objectives of the study can be described as the reasons why it should be conducted and what the desired outcome would be. This study aims to investigate the different challenges that Grade 8 learners face in the English FAL classroom in secondary schools within the Lejweleputswa area, including issues with tense, pronouns, and teachers' education levels. Identifying these problems can help teachers develop more effective methods for helping students gain proficiency in the English language. The findings of this study can also positively influence learners' ability in acquiring English more proficiently and enhance their understanding of other subjects taught in English.

1.5.2 Research objectives

- To determine the challenges that Grade 8 learners studying English as a second language face in secondary schools.
- To establish the challenges (tense errors; pronoun errors) that affect grade 8 students from acquiring English as a second language in secondary schools.
- To establish challenges faced by Grade 8 English second language teachers in the classroom in secondary schools.
- To determine how these challenges can be addressed to produce solutions

1.6 Literature Review

In the literature review section, researchers investigate and incorporate credible sources to discuss the research problems (McCombes, 2023). A literature review allows a researcher to integrate current research on the topic, which provides information on methods and theories that are relevant to the topic, as well as possible gaps in research (McCombes, 2023). In this study, current research on the topic of challenges that are experienced by English FAL learners is consulted and explained. This current research consulted provides insight into certain challenges that have been researched and is linked to the challenges that this study identifies. The researcher also explains why this study is relevant and can benefit teachers and learners. Electronic sources, scholarly articles, and books secure the information for the literature review.

1.7 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

Conceptual framework is used in a study to organise the outside sources that are consulted, which can help solve problems (Luft et al., 2022). It provides direction to the study and shows the connection or relationship between the ideas of the sources (Luft et al., 2022). The theoretical framework is related to concepts within the writing with definitions, such as references to scholarly literature in which the research problem can be understood and further investigated (Luft et al., 2022). This study employed critical theory as its guiding theory.

1.8 Common Problems for Grade 8 Learners in Secondary Schools

In a different study regarding challenges that English FAL Grade 8 learners face when writing English, Ndlovu (2019) determined that seven participants who attended pre-school were only taught in isiZulu by their teachers. This can already point to a problem regarding the English language and why it is difficult for students to grasp English as a second language. If English is not spoken and practised, acquisition of the language can be extremely difficult. Common problems that the researcher has come across with students that speak English as an additional language are that they struggle to identify when to use the correct pronouns *he* and *she* in the correct context, and often, these students also struggle with using the correct tense in the correct context. For example, a student might use the present tense to explain an action that has already taken place, such as: “*I go to the library when they call me to pick up the book.*” With regards to the issues with pronoun usage, a student might state, “*The mother, he went to the shops,*” which is the incorrect pronoun for the female noun “*mother.*” This study aims to determine why these problems are common for Grade 8 students in the English FAL classroom and what can be done to fix them.

1.9 Problems Experienced by Grade 8 Teachers in South African Secondary Schools

In a study by Emery (2012), it was indicated that although a substantial percentage of teachers do hold degrees in many countries, 21% of teachers were not qualified to specifically teach English. This can cause serious hindrances in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom globally because the teachers do not have adequate knowledge to teach the students proficient English. Additionally, a study by Fesi and Mncube (2021)

determined that English FAL Grade 4 teachers struggled with a lack of resources and overcrowded classrooms. This study will investigate the issue of inadequate education for English FAL teachers as well as possible challenges teachers experience, such as lack of resources, inadequate time allocation, and overcrowded classrooms.

1.10 Research Methodology and Research Design

Research is discussed in the following subheadings: research instrument, qualitative research and quantitative research.

1.10.1 Research Instruments

For this study, a questionnaire was administered to learners, and open-ended interviews were conducted with teachers from the selected schools. This implies the possibility of asking follow-up questions. The study used both structured and unstructured questions in the questionnaires and interviews and will connect these questions to the research questions.

1.10.2 Qualitative Research

According to Litosseliti (2024), qualitative research is an inductive process that investigates a specific topic and generates theoretical insights. Qualitative research was used by interviewing 2 (two) teachers each from the 2 (two) different secondary schools. Thus, the researcher conducted interviews with a total of four teachers. Data was recorded from these interviews using a voice recorder for data analysis.

1.10.3 Quantitative Research

Researchers use quantitative research, a method that involves analysing numerical data (Litosseliti, 2024). In this study, the researcher used the qualitative research method by analysing responses from questionnaires from forty-seven (47) learners from the purposively selected schools. The answers were tallied together to determine the more common answers. These questionnaires were analysed through a statistical analysis program called MATLAB to determine which answers were most commonly chosen.

1.11 Population and Sample

The population and sample refer to the participants and the number of participants that will be taking part in the study (Bhandari, 2023). For this research, the participants were two (2) English FAL Grade 8 teachers, each from two (2) different secondary schools in the Lejweleputswa area, and forty-seven (47) Grade 8 learners were chosen at random from the two schools.

1.12 Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure involves the selection of study participants (Ogula, 2005, as referenced in KENPRO, 2012). The researcher discussed with the teachers whether they were willing to take part in the study, and the decision was solely up to the teachers. Thereafter, the teachers selected forty-seven (47) learners [twenty-five (25) learners from one school and twenty-two (22) learners from the other school] randomly to participate in the questionnaire. No pattern was followed in the sampling procedure.

1.13 Data Collection Procedure

The tools used to conduct the research are part of the data collection procedure (Bhandari, 2023). In this study, a series of interview questions were asked of the four (4) teachers and voice-recorded for data collection. Furthermore, the forty-seven (47) learners were each handed a questionnaire to complete, and each learner remained anonymous.

1.14 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the way in which the data collected from the study is analysed (Globalstats Academic, 2023). The statistical data was run through the programme MATLAB multiple times for accurate statistical analysis of the data. Thereafter, the statistician analysed the data, put it in tabular form as well as in pie charts and bar charts for accurate presentation of the common trends found in the data.

1.15 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are steps that a researcher must take to ensure that the data is gathered morally and does not harm the participants in any way (Scribbr, 2023). When

conducting research, it is essential to take into account various ethical considerations. Firstly, it is important to ensure that the cultures of the participants of the study are portrayed in an ethical way and that stereotypes and biased views are avoided (Rickford, 1997). Secondly, individuals must give their consent voluntarily to participate in the study, and they should do so without feeling pressured to do so, with the opportunity to withdraw from the study whenever they feel the need to and without any consequences (Litosseliti, 2024). Therefore, it is very important that participants understand the responsibilities of the study, as well as the purpose of the study and any possible risks (Litosseliti, 2024). To further protect the participants, all data collected will remain anonymous, and no personal data was collected.

1.16 Limitations

Limitations can be described as restrictions that can affect the efficacy of the research (Editage Insights, 2020). Since this study only took place in two (2) secondary schools that teach English as a second language in the Lejweleputswa area, this study is limited to producing results that can be applied only to this area and no other school in another town or province within South Africa.

1.17 Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes are what the researcher aims to achieve through this study (Drew, 2023). In this study, the expected outcome is to determine the specific challenges encountered by learners in the Grade 8 FAL classroom in secondary schools to come up with a plan to overcome these problems. As a result, students should gain a better understanding of pronouns and tenses, while teachers should improve their teaching strategies.

1.17.1 Scientific Outcomes

Scientific outcomes refer to how this study will influence scientific research (Drew, 2023) related to English language acquisition in secondary schools. This study aims to achieve scientific outcomes by identifying the specific problems that Grade 8 learners encounter in FAL classrooms at secondary schools, with the goal of developing solutions that could enhance English acquisition for these learners. Upon

completion of this study, the researcher will publish an article in an accredited scientific journal.

1.17.2 Social Impact

The social impact refers to the ways in which this study could affect the participants socially (Fecher & Hebing, 2021). This study could help determine what problems are affecting English FAL students in secondary schools and why they exist. The findings could socially impact the participants by shining light on areas that classrooms need to improve to allow these students to become more proficient in the usage of pronouns and tenses in the English language.

1.17.3 Innovations

The innovations of the research could lead to changes (Zondo, 2022). This study's acquisition of pronouns and tenses could facilitate the writing of a book.

1.18 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 (Introduction of the study)

In this chapter, the topic of the study is presented. The study's background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, and aim are presented. A brief literature on the concepts of the study is provided, followed by the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpin it. An overview of the research methodology, population, and sample is provided, as well as the data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are explicated, together with the expected outcomes. This chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters in the document.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review)

Chapter 2 consists of the review of current literature and include the following information: Introduction, The English FAL Grade 8 Classroom, Challenges experienced by grade 8 learners in the English FAL classroom, Challenges with tense errors in the English Grade 8 FAL classroom, Challenges with pronoun usage in the English grade 8 FAL classroom, Requirements of teacher education in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, Time allocation for developing listening skills in the English

Grade 8 FAL classroom, Time allocation spent on English grammar and spelling in the English Grade 8 FAL classroom, The importance of developing listening skills in English in the English Grade 8 FAL classroom, The importance of improving English grammar and spelling in the grade 8 English FAL classroom, Grade 8 English FAL curriculum in South Africa, Impact of English on Society, The value of capable English teachers, Guidelines in mastering English as a second language, Advantages of mastering English as a second language with reference to pronoun usage and tense usage, Disadvantages of mastering English as a second language, The theory underpinning this study is the social constructivist theory.

Chapter 3 (Research Methodology)

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology, which is the questionnaires and interviews that will be used in the study. The points to be discussed are the following: Introduction, Research method (mixed method): including advantages and disadvantages of this method, research design, Research paradigm: positivist, Research instruments, The research methodology involves the use of a questionnaire, the construction of questionnaire questions, and the construction of interview questions. Reliability and validity, Population sample, the process includes sampling, data collection, data processing, and data analysis procedures. Ethical considerations, Informed consent, Voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, Research questions and how they connect to the questionnaire questions and interview questions, The importance of gathering information from the learners and the importance of gathering information from the teachers.

Chapter 4 (Data Analysis)

Chapter 4 discusses the data analysis of the questionnaires and interview questions. It shows the survey and interview responses and discusses the data interpretation. The following subheadings are discussed: Introduction: The secondary schools where the data was collected; Interview questions and responses with grade 8 English FAL teachers.

Chapter 5 (General Recommendations and Conclusions)

Chapter 5 focuses on general recommendations regarding the study, as well as a conclusion. These are the subheadings that are discussed in this chapter: The chapter covers the following subheadings: Introduction, Study Summary, Study Findings, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Future Research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of a literature review, wherein literature that is used was evaluated on how each literature work contributes to this study. A literature review can be defined as literature of a specific topic that is understood, collected, and critically evaluated by the researcher (Snyder, 2019). Therefore, literature that is relevant to the topic of this study is reviewed and connected to this topic of the challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners face to support the relevance of this topic. This literature's support accentuates the need for further research on this topic. Some literature will support the theory of errors discovered in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, as well as why they could be present. This literature, sourced from academic articles and scholarly studies, set the foundation of the study to theoretically explain the challenges that could be present in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom.

Therefore, this chapter discusses the challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners face, such as incorrect pronoun usage and incorrect tense usage. This chapter also discusses the requirement of teacher education, the grade 8 curriculum, the time allocated to teaching each skill for Grade 8 English FAL learners and the importance of learning English as a second language. Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of learning English as a second language are discussed, and the theory of the study is introduced, which is the Social Constructivist Theory.

2.2 The English First Additional Language (FAL) Grade 8 classroom

The English FAL classroom is vital in any English FAL speaker's development. A second language can be explained as a language that a child or individual has learned that is not their home language that they learned from when he/she was a baby (Cambridge, 2024). Kim (2023) notes that the world is becoming increasingly interconnected and that communicating in English has become essential. Additionally, the demand for proficiency in English is at its peak because it is the language of international communication (Kim, 2023). Therefore, learning English effectively in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom is vital. According to the Curricular and Assessment Policy Statements Senior Phase (CAPS SP) English Grade 7-9 document (2011), a first additional language is referred to as a language that is not the mother tongue of

the speaker, but a language added to be taught for communicative and educational purposes. In the case of the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, English is the first additional language added to an English FAL learner's professional calibre. Once again, the question of why English is so important is brought forth, and the answer is because English is the most widely spread language across the globe and is used as a medium of communication in most countries (Rao, 2019). This makes English the *lingua franca* in many countries, including South Africa. Therefore, English FAL learners will need to have a strong command of the English language to work abroad and communicate effectively with other countries.

Since learners are in a Grade 8 English FAL classroom, English is not their first language. For many learners, learning English as a second language can be extremely challenging because of the complexities of the language and the differences between their mother tongue language structure when compared to the English language structure. Kim (2023) suggests that intonation, pronunciation, and rhythm can be improved with regular practice, which leads to confidence in the learners. However, the teacher plays a major role in a learner's ability to improve in the English language. Abdimazhitovna (2024) states that when a teacher comes across specific features of a foreign language, the teacher's knowledge of general regularities in this language is not sufficient. This could be an issue in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, where teachers are not familiar with specific regular features of English as a language.

It is essential that learners have positive emotional experiences in the classroom as well as outside the classroom to enhance their success in acquiring a language (Abdimazhitovna, 2024). If learners are not receiving positive support and feedback from teachers in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, this could create another challenge to learners acquiring English effectively.

Abdimazhitovna (2024) highlights the importance of active learning, in which learners work individually, in groups, and in pairs, as well as together as a whole class. Additionally, different resources, such as newspapers, radio, television, and libraries for additional reading, are all important and work together to help learners gain clarity and understanding of a language (Abdimazhitovna, 2024). Different teaching methods, such as the communicative approach, the direct method, and the grammar-translation method, should all be used to attend to different learning needs of all learners

(Abdimazhitovna, 2024). Using these different methods can help learners gain a higher proficiency in the language (Abdimazhitovna, 2024). Therefore, it will be important to determine whether teachers in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom are using these different methods to enhance learning.

Matiso and Makena (2023) focuses their research on the text-based teaching approach. However, they determined that covid-19 harmed implementing the text-based approach when Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) was implemented (Matiso, 2023). They determined that language activities such as group discussions or interviews could not be implemented because of ERT, which compromised the text-based approach objectives (Matiso, 2023). The objectives of the text-based approach indicate that integrated teaching methods should be used to develop language skills (Matiso, 2023). Therefore, it is essential for language learning that learners engage in speaking or oral activities (Matiso, 2023). It will be vital to determine whether learners in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom are being taught with integrated teaching methods to help them develop their language proficiency.

This makes it even more important that enough attention is given to the English FAL classroom to fully develop the learners in their English speaking, reading, writing, and listening abilities. Furthermore, it is crucial to equip the English FAL teachers with the necessary knowledge and experience. Such resources can enable teachers to guide these young learners effectively on their journey in acquiring a strong command of the English language.

2.3 Challenges experienced by Grade 8 Learners in the English First Additional Language (FAL) classroom

Learners in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom can experience certain challenges pertaining to acquiring English as a second language. Common challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners experience in the classroom, which is discussed in this following chapter, are 2.3.1 Challenges with tense errors in the English FAL classroom, 2.3.2 Challenges with pronoun usage in the English FAL classroom, and 2.3.3 Requirements of teacher education in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom not being met.

2.3.1 Challenges with tense errors in the English Grade 8 FAL classroom

The English language describes tense as the form of a verb that allows one to express time (Lim, 2022). For example, if a learner wanted to express an action that took place in the past, they would use the past tense: *I walked in the park*. However, it appears to be a common error for English FAL learners to confuse tenses and use the incorrect form of verbs when speaking or writing in English. In a study by Titos (2022), the researcher mentions that a study conducted by Emvula (2020) determined the types of errors committed by learners. These errors were namely tense errors, incorrect article usage, errors with prepositions, errors with singular/plural form, subject-verb agreement errors, and incorrect word choice when learners wrote English First-Additional Language (EFAL) essays (Emvula, 2020, as cited in Titos, 2022). Furthermore, Titos (2022) cites Nndwamato (2017) to reveal that English is a language that most learners in rural villages struggle with when they are trying to read and write coherently.

Titos (2022) indicates that learners that study English as a second language struggle with reading and writing in English, resulting in grammatical errors, such as incorrect tense usage. These noted grammatical errors support the researcher's observation of grammatical errors made by English FAL learners. In addition, it reinforces the idea that learners from rural villages, where English is not a first language, are experiencing the same challenges. To improve learners' acquisition of English in the FAL classroom, it is imperative that research be done to determine the cause of this error and what can be done to correct it.

Verosha (2023) cites Corder (1967) saying that an error happens when a learner does not know the rules of the language they are trying to learn. During this error stage, Corder (1967), as cited in Verosha (2023), indicates that learners show proof of learning a language system that is being taught, and the learner will repeat the use of this system, but it is not yet the correct system. To overcome this error stage, firstly, the teacher must encourage the learner while indicating what error was made and then let the learner know what needs to be done to learn and correct the error (Corder, 1967, as cited in Verosha, 2023). Secondly, the teacher needs to provide evidence of the language system to show how the language is acquired, as well as what strategies the learner should use in his/her language-learning process (Corder, 1967, as cited in

Verosha, 2023). Thirdly, which could be considered the most important step, the learner then needs to take the feedback regarding the error from the teacher and apply it to his/her errors made to learn how to correct it (Corder, 1967, as cited in Verosha, 2023). In this process, the learner then uses the strategy of making errors in the second language to assess these errors and learn the corrections (Corder, 1967, as cited in Verosha, 2023).

This insight into errors made by second language learners is relevant to the study because it breaks down what takes place during the error phase, which can help the researcher determine which step is missing in the classroom to correct errors. Firstly, step one may be insufficient if the teacher does not encourage the learner and explain how much progress the learner has made in acquiring this second language. Secondly, step two could be lacking in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom where the teacher provides evidence of how the language system works and how the learner can correct the error. Thirdly, the third step could be neglected, which is solely dependent on the learner's own motivation to use the strategies learned to correct the grammatical error made. Using this explanation of why grammatical errors are made by learners, the researcher will be able to determine where the learners are lacking guidance in the classroom, which could lead to a solution to improve English acquisition.

2.3.2 Challenges with pronoun usage in the English Grade 8 FAL classroom

According to Merriam-Webster (2024), a pronoun in the English language is a word that replaces a noun or a noun phrase. The English language uses two pronouns: the feminine pronoun "she" in place of the noun "woman" or any feminine noun, and the masculine pronoun "he" in place of the noun "man" or any masculine noun. Often, learners will use the incorrect pronoun in a sentence for the noun present. A study by Titos (2022) found that many learners would use incorrect personal pronouns in their essay writing. It is stated that most teachers neglect teaching the correct use of first-person pronouns in the classroom (Titos, 2022). Therefore, it will be pertinent to determine whether teaching first-person pronouns is neglected in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom.

Titos (2022) discovered that some learners use double subjects in their writing, such as “*people they are.*” Furthermore, Titos (2022) determined that grammatical errors made by learners were because Sepedi is their home language. Titos (2022) then references Kim (2018) and Emvula (2020) to strengthen the point that a mother tongue can interfere with a learner’s acquisition of a second language. This source is relevant to the study because data will be collected from Grade 8 English FAL learners whose mother tongues could have an influence on their abilities to acquire English as a second language. This interference from the mother tongue can also be a contributing factor to the errors made by Grade 8 English FAL learners.

Furthermore, Emvula (2020), as cited in Titos (2022), determined that these grammatical errors with double subjects are because learners are directly translating from their home language to English. Learners make errors in double subjects because the structure of English differs from their home language. Therefore, it will be important to determine to what extent learners’ home language may be interfering with their English language acquisition in the FAL Grade 8 classroom. Additionally, it is pertinent to apply the three steps of the error phase to determine whether the student is being encouraged in the language learning, whether the teacher is teaching the correct grammatical systems to help correct errors, and whether the learner is becoming independent in learning his/her errors and how to correct future errors.

2.3.3 Requirements of teacher education in the Grade 8 FAL classroom

In the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, it is important to consider all aspects to determine the success of the learners. There are a few challenges that could be present in the classroom. Firstly, the CAPS (2011) document for Grade 7-9 indicates that all First Additional Language teachers should possess the following resources:

- a) A Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011)

The CAPS document is an invaluable resource that all teachers need to have on hand. This document serves as a guide for teachers to know exactly what resources learners need and how to teach learners effectively. In this study, it is extremely important to determine whether Grade 8 English FAL teachers have access to the CAPS (2011) document and whether they refer to it for guidance.

b) Language in Education Policy (CAPS, 2011)

The Language in Education Policy is an important policy for teachers to understand. This policy promotes multilingualism in schools by allowing learners to be taught in their home language as well as offering an additional language (Language in Education Policy, 1997). Ensuring that learners are being offered effective learning and teaching in English as an additional language according to the Language in Education Policy will be an integral part of the study.

c) The prescribed language textbook used by learners and other textbooks for resource purposes in addition to the prescribed one (CAPS, 2011)

It will be essential to this study to determine whether learners are provided with the prescribed language textbooks and other textbooks for resource purposes that are relevant to the English level of the Grade 8 English FAL learner. On the one hand, books that are too advanced may lead to learners becoming overwhelmed and not progressing in English acquisition. On the other hand, books that are too easy or for grades lower than Grade 8 could lead to learners never progressing in the English language because important knowledge and grammar are not being taught.

d) Dictionary (monolingual, bilingual, multilingual, thesaurus) (CAPS, 2011)

All learners need to have access to dictionaries. Dictionaries are fundamental in helping learners understand new terminology, which can help them grow their vocabulary. Therefore, this study will establish whether the Grade 8 English FAL learners have access to dictionaries in the classroom.

e) Prescribed literature genres (CAPS, 2011)

Learners should be exposed to different literature genres, such as short stories or poetry. These literature genres help learners understand meaning beyond the literal and develop critical thinking skills. This study will determine whether the necessary prescribed literature genres are being taught to learners in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom.

f) A variety of media materials: newspapers, magazines, brochures, and flyers (CAPS, 2011)

Media materials, such as newspapers, magazines, brochures, or flyers, can help learners understand how the English language can be used in different contexts. For example, newspapers will use formal English in an informative way to present current affairs taking place in the community. Magazines, on the other hand, can introduce techniques used in articles and advertisements, such as persuasive language to persuade consumers to buy certain products. These different media materials are important tools in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom because they help learners understand the different purposes for which the English language can be used. For this reason, it will be necessary to determine whether learners are provided with these necessary media materials.

g) Access to audio/visual aids to be used in the classroom (CAPS, 2011)

In any classroom, there should be visual aids and audio aids to help learners acquire important information about the subject that they are learning. In the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, there should be posters that contain information relevant to learning English, such as posters on the different tenses and how to use them correctly. Additionally, this study will determine whether the Grade 8 English FAL classroom contains an audio device, such as a radio or a Bluetooth speaker. This device should be able to play audio stories necessary to help develop the learners' listening skills.

h) Other media resources (a variety of newspapers, magazines, and brochures) (CAPS, 2011)

As discussed in point f, newspapers, magazines, and flyers are integral to helping teach learners about the different purposes that English can be used for. These resources also show how the language changes according to context. This is why it should be determined whether Grade 8 English FAL learners are provided with these resources in the classroom for academic enrichment.

Additionally, the following classroom resources are also required:

a) A range of texts to accommodate different reading levels, e.g., a selection of readers with sufficient copies of texts at each level for the class (CAPS, 2011).

b) A variety of media materials: newspapers, magazines, brochures, flyers, advertisements, posters, and notices.

c) Audio/visual aids (CAPS, 2011).

Some learners struggle to acquire the reading skill in an additional language. Consequently, this study will find out whether there are a range of different texts in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom to accommodate all learners on their reading levels and promote equality. Additionally, all learners should be provided with their own copy of the texts.

As previously mentioned, various media materials and audio/visual aids should be present in the Grade 8 English FAL classrooms to help learners acquire English effectively. The media materials can help learners develop their reading skills as well as learn about how English can be used for different purposes. The audio aids can help learners develop their listening skills, as well as help them with learning correct pronunciation. The visual aids can help learners see the language and form a habit of learning important grammar rules by continuously having grammar posters visible.

Firstly, if teachers in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom are lacking any of these necessary resources, their ability to equip learners to become proficient in English will be crippled. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers are provided the necessary resources to effectively teach.

Secondly, some teachers are not provided with the necessary support and education to effectively teach English as a second language. In a study by Chere-Masopha, Khalanyane, Tlali and Sebatane (2021), it was determined that teachers in Lesotho schools were not trained or equipped with the ability to implement curriculum reforms that could improve the teaching and learning experience. Chere-Masopha et al. (2021) cited Peyman, Gholam, and Parviz, (2012), to explain how teachers are offered little to no training or preparation for curriculum reforms, but they are expected to be able to change their classroom practices and their attitudes accordingly. These curriculum reforms are often aimed at changing classroom practices, but often teachers are not trained or prepared on how to implement these practices (Harris & Graham, 2019; Nhlapo et al., 2019; Abraham & Reginald, 2016; Peyman et al., 2012, as cited in Chere-Masopha et al., 2021).

Chere-Masopha et al. (2021) concluded that teachers were not adequately prepared for implementing curriculum changes in the classroom. If this lack of training is present in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, it can once again cripple the classroom and hinder any chance of improving English acquisition in learners. Some teachers were not equipped with competency in teaching the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Uys, Van der Walt, van der Berg & Botha, 2007, as cited in Mthembu & Pillay, 2021). Furthermore, Mthembu and Pillay (2021) stated that these teachers ignored the importance of methodological skills, which indicates that a possible challenge in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom can be the teachers' lack of training or education on how to teach the acquisition of English.

Another possible hindrance in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom is code-switching. Code-switching is when more than one language is used (Merriam-Webster, 2024). In this scenario, code-switching would be used in the English FAL classroom, where certain terms or phrases would be spoken in the learners' mother tongue. Although this technique is used with the intention of helping learners understand certain concepts, code-switching can hinder acquisition of English because learners will become reliant on switching to their mother tongue for certain concepts they struggle to grasp in English. In a study by Kellerman, Evans and Graham (2021), some respondents struggled with common expressions in English and would resort to code-switching. The study highlighted that being limited in language proficiency could hinder learning (Kellerman et al., 2021). Therefore, Grade 8 English FAL teachers that are limited in English language proficiency could hinder the learners' abilities to effectively learn English.

2.4 The time allocation for developing skills in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom

According to General Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus (GEMET Website, 2021), time allocation can be described as the act of assigning a specific amount of time or hours to activities in an individual's day, week, or year. In this regard, the activities will be the specific skills that Grade 8 learners need to learn and the amount of time dedicated to each skill will be discussed.

2.4.1 Time allocation for developing listening skills in English Grade 8 FAL classroom

The CAPS SP Grade 7-9 document (2011) allocates 4-5 hours per week to teach a first additional language. In the first additional language, learners will not necessarily have any knowledge of the language when they first arrive at school (CAPS, 2011). When learners first begin school, basic interpersonal communication skills, such as the ability to understand and speak the language, are taught (CAPS, 2011). Therefore, it is important to develop the listening skill so that learners can learn how to communicate in English as a second language. The CAPS SP Grade 7-9 document (2011) indicates that 2 hours should be dedicated to listening and speaking in a two-week cycle. This indicates that one hour per week will be dedicated to developing the listening and speaking skills in the additional language. Therefore, it is crucial to determine whether this amount of time is allocated to the development of listening and speaking in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom and whether learners are effectively developing these skills.

2.4.2 Time allocation spent on English grammar and spelling in the English Grade 8 FAL classroom

The CAPS SP Gr 7-9 document (2011) indicates the following regarding time allocation for learning language structure and conventions:

Language structure and conventions—1 hour - **The time allocation of the four language skills integrates the usage of language structures and conventions.** The curriculum also allocates time for formal practice. Thinking and reasoning skills are incorporated into the skills and strategies required for listening and speaking, for reading and viewing, and for writing and presenting (CAPS, 2011).

This indicates that 1 hour is allocated towards language structure and conventions within a two-week cycle, which means that 30 minutes per week is allocated for grammar in the English FAL classroom. Determining whether the Grade 8 English FAL classroom allocates this amount of time to teaching grammar will be pertinent.

2.5 The importance of developing listening skills in English in the English Grade 8 FAL classroom

When learning a secondary language, developing listening skills is important because listening to and hearing a language is usually the first thing a learner does. Consequently, this is the first skill that needs to be developed. According to the CAPS SP Grade 7-9 document (2011), listening and speaking are skills that are central to learning in all subjects because all subjects require learners to be able to listen to and speak about the content. It is through listening and speaking effectively in the language that learners can collect and understand information (CAPS, 2011). Learners can then build knowledge, learn how to solve problems, and learn how to express their ideas and opinions in the language (CAPS, 2011). Hence, developing the listening skill to allow learners to understand the values and attitudes in English texts is highly important in helping learners effectively acquire English as a second language. The CAPS SP Gr 7-9 document (2011) also indicates that learners should be presented with developing the listening and speaking skills continuously both informally (i.e., receiving and discussing information in class) and formally (i.e., debate). It is important to note that informal listening and speaking are combined with reading, writing, and language practice in the classroom (CAPS, 2011). Additionally, through speaking, an oral form is created from written text (e.g., reading aloud) (CAPS, 2011).

In a study by Olifant, Rautenbach and Cekiso (2017), it was observed that English FAL learners in Grades 8-10 experienced several reading challenges. During the reading activities, learners appeared to be unassertive, disinterested, and anxious and lacked proficiency when reading (Olifant et al., 2017). This lack of proficiency, disinterest, and anxiety could be the result of learners not being given enough time to develop their listening and speaking skills to effectively transition into training their English reading skills. As a result, it is important to determine how much time is dedicated to developing the listening and speaking skills in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom as well as how much time is dedicated to developing the reading and writing skills thereafter.

2.6 The importance of improving English grammar and spelling in Grade 8 English FAL classrooms

In a study by Nchabeleng (2020), it was determined that learners make spelling and grammar errors because of the irregularities in writing activities (Bahloul, 2007; cited in Nchabeleng, 2020). In other words, learners are not provided with necessary writing activities on a regular basis to work on and develop their English proficiency. If learners are provided with more writing activities on a regular basis, their ability to learn and correct mistakes will improve (Nchabeleng, 2020). Furthermore, continuous activities to improve English grammar and spelling in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom can improve learners' understanding of grammar rules and possibly help learners overcome challenges with grammatical errors, such as pronoun errors and tense errors.

2.7 Grade 8 English FAL curriculum in South Africa

The CAPS SP Gr 7-9 document (2011) states the following regarding teaching a First Additional Language:

- Schools that are using First Additional Language as a language of learning and teaching should therefore allocate 5 hours for that language.
- All language content is taught within a two-week cycle (10 (8) hours).
- Teachers do not have to stick rigidly to this cycle but must ensure that the language skills, especially reading and writing, are practiced.
- The time allocation for the different language skills in Grades 7-9 is 36 weeks.
- Four weeks are for examination purposes—two weeks for the June examination and another two weeks for the December examination (CAPS, 2011).

According to this information, teachers of the Grade 8 English FAL classroom should ensure that 5 hours are allocated per week to teaching English as a First Additional Language. Teachers need to teach all content, such as listening skills, reading skills, writing skills, speaking skills, and grammar, in a two-week cycle so that each element of the language can be covered. Following this cycle can help teachers effectively prepare learners for examinations.

Additionally, the recommended time for the Language of Learning and Teaching for Grades 7-9 per two-week cycle is as follows:

- Listening and speaking - 2 hours
- Reading and viewing - 3 hours and 30 minutes (1 hour 45 minutes for comprehension and 1 hour 45 minutes for literary texts)
- Writing and presenting - 3 hours and 30 minutes
- Language structure and conventions - 1 hour - Language structures and conventions and their usage are integrated within the time allocation of the four language skills. There is also time allocated for formal practice. Thinking and reasoning skills are incorporated into the skills and strategies required for listening and speaking, for reading and viewing, and for writing and presenting (CAPS, 2011:12).

According to this recommendation, the Grade 8 English FAL classroom should dedicate 1 hour of listening and speaking per week, 1 hour and 45 minutes of reading and viewing per week, 1 hour and 75 minutes of writing and presenting, and only 30 minutes per week of language structures and conventions/grammar.

According to the CAPS SP Gr 7-9 document (2011), the following materials should be provided to learners for First Additional Language Study:

- Core materials: Prescribed language textbook - Teacher Guide and Learner Book; novel; short stories; folklore; drama; poetry; dictionary.
- Media materials: Newspapers, magazines, radio talks/dramas, and television shows/dramas/documentaries.

The prescribed teacher guide provides enough information to help teach the learners effectively. Therefore, it is crucial that Grade 8 English FAL teachers have this guide. The learners also need their prescribed language textbook and learner book to effectively learn English as a second language. As previously discussed in this chapter, media materials aid learners in comprehending the various applications of English. These media materials can also assist learners in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom to learn how to think critically for themselves and use English for different purposes accordingly.

It is important to ensure that the Grade 8 English FAL classroom follows the guidelines for this curriculum to ensure that learners are being taught the correct way. Additionally, it will be pertinent to ensure that learners are provided with the relevant materials as listed in the CAPS document (2011) to make sure that they are receiving education at a fair level to secure their academic success.

2.8 The value of capable English teachers

Without capable English teachers, learners would fail to acquire proficient English usage. For a teacher to be capable, they not only need to be proficient in the English language, but they also need to be passionate, inspirational leaders that encourage learners to improve. Titos (2022) cites Mundriyah and Parmawati (2016) to explain that if teachers take learner concerns and interests seriously, their efforts can help learners develop writing skills more quickly. Additionally, it is important for teachers to allow learners time to correct their errors, which can also enhance learning (Mundriyah & Parmawati, 2016, as cited in Titos, 2022), and this observation shows that teachers taking learner education seriously is key to helping learners correct errors and improve their language acquisition. Another point noted by Nchabeleng (2020) indicated that some teachers may not be certified or trained enough to teach writing to learners effectively, which will negatively affect learners' acquisition of writing in English because the teachers will not be able to effectively correct errors or guide learners in the right direction with correcting grammatical errors. Therefore, learners' proficient acquisition of the English language is greatly dependent on the teacher's ability to teach and guide the learners, and teachers should be fully capable of doing so. Nchabeleng (2020) notes that Maswanganye (2010) suggests reading for fun is an effective way for teachers to acquire language and grammatical structures, and that teachers will be able to effectively prepare writing tasks that will interest learners to write and learn when teachers are well-informed in their subject. Kellerman et al. (2021) indicate that a study by Richards et al. (2013), as cited in Kellerman et al. (2021), determined the importance of teachers having a high level of language proficiency in order to respond knowledgeably to learners' questions, as well as to determine a learner's prior knowledge and provide feasible instructions in the classroom (Chadwick, 2012, as cited in Kellerman et al., 2021).

Therefore, it is essential to implement various strategies, such as reading for enjoyment, to enhance the teacher's understanding of the language, enabling them to effectively assist learners in acquiring English as a second language.

2.9 Guidelines in mastering English as a second language

Guidelines in mastering English as a second language can be extremely useful in advising both teachers and learners what the best techniques would be to effectively acquire English as a second language.

According to Suhirman (2023), acquiring English language proficiency in education is a pivotal venture. It helps shape the cognitive development of learners and increases their prospects (Suhirman, 2023). Subsequently, mastering English language proficiency in the Grade 8 English second language classroom is crucial. There are a few techniques that can be used to help learners master English as a second language in the Grade 8 English second language classroom.

According to Budiman, Ishaka, Rohani, Lalu and Slamet (2023), creating a supportive environment where learners can interact with native English speakers, such as English-speaking clubs and language exchange programs, can help students strengthen their English language skills. This, in turn, will allow learners to build confidence in their English-speaking ability (Budiman et al., 2023).

Another technique that needs to be considered is technology and how integrating it into English language learning can benefit learners (Fentari, 2025). There are many different digital tools and applications that can help learners engage in the classroom to create interactive learning experiences (Fentari, 2025). Learners can be introduced to language learning apps, language learning software, and online platforms to help learners practice their English language skills (Yuen & Schlote, 2024). Within these tools, there will be features to help learners improve their English language skills, such as vocabulary-building activities, interactive practices, and pronunciation guides (Budiman et al., 2023). These different tools can serve learners with different learning styles, which can make the learning experience more enjoyable (Budiman et al., 2023). When a learner is enjoying what they are learning, they are more likely to have effective results in acquiring English as a second language (Budiman et al., 2023).

It is also important to note that authentic materials from real-life resources, such as newspapers, magazines, podcasts, or videos, need to be incorporated into the curriculum (Guo, 2012, as cited in Budiman et al., 2023). These materials from real-life resources can help learners better understand language in a natural context (Budiman et al., 2023). These materials also allow learners to improve vocabulary and help strengthen their comprehension skills in English as a second language (Budiman et al., 2023). Learners are also exposed to different dialects used for different purposes, as well as different variations of culture and accents, which can help them understand the different elements that affect English as a language (Budiman et al., 2023). This understanding can help learners better grasp English as a language and learn about the different variations of English used for different purposes.

Budiman et al. (2023) cited Akcan and Tarar (2010) to show the importance of constructive feedback to learners as an effective learning strategy. It is important to provide learners with constructive feedback in the classroom because it makes learners aware of their areas in the language that need improvement and the areas that are already strengths (Budiman et al., 2023). Some examples of where teachers could provide feedback are highlighting grammar errors, discussing pronunciation issues, discussing learners' abilities in writing and speaking English, and discussing learners' language usage (Budiman et al., 2023). Additionally, providing feedback to learners that is personalised can help learners work on areas in their language usage that need improvement (Budiman et al., 2023). This personalised feedback then leads to targeted language development (Budiman et al., 2023).

There are a few ways that feedback can be given to learners: verbal feedback and non-verbal expressions, such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice (Budiman et al., 2023). When feedback is provided to learners, it allows them to determine the areas that need to be worked on (Budiman et al., 2023). However, feedback also allows learners to feel like their efforts are valued and acknowledged, which can motivate learners to continue improving their English language acquisition (Budiman et al., 2023). This is why it is imperative that teachers provide personalised and individual feedback to learners to ensure that they feel encouraged and supported (Budiman et al., 2023).

According to Yol and Yoon (2020) as cited in Budiman et al. (2023), it is vital for teachers to create language practice opportunities outside of the classroom to enhance the proficiency of the English language. Teachers can do this by encouraging learners to participate in extracurricular activities (Budiman et al., 2023). These extracurricular activities could be public speaking contests, joining drama clubs, or joining debates, which could all help learners use real-life scenarios to practice their English skills (Budiman et al., 2023). Encouraging learners to participate in these extracurricular activities can also help learners develop their critical thinking skills, develop their creativity, improve communication skills, and enhance their fluency in the English language (Budiman et al., 2023). The use of these guidelines is critical in helping learners develop their English language skills. Therefore, this information is relevant to the study because it can help guide the solutions for the Grade 8 English FAL classroom to help learners improve their English language acquisition in the selected schools.

2.10 Advantages of mastering pronoun usage and tense usage in English as a second language

Placing learners in a favourable situation to be able to master English as a second language is crucial for them to become proficient English speakers. There are many advantages that learners can acquire when mastering English as a second language.

Firstly, mastering English as a second language can lead to improvement of the learner's first language (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). In a study named "The benefits of learning English as a second language," Palomo-Blázquez (2018) notes that focusing on terms and ideas of grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and sentence structure can become a part of everyday practice and vocabulary (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). Therefore, these terms can possibly lead to a home language becoming absorbed in a deeper manner (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). Additionally, the learners' brains could be trained to examine different linguistic frames by learning to speak English as a second language (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). This training of the brain can be pivotal in changing the learners' approach to understanding English as a second language and can help learners approach pronoun and tense usage differently.

Secondly, Palomo-Blázquez (2018) noted that studying a second language can help learners enhance their networking skills because they will be able to communicate with other linguistic societies. These learners will also be able to experience different cultural ideas and different lifestyles from their own, creating a social and cultural tolerance of different cultures (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). This exposure to different cultures can help learners become more open-minded and appreciate different cultures or opinions (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). By enhancing learners' networking skills in English as a second language, these learners can also learn the native English language usage. This can expose learners in the Grade 8 English second language classroom to correct usage of pronouns and tense, which will help them correct their errors.

The third benefit noted by Palomo-Blázquez (2018) is that learning English as a second language can help boost communicative proficiency in learners. Learning a second language can improve learners' competence in communication because of acquiring new language strategies, attitudes, language codes, abilities, and new cognitive concepts (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). When teaching a second language in primary education, learners learn how to communicate in that language and focus on the language's involved use (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). Therefore, a communicative approach is used to help develop the learners' competence in communication (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). This is highly important to the study of Grade 8 English FAL classrooms because it will be pivotal to determine whether this competence in communication in primary education has been developed to the necessary level. Further, continuously encouraging learners to boost their communicative proficiency in the Grade 8 English FAL class can help learners develop the necessary new strategies, it can change their attitude positively towards learning English as a second language, and it can help these learners develop the necessary linguistic codes, such as proficient pronoun and tense usage.

Since learning English as a second language develops higher cognitive potential, the evidence shows that students function better in other academic areas as well (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Jaekel, Shurig, Ackern & Ritter, 2022). According to the study named "The benefits of learning English as a second language," by Palomo-Blázquez (2018), it was indicated that bilingual learners received better scores on their tests and exams

for math exams, text analysis and comprehension, and vocabulary tests than monolingual learners. Additionally, learners mastered their capacity for multitasking once they became better skilled at flipping from one language to another with ease (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). It has also become apparent that learners who are bilingual are able to be more conscious of their background as well as having higher-level abilities in decision-making and rationalising situations (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Jaekel et al., 2022). Therefore, it is apparent that knowledge of English as a second language can create better mental concepts (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Jaekel et al., 2022). These concepts could be multitasking, adapting their minds better in scenarios, having better problem-solving skills, and having better listening ability, which all contribute to improving practical skills in different academic areas (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Jaekel et al., 2022). Ensuring that the correct level of English FAL teaching is taking place in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom will show whether learners are effectively developing their cognitive potential.

Another reason that learning English as a second language is beneficial is because learning a second language makes it easier for learners to learn other additional languages as well (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Kroll & Dussias, 2018). The strategies that are taught to learners when they are learning a second language can be applicable to learning a third or four additional languages as well (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Kroll & Dussias, 2018). The term metalinguistic awareness refers to this ability for learners to reuse the skills attained from learning an additional language and apply these skills to learning other additional languages (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Kroll & Dussias, 2018). In this metalanguage awareness approach, the learners' brains learn to identify the different methods used in learning a second language, which then allows their brains to break down the learning of the language into a chain of tasks (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Kroll & Dussias, 2018). The reason why this "metalanguage awareness" process does not take place when one learns one's mother tongue is because one is not conscious of the process that takes place when learning the home language (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018; Kroll & Dussias, 2018). Therefore, learners will find it easier to comprehend the organisation of grammar and sentence structure across different languages (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). This is relevant to the study to determine whether Grade 8 English FAL learners understand the concept of English grammar.

Palomo-Blázquez (2018) noted that studying English as a second language is beneficial because it boosts the learners' creativity. When learners are on the path of how to master English as a second language, they are coerced into making new connections in their brains to find different words or expressions (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). This coercion influences learners to be creative as they are searching for the words in the foreign language to express themselves (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). It would be fascinating to see how Grade 8 English FAL learners express themselves creatively in English.

An important point to consider that benefits learners learning English as a second language is that this action of learning a second language builds up the learners' self-confidence (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). As learners gain more mastery over English as a second language, their self-belief grows (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). This self-belief can lead to students feeling happier with themselves and their abilities in English as a second language, which can help them feel confident when the next challenge of the language arises (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). Determining the level of self-belief or self-confidence that the Grade 8 English FAL learners have is important to determine how comfortable they are with the language.

The last, and possibly the best, advantage to mastering English as a second language is that learners are provided better career choices (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). English has become an extremely important language in the labour force, and the more mastery learners gain over the language, the better career opportunities they will have (Palomo-Blázquez, 2018). Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that learners in the Grade 8 English second language class are provided with the best tools to master English as a second language and correct grammatical errors that they struggle with, such as the use of incorrect pronouns or tense errors.

2.11 Disadvantages of learning English as a second language

There are different theories on what age is the most important for a learner to begin learning English as a second language. It is important to note that age can play an important role in whether a learner will effectively acquire English as a second language (Zhang, 2021). In a study by Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle named "The critical period for language acquisition: Evidence from second language learning, as cited in

Zhang 2021), a large group of participants ranging from age six to sixty years old were studied to determine how well they acquire a second language. It was shown that the age group that was most successful was the teenagers and not the children or the adults (Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1978, as cited in Zhang, 2021). This study by Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978), as cited in Zhang (2024) determined that younger learners would struggle with language activities that were beyond their cognitive capacity or maturity. However, it was noted that adolescents were more successful and faster in acquiring the second language in the early stages of second language development (Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1978, as cited in Zhang, 2021). It was determined that using their mother tongue daily socially, professionally, and academically is what allowed adults and adolescents to make important progress in the second language that they were learning (Snow & Hoefnagel-Hohle, 1987, as cited in Zhang, 2021).

A result of beginning to learn a second language too early is a phenomenon called “subtractive bilingualism” (Zhang, 2021). It was Wallace Lambert who named this phenomenon and discussed it when French-Canadian and Canadian immigrant children began to lose their ability in their primary languages instead of the second language, resulting in bilingualism (Zhang, 2021). Many American-born children whose parents were immigrants suffer from this “subtractive bilingualism” due to being acclimatised into American English speakers, their environment in school, and the American culture (Zhang, 2021). Even if children of immigrant parents are first introduced to their ethnic language, the assimilation into American schools and culture so early in life can lead to these children losing their abilities in their native language because what they learn in English so early on in life replaces their mother tongue (Zhang, 2021). Also, it is unlikely that these learners will continue to retain or develop their mother tongue after learning English from such a young age, even if this is the only language that their parents speak (Zhang, 2021). This disadvantage of subtractive bilingualism can negatively impact children by causing them to lose the connection with their culture and traditions. This can also lead to children feeling lost because they will not feel as if they belong to any culture. Zhang (2021) notes that unsuccessful attempts for learners and their parents to merge with society can also have devastating effects on learners’ bilingual education. Therefore, it will be pertinent

to this study to determine whether learners have retained their home language effectively and whether they feel comfortable speaking English in the classroom.

2.12 The social constructivist theory

The social constructivist theory stands for interactive learning wherein teachers and learners discuss context, and learners lean on their own perceptions to understand these concepts (Prawat, 1992, as cited in Davis & Smits, 2017). This theory can impact the study by helping to balance the focus between both the teacher's ability to teach English as a second language in the Grade 8 classroom and the focus on the learners and their understanding of the content. For this reason, this theory of social constructivism was chosen to determine whether learners are engaging in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom to develop their knowledge and critical thinking.

According to Fosnot (1996) as cited in Nchabeleng (2020), the most important element of the Social Constructivist Theory is that learners can construct their own knowledge and understanding based on their perceptions of their realities. Von Glaserfeld (1984) as cited in Nchabeleng (2020) noted the following three principles as the main points in understanding the Social Constructivist Theory:

- a) Active awareness and involvement in learning are essential; one cannot gather knowledge passively.
- b) An individual needs to be consciously aware while learning, which creates an adaptive process in which the individual learns more effectively.
- c) The most important task for the individual is to be cognitively aware and present.

Furthermore, in a study titled "Constructivist Approach to Learning: An Analysis of Pedagogical Models of Social Constructivist Learning Theory" by Mishra (2023), it was noted that this constructivist approach believes that everyone creates their own mental structure in which he/she interprets his/her experiences. Furthermore, learning is an active mental action in which current knowledge and past experiences help learners to construct ideas, knowledge, and skills (Woolfolk, 2008; Santrock, 2011, as cited in Mishra, 2023). Jones and Brader (2002), as cited in Mishra (2023) indicate that this theory emphasised the individual and his/her knowledge, previous beliefs, and skills. Further, Edwards (2005), as cited in Mishra (2023) noted that this constructivist

approach believes the knowledge and beliefs of the individual have been constructed by previous generations that pass on knowledge. As stated by Mishra (2023), constructivism maintains that learning is an active process, and one does not acquire knowledge passively. Furthermore, a process for learning needs to take place for the learners to develop internal concepts through social interactions in the classroom (Mishra, 2023). Vygotsky believed that language and thought were connected to one another and that a child would first begin using language superficially during social interactions (Mishra, 2023). Sometime after this superficial language use, this language would structure the child's thinking (Mishra, 2023). For this reason, Woolfork (2008), as cited in Mishra (2023) noted that language was a critical tool to develop the cognitive process. This is an important observation to keep in mind for this study because it will help the researcher to understand how much the Grade 8 English FAL learners' cognitive process of critical thinking has been developed through teaching in the classroom.

As per the website Gowrie NSW (n.d.), a technique of Vygotsky's theory used in the classroom is instructional scaffolding. The method of instructional scaffolding involves the teacher or educator guiding learners in their learning process (Gowrie NSW, n.d.). During this process, it is important that the teacher have more experience with the task or the process of learning than the learner, and the teacher also needs to understand what level the learner is on and how to guide this level effectively (Gowrie NSW, n.d.). The main aim for this technique of instructional scaffolding is to ensure that the learner feels comfortable asking questions while they are learning until they feel comfortable performing tasks without help from the teacher (Gowrie NSW, n.d.). This technique of scaffolding could be effective in developing learners' abilities to complete tasks alone in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. Therefore, the researcher will determine if this method is used in the English FAL Grade 8 classroom.

This study considers Vygotsky's social constructivist theory in relation to the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. It will be important for teachers and researchers to determine how much of the English language in Grade 8 English FAL learners is simply superficial language use and whether learners have developed their English capacity effectively so that English structures the learners' thinking. Furthermore, it will be pivotal to determine whether instructional scaffolding is used in the Grade 8 English

FAL classroom. It is important to assess whether learners feel comfortable asking questions in class when they do not understand specific concepts, as this can help them develop their language ability.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter covered the requirements for the Grade 8 English FAL classroom as well as the challenges that learners might face in the classroom. The social constructivist theory, which underpins this study, assisted the researcher in determining the interactive approach to teaching that occurs and whether both teachers and learners are contributing to English acquisition in the Grade 8 classroom. The chapter to follow will be Research Methodology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the study's data collection and analysis methods. There will be a discussion on how data was collected and how it was analysed. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The instruments used in the data collection include hard copies of the questionnaires that are filled in and collected as well as a voice recorder (tape recorder) to record the interviews, which will be transcribed for data collection. This chapter will include the importance of gathering information from both learners and teachers; the research paradigm of the study, which is positivist; and the research method, which is the mixed method including both the qualitative and quantitative approach. This method will be used when analysing the data collected from the population and sampling. This chapter will also explain the connection between the research questions and both the interview and questionnaire questions, as well as the ethical considerations.

3.2 Research method

The research method refers to the procedures used to collect and analyse data (Scribbr, 2024). Research methods that are used are usually qualitative or quantitative. In this study, the mixed-method approach is used. This implies the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Some advantages of quantitative data are that the researcher can work with larger samples, and it is easy to collect (Stevens, 2023). Additionally, quantitative data is objective, so it is easier to draw reliable conclusions from it (Stevens, 2023).

The most concerning disadvantage of quantitative data is that it can lack depth in a study (Stevens, 2023). This is because the numbers cannot determine more in-depth reasons for the conclusions (Stevens, 2023). A disadvantage of qualitative data is that it is more time-consuming to collect than quantitative data (Stevens, 2023). Additionally, qualitative data can be subjective, so there is a risk of bias in the data collected (Stevens, 2023). Regarding qualitative data, the advantage is that this type of data collection can show rich insights into the topic that is being studied (Stevens,

2023). Additionally, the researcher can gather the target audiences' feelings on the topic that is being researched (Stevens, 2023).

Qualitative research can be defined as the study of different manifestations of the nature of phenomena (Philipsen & Vernooij-Dassen, 2007, as cited in Buseto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020). This study of the nature of phenomena also includes their quality, which perspectives from which they can be perceived, and which context in which they appear (Philipsen & Vernooij-Dassen, 2007, as cited in Buseto et al., 2020). However, what cannot be determined in this study of the nature of phenomena is their range, frequency, and/or their place of cause and effect in a chain that is objectively determined (Philipsen & Vernooij-Dassen, 2007, as cited in Buseto et al. 2020). Punch (2013), as cited in Buseto et al. (2020) provided a clearer definition in which it states that qualitative research deals with data in the form of words rather than in the form of numbers.

The qualitative method is effective for research questions that look at complicated interventions and aim to improve those interventions. In qualitative research, the method can be inductive because it is used to research a specific topic, which results in a theory about the topic (Litosseliti, 2024).

In this research, the qualitative approach was used by interviewing two (2) teachers each from the two different secondary schools. This is a total of four (4) interviews. Each teacher was asked five (5) semi-structured interview questions, which could prompt further questions in each interview. The data gathered in these interviews were recorded (using a voice recorder) for data analysis.

On the other hand, quantitative data would be any data that can be counted, measured, or given a numerical value (National Library of Medicine, 2022). This type of data collection can be beneficial by providing patterns in the data collected, which can help the researcher make accurate conclusions about the data collected. The qualitative research method was used in this study by distributing questionnaires to twenty-five (25) different Grade 8 learners from two different secondary schools in the Lejweleputswa area. Each questionnaire consists of seven (7) questions that have multiple-choice answers and one (1) question in which the learners can answer freely. The answers to the questionnaires were tallied together to determine common

answers. Therefore, this research can identify a pattern that explains the prevalent issues in Grade 8 English FAL classrooms.

3.3 Research design

In any study, the research methodology will be what explains and discusses the data that had been collected as well as the methods that have been used for analysis (McCombes & George, 2023). The methodology is an integral part of any thesis, dissertation, or research paper because it explains what the researcher has done and how it was done (McCombes & George, 2024). This allows readers to evaluate the research and dissertation topic to determine how reliable and valid they are (McCombes & George, 2024). Within the methodology is the research paradigm and the research method. For this study, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. The research paradigm is the positivist paradigm.

3.4 Research paradigm

A research paradigm can be thought of as a set of beliefs or agreements between experts in a specific field that are mutually accepted (Burrell & Morgan, 2017). This set of beliefs is what is used to address challenges in the specific field (Burrell & Morgan, 2017). Within a research paradigm will be ontology, research, and epistemology (Abbadia, 2022). There are different paradigms within research, but most will consist of either positivism or interpretivism (Abbadia, 2022). The research paradigm that was followed in this research is positivism. The positivist paradigm is neutral and measurable through observation of action, activity, and reaction (Park, Konge & Artino, 2020).

It is important to understand the specific assumptions of a paradigm because these assumptions can provide a more detailed understanding of how a study is implemented to determine problems, solutions, and criteria for evidence (Park et al., 2020). It is stated by Park et al. (2020) that positivism is aligned with the hypotheticodeductive model of science. Hypotheticodeductive can be defined as something that tests the consequences of hypotheses to determine whether these hypotheses are deemed false or if they are deemed acceptable (Oxford Languages, 2024). Therefore, this means that in the positivist paradigm, the researcher will test a hypothesis in the study to determine whether the hypothesis is false or accurate. A

deeper look into positivism through a hypotheticodeductive lens can be beneficial (Park et al., 2020). Park et al. (2020) further describe the positivism method as a circular process that has three steps. Firstly, the researcher starts with theory from literature and builds a hypothesis (Park et al., 2020). Secondly, the researcher then designs an experiment by implementing variables into the study (Park et al., 2020). Thirdly, the research conducted an empirical study on the experiment (Park et al., 2020). This means that the researcher verified outcomes of the study through observation rather than pure logic. The research ultimately contributes its findings to literature, completing the circular process (Park et al., 2020). New findings from empirical studies can help to strengthen a theory or refine it (Park et al., 2020).

The positivist approach emphasises the need to develop knowledge objectively (Park et al., 2020). In other words, the values or beliefs of the research or the participants cannot influence the study (Park et al., 2020). Rather, the study will be conducted and observed objectively to determine outcomes. Park et al. (2020) consider properly developed knowledge to be truth, which means that knowledge is accurate and certain. Therefore, to develop “truth” appropriately, there needs to be complete separation between the participants and the researcher (Park et al., 2020). This separation would be an emotional one where emotional factors or individual values cannot influence the collection of data. Park et al. (2020) describe this separation as the way in which positivists operate, which is in dualism and objectivity. Therefore, individuals’ subjective experiences and values are dismissed, and the objective thinking in positivism is applied (Park et al., 2020). Usually in positivism, the researcher needs to not interact with the participants during data collection and not be involved in the experiment in a meaningful way (Park et al., 2020). However, this does not mean that positivism can only be applied in scientific study. On the contrary, positivism can be applied to social science research, albeit it is done so with a bit more difficulty (Park et al., 2020). Homans (1964, as cited in Keat, 1979), provides the explanation of some basic laws observed by behavioral psychologists, such as the idea that being provided with a reward result in increased recurrence of a behaviour. Therefore, applying this pattern of behavior can be applied in the positivist view in social studies.

For this study, the researcher applied positivist thinking by observing participant responses objectively to determine logical patterns in human behavior while learning.

This means that even though the researcher conducted the interviews with the teachers in person, an objective viewpoint was kept by listening to the teachers' responses while keeping a professional and scientific mindset. The researcher also did not create any subjective or emotional attachments to the teachers' experiences. Thus, this enabled the researcher to keep an objective viewpoint. This objective view helped the researcher determine why logical patterns, presented as challenges, occur in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. This objective thinking can also help determine logical solutions to the challenges identified.

3.5 Research instruments

Research instruments refer to tools that are used in research to collect, measure and analyse data (George, 2022). In this research, both a questionnaire and interviews was conducted for data collection, measurement, and analysis.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

Researchers use a questionnaire, a series of questions, as a tool to collect necessary data from respondents (Taherdoost, 2023). Questionnaires can either be written or oral questions, and they can feature open-ended questions or closed questions, or a mixture of both (Taherdoost, 2023). Open-ended questions are questions that allow respondents to answer openly in their own words with as much detail or as little detail as they want to (Taherdoost, 2023). Closed questions are questions that have predetermined answers from which the respondents can choose (Taherdoost, 2023). In this research, the questionnaire consists of seven (7) closed questions and one (1) open-ended question for the respondents. Forty-seven (47) Grade 8 English FAL learners will be answering the questionnaire.

There are many benefits of using a questionnaire. Firstly, questionnaires are practical because researchers can strategically manage who the target audience is for the questionnaire as well as what format and questions to use while gathering data for the researcher's subject choice (Taherdoost, 2023). Secondly, questionnaires are cost-efficient because there is no need to hire surveyors to deliver the questionnaires (Taherdoost, 2023). Instead, questionnaires can be emailed to respondents to be printed, or the researcher can deliver the questionnaires personally. Thirdly, questionnaire results can be gathered quickly (Taherdoost, 2023). Fourthly,

questionnaires are highly scalable, meaning that they can be distributed to different demographics across the world (Taherdoost, 2023). Lastly, questionnaires can make respondents feel more comfortable in the research process because the questionnaire is completely anonymous, and respondents are not put through stressful time constraints to answer the questionnaire (Taherdoost, 2023).

Some disadvantages of using questionnaires include the following: Firstly, some respondents may not answer honestly in the questionnaire (Taherdoost, 2023). Secondly, some respondents may skip answering certain questions (Taherdoost, 2023). Lastly, including open-ended questions can create some difficulty in interpreting the data because this type of question requires a human to interpret this information (Taherdoost, 2023).

3.5.2 Construction of questionnaire questions

When considering the analysis of the questionnaire, one must consider the type of analysis to do. Since the questionnaires fall under quantitative analysis, descriptive statistics will be used for analysis. In this analysis, the sample chosen by the researcher is the focus of the analysis to find answers and solutions for this population sample (Jansen & Warren, 2020). The quantitative data collected in this study is both categorical and numerical (Jansen & Warren, 2020). Nominal data, which is level 1, measures similarities and differences in responses between gender groups (Jansen & Warren, 2020). Since nominal data has categorical characteristics or groups that have no rank order, this means that it is acceptable for measuring similarities and differences in responses of the different genders of learners within the English FAL Grade 8 classroom. Therefore, in this study, similarities and differences between Grade 8 boys will be measured, and similarities and differences between Grade 8 girls will be measured.

This study also consists of ordinal data. Ordinal data, which is also Level 2, can be described as data that contains characteristics that are qualitative and have a natural ranking order (Jansen & Warren, 2020). Therefore, questions that have different levels of agreement will be analysed according to the natural ranking order. These questions can be low-agreement questions or high-agreement questions.

The last type of data that is used in this study is ratio data. This is Level 4. Ratio data consists of numerical values that are ordered (Jansen & Warren, 2020). Additionally, this type of data is the most effective measurement level (Jansen & Warren, 2020). Jansen & Warren (2020) indicate that ratio data is naturally numerical, and it has a meaningful zero point in measurement. For this research, the length of time in minutes per week dedicated to teaching English FAL grammar, such as pronoun usage and tenses, can be measured as ratio data.

These are some sample questions from the questionnaire:

- Do you struggle with English grammar, such as correct pronoun usage and tense usage, in the classroom?
- Does your teacher spend time helping you correct grammatical errors?
- Does your teacher allocate time to read through other media material such as newspapers, magazines or brochures?

3.5.3 Interview

An interview is a process whereby the researcher asks an interviewee several questions to collect data (George, 2022). There are three types of interviews, namely structured interviews, unstructured interviews, and semi-structured interviews (George, 2022). A structured interview includes questions that have been planned and predetermined (George, 2022). An unstructured interview is free flowing with no planned questions (George, 2022). A semi-structured interview is where there are questions that are planned and predetermined with some room for asking questions that were not planned (George, 2022). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow room for the researcher to use a more open plan for the questions, so they do not have to follow a specific phrasing, order, or structure (George, 2022). The interviewee's answers may prompt the researcher to ask follow-up questions. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted with four (4) Grade 8 English FAL teachers. This means that the researcher will ask five (5) predetermined questions in the interview, and there will possibly be two (2) follow-up questions asked depending on the answers from the teachers. The interviews will be voice-recorded with a tape recorder for data collection. The recordings will be transcribed to collect data.

There are a few benefits of using semi-structured interviews for data collection. Firstly, interviews enable the researcher to collect detailed and important information (George, 2022). Secondly, there is a relatively high validity in the data collected from interviews (George, 2022). Thirdly, the researcher can ask follow-up questions if needed in a semi-structured interview (George, 2022).

Some disadvantages of using a semi-structured interview are as follows: Firstly, it can be time-consuming to prepare for the interview (George, 2022). Secondly, there is a risk of observer bias or recall bias (George, 2022). However, since the researcher is using the positivist paradigm, removing all personal elements from the data collection process is vital. Therefore, the risk of observer or recall bias is minimised.

3.5.4 Construction of interview questions

In these semi-structured interviews, the questions were open-ended. In interviews, open-ended questions can be used with other interviewing techniques or alone to explore topics in more depth, identify possible causes of challenges, and understand processes (Weller et al., 2018). The interviews were conducted during the day in person, or if that is not possible due to scheduling discrepancies, via an online meeting (such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams).

These are some sample questions from the interviews:

- What are the challenges faced by Grade 8 learners in English as a second language, specifically in tenses and pronouns?
- What could be the challenges faced by Grade 8 educators in teaching English as a second language?
- In what way can the above-mentioned challenges be addressed to yield better results or understanding by learners?

3.6 Reliability and validity

It is important to ensure that both the interview questions and the questionnaire are reliable and valid for studying the challenges faced by Grade 8 learners in the English FAL classroom. Validity in a study refers to the accuracy of measurement in a study and whether the results can accurately represent what they are supposed to measure (Scribbr, 2024). The reliability of a study refers to the consistency of a measure and

whether the results would be able to be produced under the same circumstances (Scribbr, 2024).

The validity of the findings from the questionnaire and the interviews can be verified with the use of outside sources, such as electronic sources, scholarly articles, and books. The researcher used information collected from these electronic sources and scholarly articles to understand previous studies done on determining challenges learners face with learning English as a second language. Understanding the literature on challenges faced by these learners can help the researcher see what techniques have been used to improve the acquisition of English as a second language already and where there might be room for improvement or the implementation of different techniques.

The researcher relied on the trustworthiness of the study and research design to determine the challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners face in the classroom. The questions provided in the interviews and the questionnaire focus on determining the challenges faced in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. The methods chosen to assess the data, such as the six steps followed in thematic analysis, will help ensure the quality of the findings, which can lead to quality solutions being sought. Methodological triangulation was also used in this study in order to enhance the study's validity and reliability. Methodological triangulation is a method used in research where the researcher uses different methodologies to approach the same topic (Bhandari, 2023).

3.7 Population sample

The population and sampling are the most important aspects of the study because they refer to both the participants involved in the study and the total number of participants (Bhandari, 2023). In this study, two (2) English FAL Grade 8 teachers each (4 teachers in total) from two (2) selected secondary schools within the Lejweleputswa area were selected for interview questions. Furthermore, forty-seven (47) Grade 8 English FAL learners were chosen at random from the two schools within the Lejweleputswa Education District to answer the questionnaire. Out of forty-seven (47) Grade 8 learners, twenty-five (25) learners were chosen from one school, and twenty-two (22) learners were chosen from the other school. The respondents for the

questionnaire were both male and female. The respondents for the interview questions were only female because there were only female Grade 8 English second language teachers.

3.8 Sampling

For this study, the purposive sampling procedure will take place. The purposive sampling procedure is an approach to sampling most often used in qualitative research where the researcher chooses a small and specific sample of the population to gain knowledge about a particular occurrence (McCombes, 2023). The study's focus is on the challenges faced by Grade 8 English FAL learners in the secondary classroom. The researcher discussed with the four (4) teachers whether they were willing to participate in the study. The decision on whether to take part in the study or not was solely up to the teachers. Thereafter, the teachers randomly selected the forty-seven (47) learners to participate in the questionnaires. There was no pattern followed in this sampling procedure. The respondents for the questionnaire were both male and female. The respondents for the interview questions were female.

3.9 Data collection

When data is collected, a process takes place where information on different factors of interest is gathered in a systematic manner (Responsible Conduct in Data Management Website, n.d.). This information collected allows the researcher to answer research questions, evaluate different outcomes, and test hypotheses (Responsible Conduct in Data Management, n.d.). In other words, the data collection process refers to tools that are used in the study to conduct the research (Bhandari, 2023).

For this study, four (4) semi-structured interviews took place with four (4) Grade 8 English FAL teachers. The interviews were voice recorded for data collection purposes. The data was then transcribed and analysed.

Furthermore, the forty-seven (47) randomly selected learners were each handed a questionnaire to complete, and each learner that participated remain anonymous. The questionnaire answers were tallied numerically to determine patterns in the answers. This procedure helped the researcher see common patterns of challenges in the

Grade 8 English FAL classroom, which can help the researcher determine possible logical solutions.

This data was collected during the day so as not to disrupt any schedules of the participants.

3.10 Data processing

There are three types of data processing, namely manual data processing, mechanical data processing, and electronic data processing (Taherdoost, 2020). With manual data processing, the data is processed manually without the help of electronic devices (Taherdoost, 2020). Although this method requires the least number of resources and is the least expensive, it can be time-consuming, and errors can be made during the data processing process (Taherdoost, 2020). Mechanical data processing is when machines, such as calculators or typewriters, are used to process data (Taherdoost, 2020). This data process produces fewer errors, but it is more complex (Taherdoost, 2020). With electronic data processing, researchers use modern data processing software in which instructions are programmed into the software to analyse the data (Taherdoost, 2020). This method of processing data is the most expensive, but it is also the most reliable and the fastest method for data processing (Taherdoost, 2020). For this study, the researcher sent the data to a statistician to be processed through electronic data processing to yield accurate results.

3.11 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process where data is examined, filtered, modified, and represented to solve a problem (Stevens, 2024). In this study, both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) data was collected and analysed. The following table demonstrates the different features of both thematic analysis and statistical analysis:

Feature	Thematic Analysis	Statistical Analysis
Data Type	Qualitative	Quantitative

Methodology	Interpretation by the researcher to find meaning; Can be subjective	Objective statistical and mathematical methods
Goal	To identify patterns and common themes in the data	To find trends and correlations in data; to draw conclusions from data
Focus	Complexity and depth of meaning in data	Objective measurement of data

In order to effectively answer the research questions, the researcher used both thematic and statistical analysis. Thematic analysis was used during the interview where the researcher interpreted the interview answers by consulting current research on the topic of challenges that English FAL Grade 8 learners experience and applying this knowledge of literature to interpret and compare it to the data that was collected from this study. The researcher also used the positivist paradigm to keep an objective viewpoint while interpreting the data collected to produce more reliable to data. Statistical analysis was also used by sending the questionnaire responses to a statistician where they were run through a statistical analysis program called MATLAB to analyse common answers for interpretation.

3.11.1 Procedure for analysing data

Regarding the questionnaire, statistical analysis was used. Statistical analysis is the process where data is processed to find meaningful trends (Stevens, 2024). In statistical analysis, there are two categories, namely descriptive analysis and inferential analysis (Stevens, 2024). In the study, descriptive analysis was used. This analysis is where numerical data is analysed to determine the outcomes of the study

(Stevens, 2024). Statistical analysis was important to gather objective data that uses mathematics to determine common answers that were chosen.

Regarding the interviews, thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is a method that can be used to systematically organise and identify patterns in data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This type of analysis can also offer insight into the patterns or themes, as well as identify relationships present in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Data collected from interviews in this study was analysed using thematic analysis. There are six steps developed by Braun and Clarke (2022) that thematic analysis follows, which was followed when analysing data from interviews conducted in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2022). These six steps are “familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up” (Caufield, 2023:1). The first step, familiarisation, involves an overview of the data (Caufield, 2023). This can include transcribing audio from the interviews, taking notes, and becoming familiar with the collected data (Caufield, 2023). Step 2, which is coding, refers to highlighting important parts of the transcribed text and assigning labels or “codes” to these phrases or sentences to describe their content (Caufield, 2023). Step 3 is generating themes (Caufield, 2023). From the codes that have been created, the researcher now needs to identify patterns in these codes and start creating themes from these patterns in the codes (Caufield, 2023). Step 4 involves reviewing themes (Caufield, 2023). In this stage, the researcher needs to make sure that the themes are accurate and useful representations of the data (Caufield, 2023). Themes that are found to be problematic can be changed, combined, split up, or discarded entirely to make the data representations more accurate (Caufield 2023). Step 5, namely defining and naming themes, involves just what it is called (Caufield, 2023). When themes are defined, it helps the researcher determine what is meant by each theme and how it helps to understand the data (Caufield, 2023). Naming the themes is purely to create clear and concise names for each theme (Caufield, 2023). Step 6, writing up, involves the researcher writing up the analysis of the data (Caufield, 2023). Within this thematic analysis write-up step, there needs to be an introduction to establish the researcher’s research question, as well as the aims and the approach.

(Caufield, 2023). There will also need to be a methodology section explaining how the data was collected and how the thematic analysis itself was conducted (Caufield,

2023). Hereafter, there will be a “results” or “findings” section that will address each theme, how often they appear, and what they mean with examples included (Caufield, 2023). Finally, a conclusion will summarise the analysis and how it answered the research question.

Another important element to consider with thematic analysis is that there are different approaches that should be considered (Caufield, 2023). These different approaches are the inductive approach and the deductive approach (Caufield, 2023). An inductive approach consists of relying on the data and allowing it to determine themes in the research (Caufield, 2023). A deductive approach consists of relying on theories that are pre-existing or preconceived due to theory or existing knowledge on the topic already. In this study, the researcher will focus on the deductive approach, as there are preconceived theories influencing the study, such as the social constructivist theory.

It is also important to consider the difference between a semantic approach and a latent approach (Caufield, 2023). In the semantic approach, the researcher analyses the explicit content found in the data (Caufield, 2023). In the latent approach, the researcher reads into subtext and assumptions that could be underlying in the data (Caufield, 2023). Since this study will use the positivist paradigm, which consists of objective observation in the research, the semantic approach would be a suitable fit for this study because the researcher will objectively analyse the explicit content found in the data.

Using thematic analysis in this mixed-method study will ensure credibility. The transcribed data that will be recorded using a voice recorder will be considered in correcting any misinterpretation. This transcribed data will also be considered to confirm information to certain agreements.

3.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in research can be defined as a set of principles that help guide a researcher’s research design and research practices (Scribbr, 2024). Every study involving human participants needs to have ethical considerations. These principles ensure that no harm comes to the participants of the study. Participants need to understand and agree with the purpose of the study before giving their consent to

participate (Litosseliti, 2024). Therefore, the researcher needs to outline the ethical aspects involved in the study. There are many ethical considerations to consider when conducting a study. This study was granted ethical clearance by a scientific committee.

The following are some ethical considerations that this study focuses on: informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality and anonymity.

3.12.1 Informed consent

The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the study and the methods that would be used to collect the information. The participants were also informed that they can participate in the study voluntarily. They can also decide to leave the study at any time without any consequences. To further protect the participants, all data collected will remain anonymous, and no personal data was collected. Participants were informed about what the study is about, what the researcher would do with the collected data, and why they were chosen to take part in it. They were also informed on what the findings of the study would be used for. Because of the age group of the learners (13–14 years old), parental consent was also sought for these learners to participate in the study anonymously prior to the learners participating in answering the questionnaires. The researcher ensured that participants were fully aware of what they are getting into by participating so they could decide whether to take part in the study. The researcher ensured this by firstly speaking with the principals of both schools and explaining the purpose of the study. The researcher also provided evidence of the ethical clearance certificate to the principals. Secondly, the researcher then spoke to the Head of the English Department of each school. The procedure was explained clearly to the head of the English department of each school, and the ethical clearance certificate was then also provided as proof. Thereafter, the Head of the English Department of each school chose two (2) Grade 8 English FAL teachers to speak with the researcher and determine whether they would like to take part in the study. The researcher handed each teacher their own copy of the ethical clearance certificate for the study and explained to each teacher that participation was completely voluntary and that no personal information will be collected. The researcher also explained that they may stop participating at any time without any consequences. Before the interviews began, the researcher explained to the participating teachers that the interview audio would

be recorded with a voice recording device in order to collect the data and asked whether they would still be comfortable with participating. The teachers were still happy to participate, and they signed consent forms before the interviews were conducted. For the questionnaire that needed to be answered by the learners, the researcher first handed out fifty (50) consent forms to the two (2) interviewed teachers from each school. Twenty-five consent forms were printed in English, and twenty-five were printed in Sotho for convenience of the learners and their parents or guardians. The reason for choosing to print extra consent forms in Sotho was to ensure that the parents or guardians of the children fully understood the purpose of the study and that there would be no personal information collected, learners would only need to fill out a short questionnaire, which would take around 15 minutes, and that learners could stop participating in the study at any time without feeling uncomfortable. Additionally, all consent forms stated clearly that no one would be compensated for financially for taking part in this study. The researcher returned to the schools a few days later on an agreed upon date where the consent forms were first collected and checked, and only then the learners took part in answering the questionnaires.

3.12.2 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation is of utmost importance to participants. This means that they can choose whether they will take part in the study or not. Voluntary participation means freedom to choose whether they want to be a part of the study or not. Participants were informed that no payments will be made to them; they are participating as volunteers. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time if or when they feel they are not comfortable anymore.

3.12.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity entail an agreement in which the researcher assures participants that the information they will provide as data will be confidential. Their names were not disclosed at any stage, as they did not provide them. No other personal information, such as ID numbers, was collected. Therefore, the responses were anonymous. The public will never see their responses revealed.

3.13 Research questions: The connection to interview questions and questionnaire questions

This study focuses on the challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners face in the classroom. Therefore, the main research question is as follows: What are the challenges that Grade 8 learners studying English as a second language face in secondary schools? This research question directly addresses the challenges that these learners may be facing in the English second language classroom in secondary schools.

The following questions are the sub-questions: a) How do the challenges (tense errors; pronoun errors) affect grade 8 students from acquiring English as a second language in secondary schools? b) Which challenges do Grade 8 English second language teachers face in the classroom in secondary schools? c) In what way can these challenges be addressed to produce solutions? These sub-questions effectively support the main research question in determining the cause of certain challenges these learners face in the classroom and what solutions can be found.

The interview questions are based on determining what challenges the teachers have noticed the learners face with English in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, what challenges the teachers face in the classroom, the resources available in the classroom, and the amount of time spent developing the listening skill and grammar.

The questionnaire questions are focused on determining whether learners struggle with grammar, such as pronoun usage and tense usage, whether they have certain resources available, and whether they are developing their listening and grammar skills in the classroom.

The questions in the interviews and the questionnaire connect to the research questions by focusing on determining the challenges Grade 8 English FAL learners have in the classroom, such as pronoun and tense usage errors. Additionally, the interview and questionnaire questions focus on resources available to learners in the classroom and whether certain necessary skills are being developed.

3.14 The importance of gathering information from the learners

When doing research, the goal is to determine common outcomes to understand challenges and determine possible solutions. Therefore, it is important to listen to the participants of the study. Learners can be the best lead on what is going on in the classroom and why certain challenges are present. In a study named “Language-related barriers to learning in a rural English as a second language classroom in South Africa” by Makhathini and Mncwango (2020), the following was observed from student feedback:

“Learners also expressed challenges that they were facing. The majority of them expressed their unhappiness in the way they learn the language. They highlighted that language learning is crucial to their academic excellence, yet there is no available means to foster language learning except for sharing a literature textbook. They highlighted that the only time that they learn the language is when they are introduced to parts of speech and in most cases, teachers do not give learners feedback” (Makhathini & Mncwango, 2020:80-81).

Without this feedback from the learners, the researchers would not be aware that teachers neglect to give learners feedback or that learners only learn language when they are introduced to parts of speech. This type of information gathered is extremely important to help lead researchers toward the common goal of finding solutions to gaps in the classroom.

3.15 The importance of gathering information from the teachers

Teachers from the Grade 8 English FAL classroom can offer an alternative perspective on gaps that may be present in the classroom. Teacher insights can highlight issues related to insufficient teacher education and training, as well as identify potential resources that are missing in the classroom. In a study by Pearce and Wood (2019), as cited in Fesi and Mncube (2021), it was determined that teachers are “the most critical participants in educational reform, predominantly in those that influence what happens in the classroom.” Since teachers are so important in education, it is crucial to gain insight into their personal experiences with challenges in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. Gaining insight directly from the teachers will help lead to possible solutions.

3.16 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the methodology used in the study. The research paradigm used was positivism. The research design employed a mixed method. The data collection and analysis, as well as the population and sampling, were discussed in this chapter. The next chapter will focus on data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Data analysis in research can be described as the process whereby data, which is information, is collected as useful evidence to make educated decisions regarding a study (Coursera Staff, 2023). For the questionnaire answers to be analysed, the questionnaires were sent to a statistician to be interpreted and recorded accurately. The process was placing the data captured through a program called MATLAB to gain accurate statistical analysis.

For the interview questions to be analysed, the researcher voice-recorded the interviews on a cell phone as well as used Microsoft Word Dictate, which also recorded and transcribed the interviews as they were in process.

Within this chapter, the data collected from the teacher interviews and learner questionnaires will be analysed and discussed. This chapter discusses the secondary schools where data was collected. Interview responses with Grade 8 English FAL teachers, Follow-up questions, biographic information from the questionnaires answered by English FAL Grade 8 learners, Questionnaire responses, document analysis, interview question analysis, questionnaire analysis, and conclusion.

4.2 Schools selected for the study

In this study, data was collected from two English Grade 8 classes from two English secondary schools. These two schools were Nanabolela Secondary High School and Letsete Secondary High School. These two schools were chosen because they are English secondary schools and would provide the necessary data needed for this specific study.

4.3 Responses to interview questions with Grade 8 English FAL teachers

Four (4) Grade 8 English secondary teachers were interviewed for this study. Two (2) teachers from Nanabolela Secondary High School were interviewed, and two (2) teachers from Letsete Secondary High School were interviewed. The discussion below emanates from the interview using a voice recorder to enable the researcher to

analyse this data. The interview questions, along with each teacher's response, will follow.

4.3.1 Teaching learners

All four teachers that were interviewed indicated their enjoyment with teaching Grade 8 English FAL learners. One teacher indicated: "What I like the experience because you have to start them from scratch." Another teacher stated: "I want to improve their performance so that they can become more advanced in English while they are growing up in another grades." Although teaching Grade 8 learners has many positive outcomes for both teachers and learners, there are challenges that are faced.

4.3.2 Challenges faced by Grade 8 learners and teachers in the English FAL class

During the interviews with the four teachers, there were many challenges that were raised. One teacher stated the following: "Oh, this it is very fascinating to teaching these learners, you know? Although here and there it becomes difficult because they don't have enough books to learn that like we don't have a library at school that now it's a, it impacts their reading ability." This lack of resources negatively impacts the Grade 8 learners because they do not have access to books to improve their reading.

Another teacher brought up the issue of teaching learners wanting to be taught in their home language instead of English. She stated: "They don't know how to use tenses like... when... when they're talking like, when they must use past tense, the struggle. I think it's the language barrier. Because they want you to explain in their home languages like Sotho, to translate English in Sesotho." Another teacher indicated: "With not being able to speak their [English] language, they often... they often opt for vernacular." Teachers also indicated that learners were taught in their home languages during their other subjects at school as well. One teacher said: "Our black learners, they used to their home language in such a way that in their other subject classes the teacher is explaining them in their Sotho language or Xhosa, their vernacular languages, so they are not used in speaking English every time here at school. And even in English class during English period, they want to speak their... their vernacular in the class." Another teacher stated: "Your period 45 minutes and then after that, they

go to maybe mathematics where the maths teacher would be so desperate for the learner to understand to a point that they teach maths in vernac. So, it compromises like you as an English teacher is trying to do.” As stated by the last teacher, teaching learners in their home language compromises what English teachers are doing in the English FAL class because learners are not practicing English, so the little English they did learn in class does not get absorbed.

Another challenge that was raised by one of the teachers was that learners struggle with spelling as well. She stated: “The also struggle in spelling. For instance, if they even... tense, they tend to write wrong spellings.” When learners do not practice correct spelling or attempt to correct spelling errors, they will not be able to express themselves effectively when writing in English. Regarding incorrect pronoun use, one teacher indicated: “I was telling them that it's wrong to say “Mahlako she”. It's either say “Mahlako” or you use the pronoun “she”. So, they know what pronouns are. And then another challenge regarding pronouns is... in English... you use “him” and “his” for males and “her” for females. They don't master that. So, they just throw in anything that can be thrown in. With their home language, there is no such thing as “her” and “him” and “his”, you know, “himself”, “herself”; it's just one thing.” To further explain this challenge, the teacher stated: “In home language, it's ‘ke pene ya hai’, neh? ‘It's his pen,’ like, ‘ke pene ya hai.’ ‘Ya hai’ accommodates both males and females.” The fact that Grade 8 English FAL learners do not have a pronoun that accommodates females and a different pronoun that accommodates males but rather one pronoun that accommodates both, this makes it clearer why these learners struggle to use English pronouns correctly. These learners need to be given more opportunities to practice English pronoun usage to learn the English pronoun usage correctly.

One teacher also indicated that some learners do not learn to understand English that they are reading but rather use word association. She stated: “Another challenge is that, especially when teaching comprehension, you would find that they answer comprehension questions by word association. So, they look for the word “courage” in the question; they look for the word “courage” in the comprehension. Whether it answers the question or not, they don't care. Courage is there; courage is there. they copy out the whole sentence. So, that's another challenge. And then another one is reading without comprehension. Some can say: ‘OK this is “your ethical clearance”,’

but they don't really understand what 'your ethical clearance' means." This information from the teacher indicates that learners do not learn to properly understand English through reading, but rather, they use word association to just "copy and paste" information from the comprehension that matches the question, even if it is incorrect.

It was brought to the researcher's attention that content gaps from primary school are also big contributors to a learner's struggle to effectively acquire English as a First Additional Language. One teacher stated: "One would expect that at a level of Grade 8, 14 years of age, there are certain skills that they should have. There are learners that cannot read Sesotho. So, it makes it very difficult for them to teach to read English." Another teacher indicated: "These learners are coming to school and they're just wrong. They... they don't know how to speak; they don't know how to express themselves. And others, they can't write; you have to show them how to write, how to do because they are from primary school. When they come here in high school, they are overwhelmed with a lot of work. So, I find that they are sometimes lacking; they don't even know how to construct a sentence." These teachers have raised the issue with content gaps emanating from primary school where learners should be taught how to read and write in both their home language and in English, but they are not. This creates a problem with English acquisition in Grade 8.

The learner-teacher ratio in the Grade 8 English FAL class is vast and could be contributing to issues of discipline in the classroom. One teacher provided the following important information: "[There are] six classes of Grade 8s. And full classes. A lot of learners in the class. There's no class that is less than forty. Yes, it's forty upwards. All the classes." Another teacher indicated: "Grade 8, they range between 45 and 50 in a classroom. [Grade 8] Teachers, there were three last terms; there are two this term." This information indicates that there are forty learners, sometimes more to one teacher for every class. Also, there are six classes that are allocated to Grade 8 English FAL learners only. This means that these teachers likely also teach English FAL to other Grades in the school with just as many learners in each class. This ratio of so many learners relying on one teacher can create many challenges. Firstly, the teacher will not have enough time to give learners one-on-one attention to teach and correct learners that need extra help learning English because there is only so much time in an English period and there are too many learners. Secondly, having so many

learners to one teacher creates issues with discipline in the classroom because there are too many learners that a teacher needs to be kept in order.

Discipline in the classroom is another challenge that teachers have indicated is a problem. One teacher stated: “They are naughty coming from primary school. They are naughty, so they give us headache but because we are mothers, we take care of them.” Another teacher indicated: “From primary they don't have... they were not taught to be independent, like to do self-study, to be introduced to self-study and to voluntarily do their work at home. They need to be... there must be chasing after them and if there's no one like if, for example, their parents mostly come late from work, so they don't really put hard work. As a teacher, their concentration is still lacking. They still think that this is primary.” To further elaborate. This teacher said: “It's just something that is not... doesn't click well to them that is now they are in high school they have to work, they must be quiet, they must listen, you, see? Their listening is very limited.” This lack of discipline of the Grade 8 FAL learners can contribute to the challenge of time constraints in the classroom since much of the lesson consists of trying to get order of the learners to listen to what is being taught.

Lastly, the teachers indicated that time constraints are a big challenge that they face in the Grade 8 FAL classroom. One teacher indicated: “And also ma'am, I think uh we don't get time to concentrate on reading, reading, reading. Because in that 45 minute, you can't give them something to read and at the same time you teach them. So, I think also the barrier is the time constraint.” This teacher also raised the fact that teachers have to put in extra time after hours for their learners, stating: “Yah, because we, we also tend to do the extra time with them if you want to raise them, we have to make arrangement for them to come after school, after hours.” The fact that teachers need to use their personal time after hours to keep up with the curriculum content proves that there is not enough time allocated to classes for teaching Grade 8 English FAL learners. Another teacher said: “So, the challenge is you only see them 45 minutes. I don't think it's enough per day. ...school, it's a minimum of 45 minutes maximum of the 90 minutes if it's a double period. It is not enough... because remember, they come into a grade with content gaps. They don't know everything that they need to know at the level of Grade 8. So that makes the time we have not enough. Sometimes we even spend so much time making up for what they should know than

teaching what we should be teaching now. For example, you cannot really teach direct and indirect speech without them not knowing the difference between first person pronouns and third person pronouns. You cannot teach passive voice and active voice in Grade 8 when they were supposed to have been taught subject, verb and object in the previous grade.” This teacher felt that the content gap was severe enough to bring it to the attention of her supervisors. She stated: “There's a big content gap. There's a BIG content gap. To an extent that I was even saying to my subject advisor at the district office, I took a photo of a script, and then this learner had just put any letters together and those letters put together, they don't really make up a word, and she was like: “What is this?” Yeah. It's a baseline assessment written by a Grade 8 [learner], from primary school. And you look at the learner's report, but this learner passed. How is it possible that between December holidays and January, that space of four weeks suddenly, this child cannot read and write. You know? So, that's a huge content gap and not just in English.” This content gap highlighted by the teacher indicates that learners are struggling to adapt to content they are taught in the Grade 8 classroom because they have not been introduced to important English content and they have not been taught necessary skills in their home language. As a result, the above responses responded to the sub-questions: “How do the challenges of tense errors, pronoun errors and teacher education affect Grade 8 learners from acquiring English as a second language in secondary schools” as well as “Which challenges do Grade 8 English second-language teachers face in the classroom in secondary schools?”

4.3.3 Possible suggestions of solutions to these challenges from Grade 8 English FAL teachers

After discussing the issues that both teachers and learners experience in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, teachers were then asked what possible solutions they felt would benefit their classrooms and their learners. These are the following challenges that teachers provided:

A few teachers indicated that more time needs to be allocated to teaching English to FAL learners to help learners acquire English efficiently. One teacher said: “More time,” for English teaching periods. The other teacher emphasized the importance of reading,

stating: “The other thing – reading, reading, reading; [It] has an impact, and it has a huge impact on acquisition of language, as well as the speaking part of it. So, if the help encouraging them to speak the language and encouraging them to read the language and read with understanding will take us a long way.” Another teacher stated the following: “I was happy because now they talk about the EA that are coming to... are going to come to be employed. And so, there's a post for reading only; that teacher is going to just teach learners how to read. So, I think that is a good gesture. It's from the department because that thing, it needs someone who is going to be there, only focusing on reading. This new post for a teacher that will focus solely on reading will not only help learners improve their English acquisition through reading, but this will also free up time in the English classroom for teachers to focus on other English content without having to worry that learners need to be allocated time to still be taught how to read in English.

Another teacher stated that it is important for parents to be involved in the learners' acquisition of English. She said: “You know, parents need to play a role.” She also stated: “[If] schools had assistance maybe in their program of teaching languages. There's a module about interventions on learners who cannot read and write because it's reality - they are there, dyslexic and whatever, you know? - So, we have big classes you would want to intervene make intervention programs.” Involving parents more can help teachers because the parents can ensure that learners practice English at home as well. Additionally, an intervention program could help teachers provide extra support to learners who have learning disabilities or challenges and need extra assistance while they are learning English.

The last possible solution a teacher suggested was implementing more resources in the classroom. She stated: “I think if we can have audio machines and even the TV. But when you teach you demonstrate, you show them how from TV [how] someone who is doing the very same thing, like from, for example, the speech, at least from the radio or TV so that they listen [to] how to make a speech.” Implementing resources, such as audio equipment or a TV, can assist teachers to clarify their lessons by demonstrating the content they are teaching.

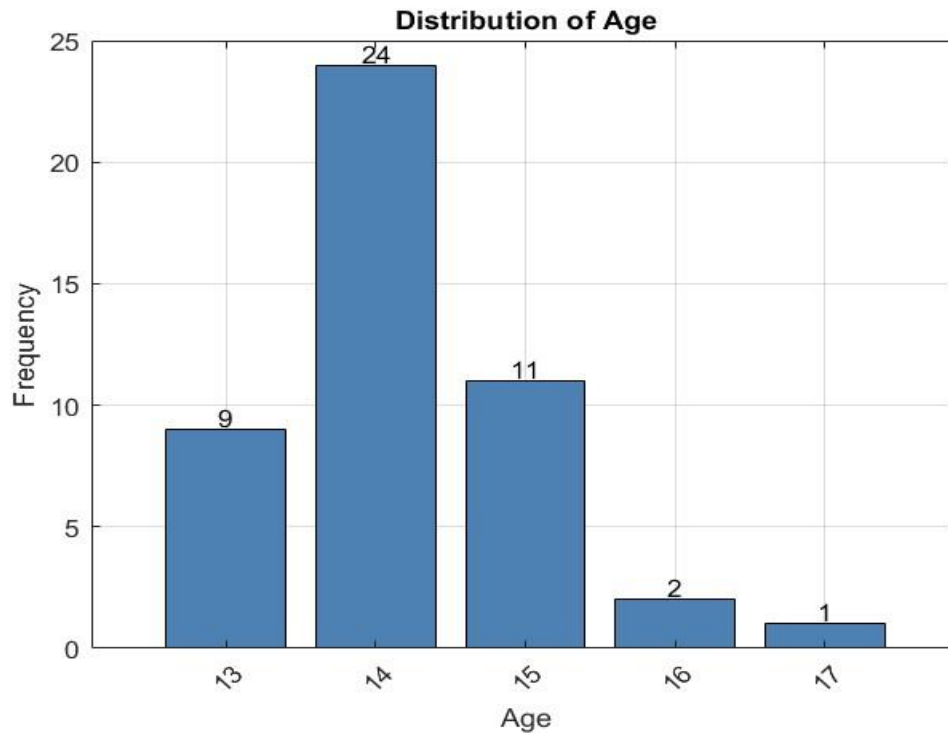
4.4 Biographic information from the questionnaires responded to by English FAL Grade 8 learners

In this study, forty-seven (47) Grade 8 English FAL learners were chosen randomly to answer the questionnaire. The discussion below is based on the data collected from hard copies of questionnaires that were handed out to the learners (respondents) to allow the researcher to analyse this information. Twenty-five (25) learners were from Nanabolela Secondary High School, and twenty-two (22) learners were from Letsete Secondary High School.

Biographic information collected in this study was through a questionnaire. The information will be presented using graphs.

4.4.1 Participants age (N=47)

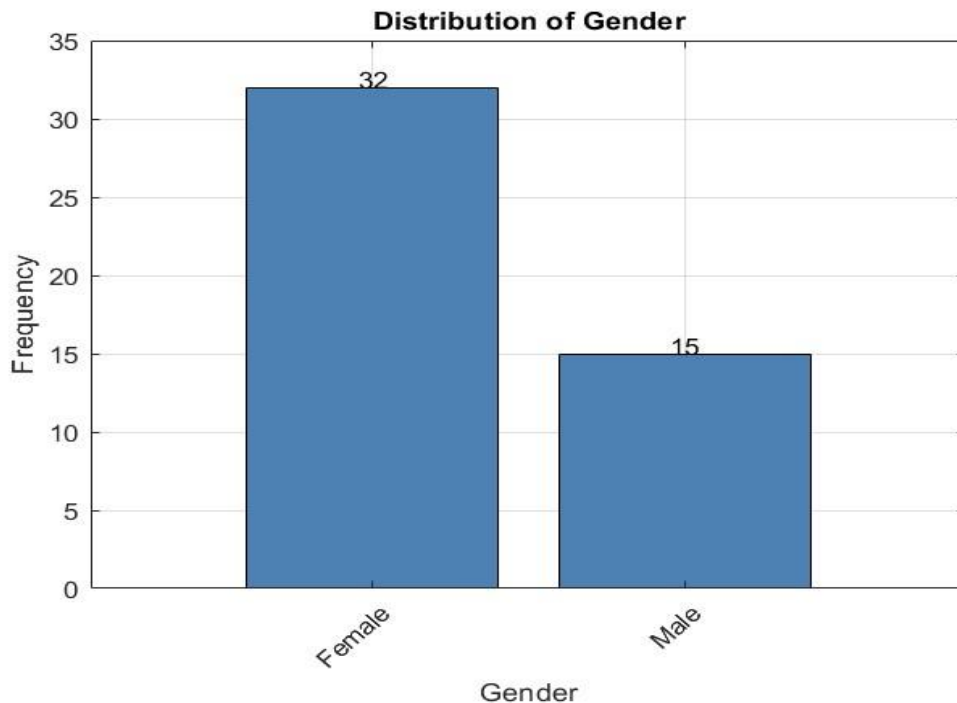
Figure 4.1: Age distribution



The above graph represents the fashion in which the grade 8 English second language learners responded to the question above. With regard to age, nine (9) learners indicated that they were 13 years old (making up 19% of the population sample), twenty-four (24) learners indicated that they were 14 years old (making up 51% of the population sample), eleven (11) learners indicated that they were fifteen (making up 23% of the population sample), two (2) learners indicated that they were sixteen years old (making up 4% of the population sample), and one (1) learner indicated that they were seventeen years old (making up 2% of the population sample).

4.4.2 Participant gender (N=47)

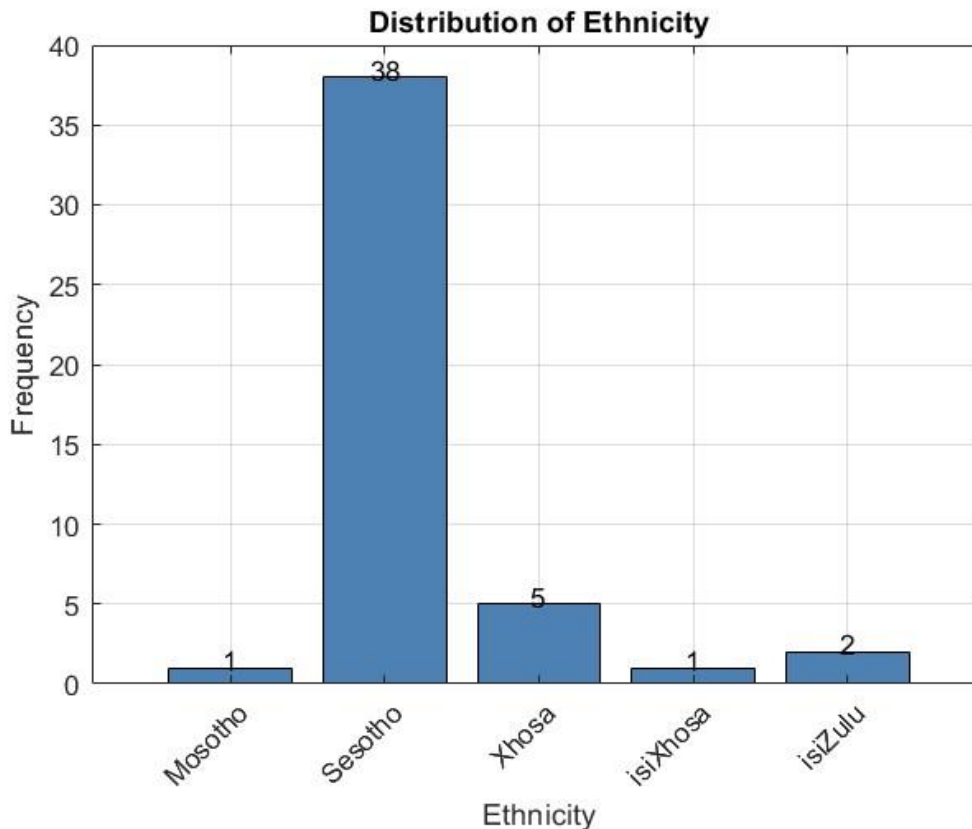
Figure 4.2: Gender Distribution



The above graph represents the fashion in which the grade 8 English second language learners responded to the question above. In this study, thirty-two (32) learners were female (making up 68% of the population sample), and fifteen (15) students were male (making up 32% of the population sample). Zero learners did not specify their gender. The higher proportion of female learners may influence classroom participation patterns positively as female learners are more likely to participate in classroom engagement. Hwang & Lin (2023) indicate that female learners have higher academic achievement compared to male learners.

4.4.3 Participant ethnicity (N=47)

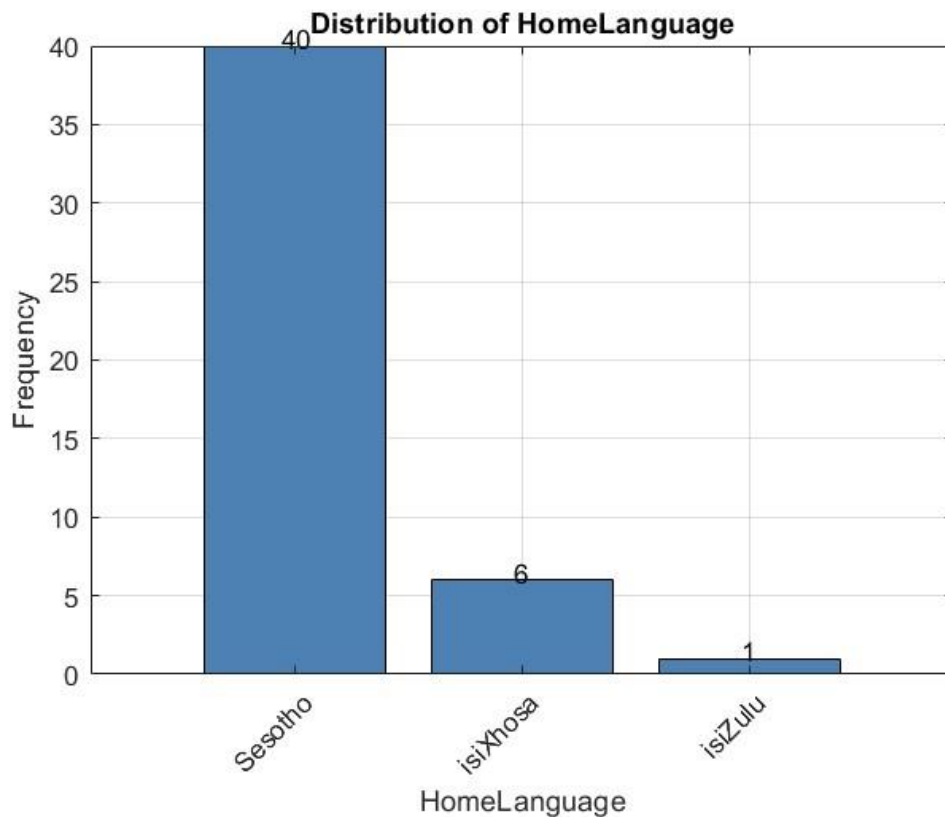
Figure 4.3: Ethnic distribution



The above graph represents the fashion in which the grade 8 English second language learners responded to the question above. With regard to ethnicity, one (1) learner indicated that they were Mosotho (making up 2% of the population sample), thirty-eight (38) learners indicated that they were Sesotho (making up 81% of the population sample), five (5) learners indicated that they were Xhosa (making up 11% of the population sample), one (1) learner indicated that they were isiXhosa (making up 2% of the population sample), and two (2) learners indicated that they were isiZulu (making up 4% of the population sample). These different home languages of the learners indicates that not all learners have the same home language, which could also affect their acquisition of English as a First Additional Language (FAL) because even if a teacher uses code-switching in the classroom, it will not necessarily be the home language of the learner.

4.4.4 Participant home language (N=47)

Figure 4.4: Home language distribution



Regarding home language, forty (40) learners indicated that their home language is Sesotho (making up 85% of the population sample), six (6) learners indicated that their home language is isiXhosa (making up 13% of the population sample), and one (1) learner indicated that their home language is isiZulu (making up 2% of the population sample). As indicated in the section above, the different home languages that the learners have can create an issue with understanding the content taught in the Grade 8 English FAL class because some learners will not understand the instructions in English, and the language that teachers may code-switch to in order to explain the concepts is not the home language of the learners either.

4.5 Questionnaire responses

The questionnaires contained seven (7) closed-ended questions designed to gather quantitative data, subsequently undergoing analysis and tabulation. The questionnaire had one (1) question, which was question 8, with an open-ended question for learners

to fill in their experiences. Below are tabulated answers followed by questionnaire questions, as well as important answers to question 8. It is important to note that each learner had a choice between completing the questionnaire in English or in Sesotho, as there were fifty (50) questionnaires printed in English and fifty (50) questionnaires printed in Sesotho. Twenty-four (24) learners chose to answer the questionnaire in Sesotho, and twenty-three (23) learners chose to complete the questionnaire in English. However, among the twenty-three (23) learners who answered in English, two (2) learners chose not to respond to open-ended question 8, suggesting that they may not have fully understood the question because it is being in English. These two learners chose to answer the English questionnaire instead of the Sotho questionnaire, which is why they did not understand question 8.

4.5.1 The open-ended question 8 important responses

Question 8: Write down anything you would like to add regarding your experience learning English as a second language.

Relevant responses to open-ended question 8 from Grade 8 English FAL learners: The following paragraph is paraphrased from answers that Grade 8 English FAL learners wrote in their questionnaires for question 8.

The twenty-one (21) learners that answered the questionnaires in English had important input for this study. A few learners indicated that reading at home and watching English shows helps them acquire English. Many learners indicated that they struggle with parts of speech and grammar. They stated that they get confused with the different parts of speech and mix them up. Some learners indicated that they mix up the language structures in English. Another learner requested that they be provided with more notes on English parts of speech and grammar to help them better understand the structure of English. Some learners reported that they misinterpreted the English questions posed. Many learners requested to have English posters in the classroom to help them learn visually regarding English grammar. Another learner also requested that English posters be added to ALL classrooms to aid them visually to acquire English effectively. Some learners requested that they have reading classes added to their schedule so that they can focus on reading in English to better themselves. Some learners asked to be provided with more English books to read and

to practice writing in English. Another learner indicated that they would like to have extra classes in English on Saturdays. It is important to note that in every answer of the twenty-one (21) learners, the English grammar, spelling, and sentence construction were not good.

The twenty-four (24) learners who answered in Sesotho also made some important points. Many of the learners indicated that the Grade 8 learners are disrespectful to their teachers, and that the teachers spend most of the lesson disciplining or scolding them for being too noisy instead of teaching. Another learner indicated that many of them do not do their homework at home. These learners will do their homework in the mornings when they arrive at school. Some learners said they don't ask the teacher for help when they do not understand something in English, which causes confusion. Learners indicated that they do not understand some English words and sentences. Some learners indicated that watching the news helps them to understand and acquire English. Other learners indicated that English is a difficult language to learn, and many learners feel that learning it is a burden.

4.6. Interview question analysis

For the interview question analysis, the interviews were voice recorded so that accurate information would be retained for the study. No personal information was collected to protect the identity of the participants. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed by the researcher.

After analysing the interview questions and answers of the four (4) Grade 8 English FAL teachers, there are a few common issues. Firstly, there are many learners in the classrooms, and there are too few Grade 8 English teachers in each school. This was an issue that all four teachers brought up during their interviews where they stated that there were up to six Grade 8 English FAL classes that each teacher needed to teach. One teacher from Nanabolela Secondary School indicated that there are six Grade 8 English FAL classes. Each Grade 8 English FAL class also has a minimum of forty (40) learners. This indicates that the learner-teacher ratio is overwhelming, because one teacher is responsible for teaching and keeping the attention of at least forty (40) learners. This extreme learner-teacher ratio can be overwhelming for teachers because learners tend to be more disruptive when they are many in a class. Teachers

will struggle to keep the class quiet, which takes up crucial lesson time. This also leads to not all learners getting one-on-one guidance from teachers, and the teachers will not be able to address all individual learner challenges.

Secondly, learners prefer to speak their home language at school rather than English. In their other school subjects, learners are taught the subject content in their home language instead of English by their teachers just so that learners understand the content. Speaking their home language during English class and other school subjects leads to learners not receiving enough language practice for the English language, which leads to poor acquisition of English. Additionally, when learners are not taught in the target language, they will not understand the content in English; they will only understand it in their home language.

Thirdly, learners are disrespectful to the teachers and do not have a good concentration span, so teachers tend to waste much of the lesson time scolding the learners to be quiet and pay attention. This was raised by both teachers and learners. Teachers indicated that learners are naughty in class and make a lot of noise, which leads to teachers having to shout at learners to be quiet instead of using the lesson time to teach English content. Certain learners also noted in their open-ended question 8 that some learners talk back to the teachers and waste a lot of the lesson time because the teachers need to keep reprimanding those learners. This is likely a result of the overcrowded classrooms where there are too many learners in one class, so it is difficult for the teachers to keep order of so many learners.

Lastly, the teachers have indicated that there is not enough time allocated to teaching English to these learners because they have huge content gaps, and much of the time is spent teaching the learners content that they should already know before they can attend to the content prescribed for Grade 8. This was noted by teachers from both schools. The teachers noted that learners are not taught English content adequately in primary school, so once they reach Grade 8, they are not able to understand the Grade 8 content. One of the teachers indicated that some learners are not even able to read in English at all, and some learners have not even been taught to read in their own home language. This leads to massive content gaps as well as a lack of an important skill that learners need in order to thrive in both their home language and English as their first additional language.

It was also highlighted that some secondary schools do not have necessary resources, such as a school library. This is an important challenge that was raised because it is crucial for learners to have access to resources to help them enrich their education. Not having a library at school robs learners of the opportunity to read books in their home language and in English, which would enrich their learning and help them further develop necessary language skills in both English and their home language. Without this school library, learners will not be inspired to take their learning into their own hands and further develop their language skills. This means that learners will only practice English in their English FAL class, which is only a small portion of the day. Therefore, learners will struggle with the acquisition of English as a First Additional Language (FAL) because they do not spend any extra time practicing English language skills.

Teachers need access to additional resources in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, such as audio devices and televisions. Allowing learners to learn through audio devices by listening to a speech or a story, or by allowing learners to watch movies or videos on speeches, exposes learners to different perspectives on the content that they need to learn. Learners will be able to visualise the content they are learning, which can help them understand it better. Without these resources, learners will only have access to learning from textbooks, and they will not be exposed to different learning techniques, such as learning how to present themselves when conducting a speech by watching a recorded debate.

Teachers need to focus more on teaching in English instead of using code switching in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. If code switching is what teachers depend on to teach learners, then these learners will struggle to understand English concepts because they only focus on the concepts in their home language. Code switching is a technique that has good intentions to help learners understand but overusing it can lead to learners struggling to understand their Grade 8 FAL content in English. Therefore, teachers should focus on teaching learners in English during their English period so that learners have more exposure to this language. Additionally, teachers of other subjects should teach learners in both their home language and English so that learners have further practice with the English language.

All of these challenges highlighted by teachers provides an indication on why learners struggle with English tenses, pronouns, spelling and reading. Overcrowded classrooms can lead to learners being disruptive and distracting learners from their work. Additionally, not all learners will be able to get one-on-one time with the teacher to address specific problem areas with English content, such as correcting errors with English spelling, tenses or pronouns, because there are just too many learners in the class. For this reason, the teacher will just not be able to address each student during their English period. The time allocation for the English period also creates a challenge for teachers and learners because there is so much content that needs to be covered in the English FAL class, but the time is limited. This means that teachers may not be able to effectively explain certain English content because time is limited and the teachers need to cover a lot of work. This also means that time spent on correcting errors with tense usage, pronoun usage or spelling is also limited. If learners do not get the time to correct errors that they make with English grammar, they will not know where they have made the mistake or how to overcome it. Content gaps are visible in Grade 8 English FAL learners when they first arrive in high school because there are some skills that they should be able to do by the time they reach Grade 8, such as reading in their home language, but they are not able to do this. These content gaps create huge challenges for learners and teachers because teachers need to use up precious class time teaching learners' content and skills that should have been taught in primary school. Only once teachers have addressed these content gaps can they address the curriculum content for Grade 8.

4.7 Questionnaire analysis: Results and Discussion

For the questionnaires, no personal information was collected to protect the identity of the participants. The purpose of the questions in the questionnaire was to determine what possible challenges learners in the Grade 8 English FAL class face. The first seven (7) questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended questions. These questionnaires were sent to MATLAB for statistical analysis and presented in tabular form. The last question, which is question 8, was open-ended and was included to gain some insight into the learners' experiences with English as a second language.

This chapter presents and interprets the findings from the Grade 8 English Second Language questionnaire administered at two (2) South African English secondary high

schools. The aim of the study was to investigate learners' challenges in English grammar, particularly focusing on the correct use of tenses and pronouns. The data comprised responses to seven structured questions. The first six questions were based on a four-point Likert scale and the seventh as a binary Yes/No question. Analysis was carried out using MATLAB, with visualisations (bar charts and pie charts) and descriptive statistics used to summarise the responses.

Below is a table containing the questionnaire questions and response options for clarity.

<u>Questionnaire Questions</u>	<u>Response options</u>
<p><u>Question 1</u></p> <p>Do you struggle with English grammar, such as correct pronoun usage and tense usage, in the classroom?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most of the time. 2. Sometimes. 3. Rarely. 4. Never.
<p><u>Question 2</u></p> <p>Does your teacher spend time helping you correct grammatical errors?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most of the time. 2. Sometimes. 3. Rarely. 4. Never.
<p><u>Question 3</u></p> <p>Do all learners have access to prescribed textbooks for Grade 8 second-language English class?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, all learners have the prescribed book. 2. Most of the learners have the prescribed book. 3. Only some learners have the prescribed book. 4. No learners have the prescribed book.
<p><u>Question 4</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More than twice a week.

<p>Does your teacher allocate time to read through other media material such as newspapers, magazines or brochures?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Once a week. 3. Once every two weeks. 4. Never.
<p><u>Question 5</u></p> <p>Do all learners have access to dictionaries?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, all learners have access to dictionaries. 2. Most learners have access to dictionaries. 3. Only a few learners have access to dictionaries. 4. No learners have access to dictionaries.
<p><u>Question 6</u></p> <p>Does your teacher read aloud or use audio during your lessons?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, for 1 hour weekly. 2. Yes, for 30 minutes weekly. 3. Rarely. 4. Never.
<p><u>Question 7</u></p> <p>Are there visual aids, such as posters and flash cards, on the classroom walls?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes. 2. No.
<p><u>Question 8:</u></p> <p>Write down anything you would like to add regarding your experience learning English as a second language.</p>	<p>Open-ended question.</p>

The results from the first six questions offer details about learners' perceptions of support structures and resources available for English language acquisition. The

questions covered areas such as grammar difficulty, textbook access, teacher engagement, and opportunities for reading and writing practice.

The descriptive statistics (see Table 4.1) show that the average response values for most questions ranged between 2.1 and 2.8, suggesting a moderate agreement with statements such as struggling with grammar and receiving teacher support.

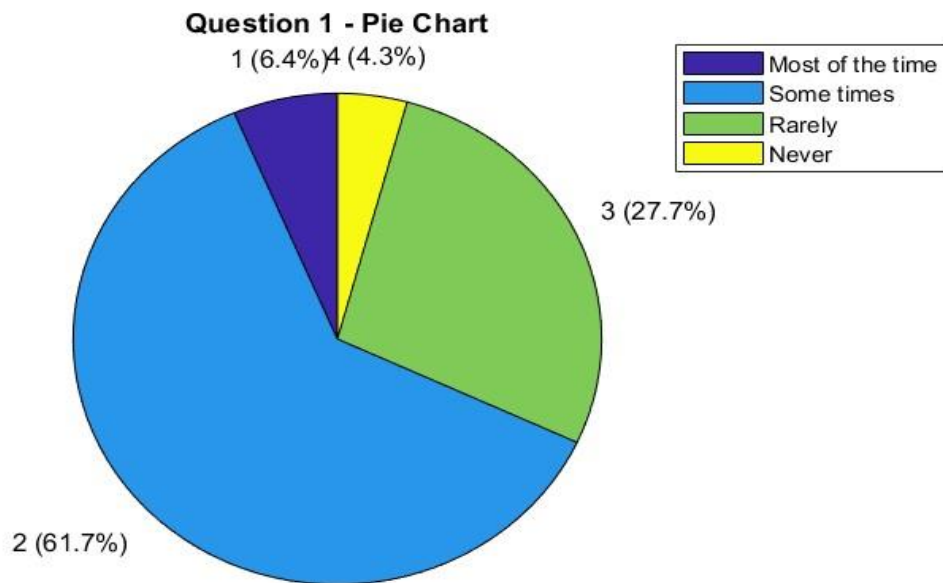
Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics

Question	Mean	Median	mode	Std.Dev
1	2,30	2	2	0,66
2	2,09	2	1	1,12
3	1,89	1	1	1,15
4	2,53	2	4	1,25
5	2,77	3	3	0,98
6	2,11	2	2	0,91

An overall analysis of all responses to Questions 1–6 was conducted to identify general trends. When combining the numeric values across all six questions, the most frequent responses were "2" (sometimes) and "3" (rarely). This finding implies that although support mechanisms such as grammar correction or reading time are in place, their frequency or effectiveness is inconsistent across the sample.

4.7.1 Question 1 Analysis: Do you struggle with English grammar, such as correct pronoun usage and tense usage, in the classroom?

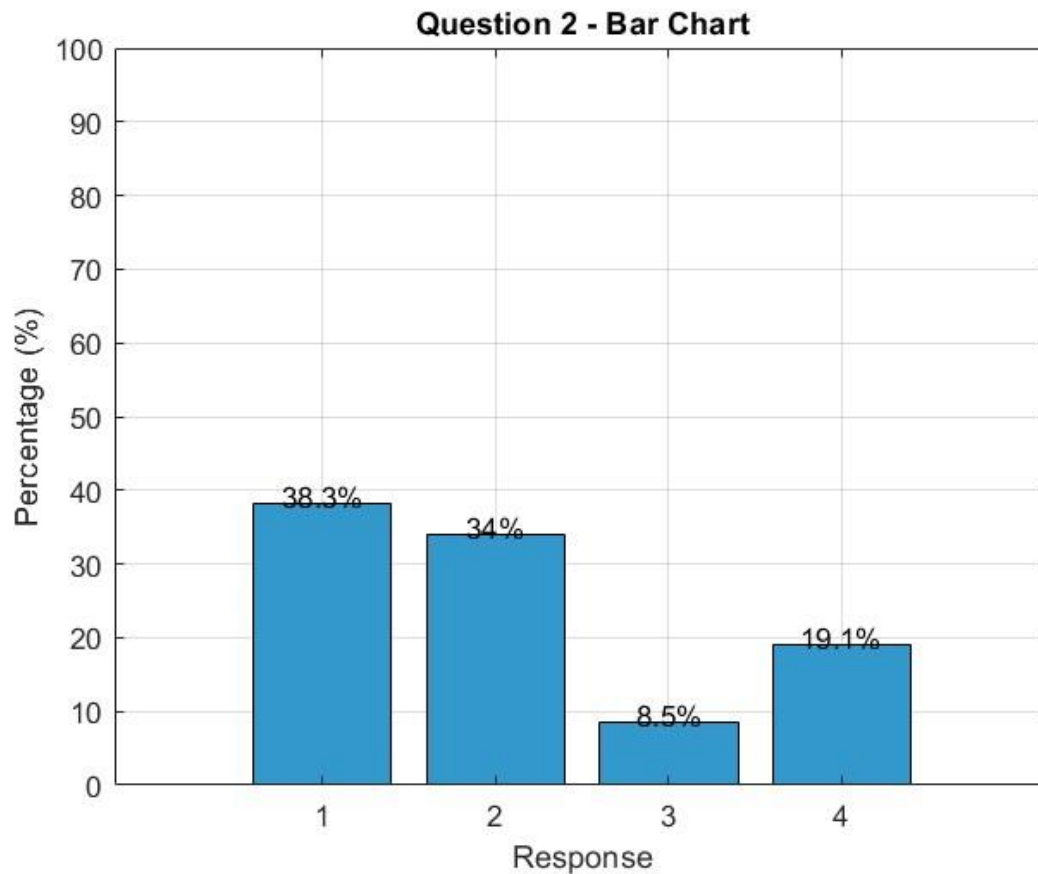
Figure 4.5: Learners struggling with English



Question 1 offered four response options: "most of the time" (represented by the number 1), "sometimes" (represented by the number 2), "rarely" (represented by the number 3), and "never" (represented by the number 4). The median response for question 1 is 2, which agrees with the mean, which is 2.30. Of the 47 respondents in the population sample, 61.7% of the population sample responses lean towards sometimes, 27.7% of the population sample responses suggest that they rarely struggle with English grammar, 6.4% of the population sample responded that they struggle with English grammar most of the time, and 4.3% of the population sample responded that they never struggle with English grammar. Therefore, most of the respondents chose option 2, which is "sometimes". This indicates that most learners "sometimes" struggle with English grammar in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, which highlights the theme of this study that Grade 8 English FAL learners experiences challenges in the classroom.

4.7.2 Question 2 Analysis: Does your teacher spend time helping you correct grammatical errors?

Figure 4.6: Teachers offering assistance with grammatical errors

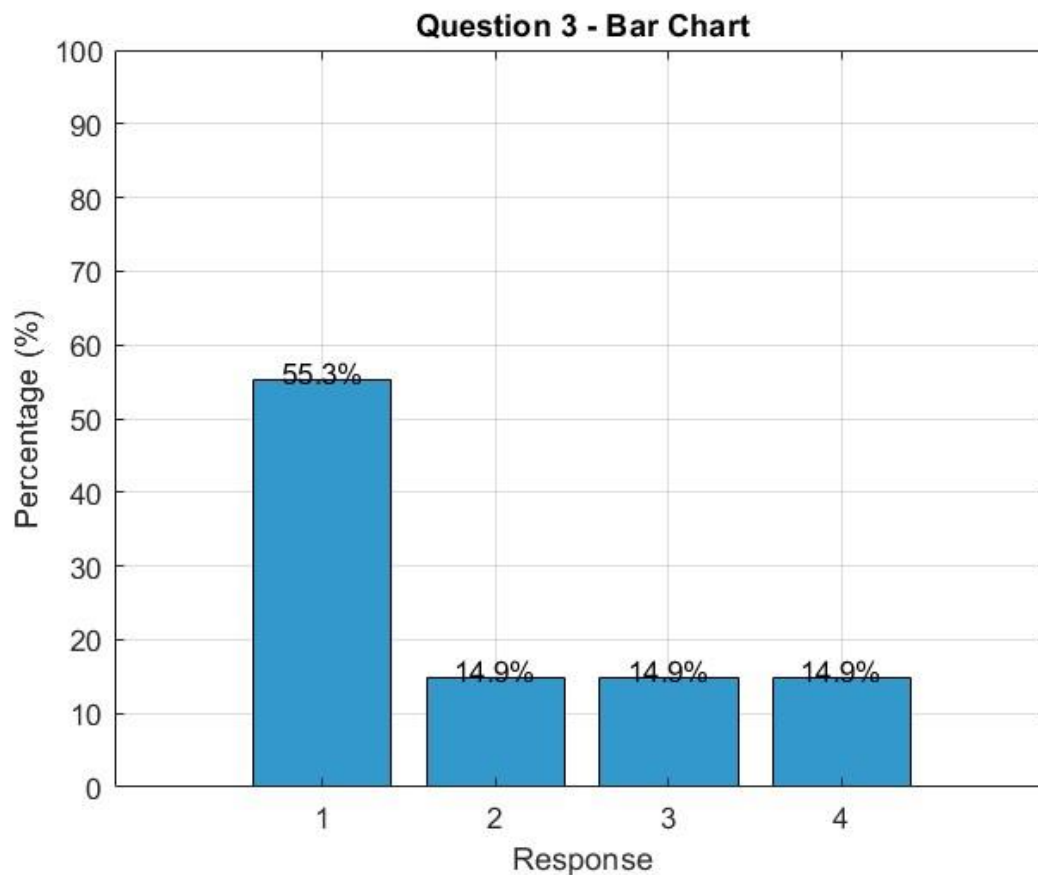


For question 2, learners could choose from four response options: Most of the time (1), sometimes (2), rarely (3), and never (4). The number 1 represents most of the time, the number 2 represents sometimes, the number 3 represents rarely, and the number 4 represents never. The median response for this question is 2, while the mean is slightly higher at 2.09. This answer choice indicates that 34% of the population sample responded with sometimes, 38.3% of the population sample responded with most of the time, 8.5% of the population sample responded with rarely, and 19.1% of the population sample responded with never. This response choice indicates that teachers only sometimes correct learners' English errors. This can create problems with learners not knowing where they are making mistakes in their English grammar

and usage, which can hinder learners from effectively acquiring English as a second language.

4.7.3 Question 3 Analysis: Do all learners have access to prescribed textbooks for Grade 8 FAL English class?

Figure 4.7: Learner access to textbooks



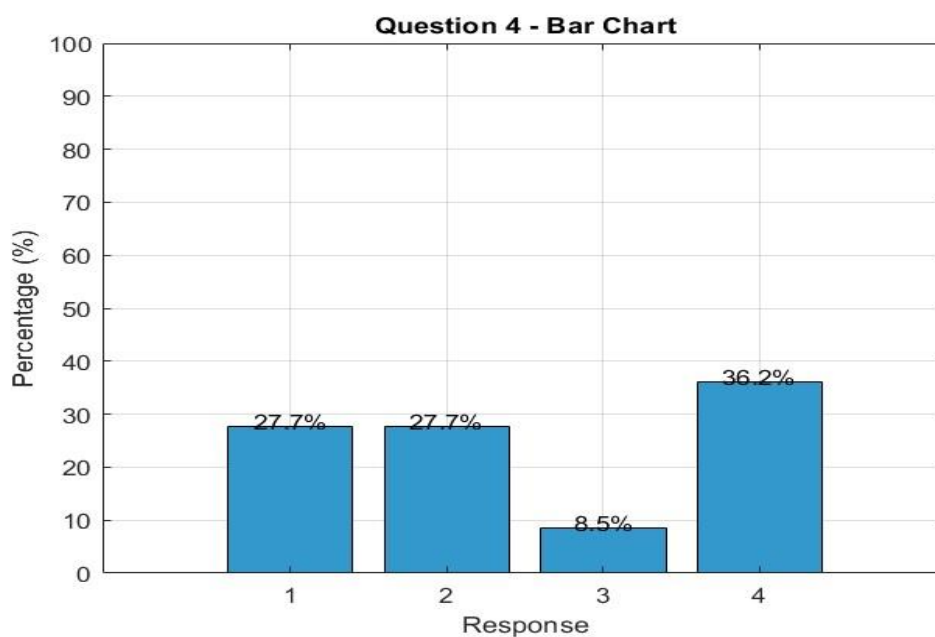
The responses available for the learners to choose from in question 3 were Yes, all learners have the prescribed book (represented by the number 1), most of the learners have the prescribed book (represented by the number 2), only some learners have the prescribed book (represented by the number 3), and no learners have the prescribed book (represented by the number 4). The median for this question is 1, which agrees with the mean of 1.89. This shows that 55.3% of the population sample responded that yes, all of the learners have the prescribed book for their Grade 8 English second language class; 14.9% of the population sample responded that most of the learners

have the prescribed book; 14.9% of the population sample responded that only some learners have the prescribed book; and 14.9% of the population sample indicated that no learners have the prescribed book. Although not all the learners have the original copy of the prescribed book, copies are made available to them. This response was important to the study to ensure that learners have access to important prescribed material.

Question 3, about access to prescribed textbooks, had the lowest mean (1.89), implying that a significant number of learners lack consistent access to these critical resources.

4.7.4 Question 4 analysis: Does your teacher allocate time to read through other media material such as newspapers, magazines or brochures?

Figure 4.8: Students have time to use other media

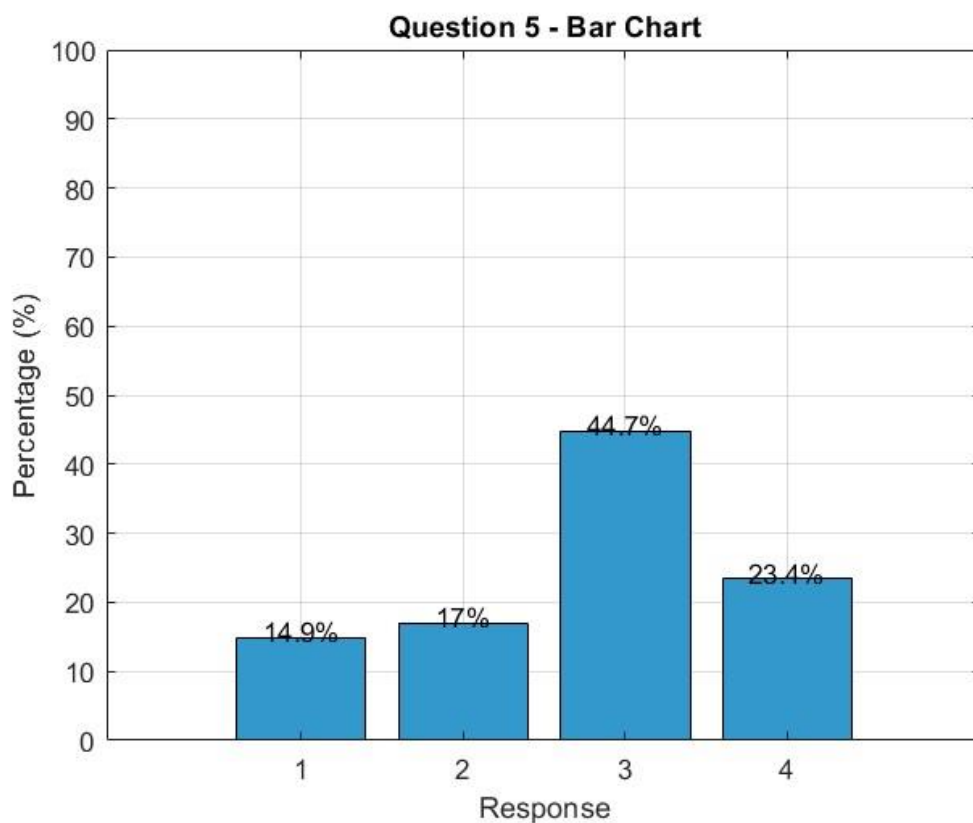


The responses available to choose from for this question were more than twice a week (represented by the number 1), once a week (represented by the number 2), once every two weeks (represented by the number 3), and never (represented by the number 4). The median response for this question was 2, which agrees with the mean of 2.53. However, the mode for this response was 4. This indicates that 27.7% of the population sample responded with more than twice a week, 27.7% of the population sample responded with once a week, 8.6% of the population sample responded with

once every two weeks, and 36.2% of the population sample responded with never. Since “option 4: Never” was the most chosen answer, this indicates a significant gap in the Grade 8 English second language classroom because learners should be exposed to different types of English reading material. Having access to different English material, such as newspapers, magazines or brochures, can enhance learning in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom because learners will be able to see how the English language is used in different styles for different purposes.

4.7.5 Do all learners have access to dictionaries?

Figure 4.9: Access to dictionaries

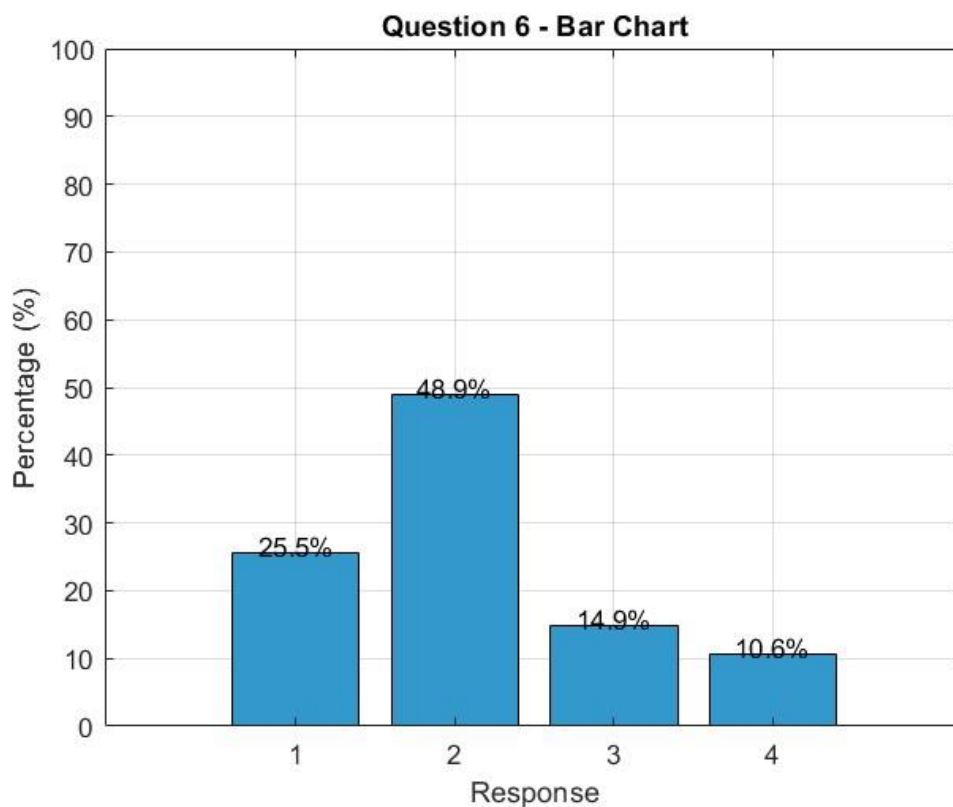


The responses available for learners to choose from for question 5 were Yes, all learners have access to dictionaries (represented by the number 1); most learners have access to dictionaries (represented by the number 2); only a few learners have access to dictionaries (represented by the number 3); and no learners have access to dictionaries (represented by the number 4). The median response for this question was 3, and the mean was 2.77. This indicates that 14.9% of the population sample responded that yes, all learners have access to dictionaries; 17% of the population

sample responded that most learners have access to dictionaries; 44.7% of the population sample responded that only a few learners have access to dictionaries; and 23.4% of the population sample responded that no learners have access to dictionaries. This outcome agrees with the study because learners should have access to dictionaries, even if there are only a certain number of dictionaries kept in the classroom for learners to use when needed and left in the classroom when learners leave the classroom.

4.7.6 Does your teacher read aloud or use audio during your lessons?

Figure 4.10: Teachers reading aloud

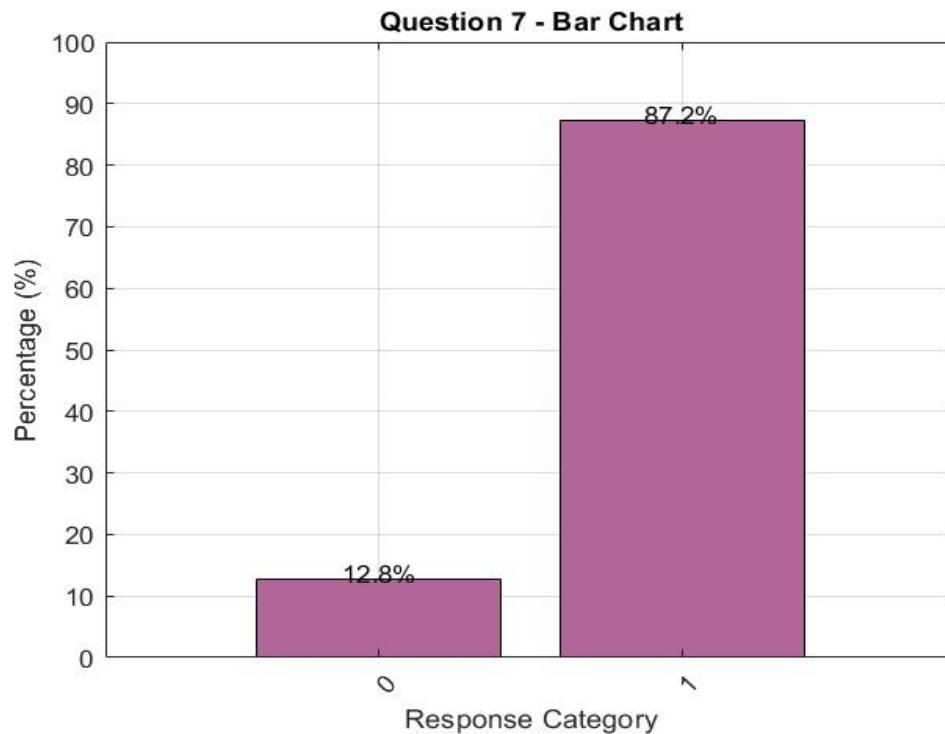


The available responses that learners could choose from for this question were: "Yes, for one hour weekly," "Yes, for 30 minutes weekly," "Rarely," and "Never." The responses for question 6 showed a mean of 2.11 and a median of 2. This indicates that 25.5% of the population sample responded with yes for one hour weekly, 48.9% of the population sample responded with yes for 30 minutes weekly, 14.9% of the population sample responded with rarely, and 10.6% of the population sample responded with never. This suggests that auditory learning support is not uniformly

provided or experienced enough, which can inhibit learners from acquiring English as a second language.

4.7.7 Are there visual aids, such as posters and flash cards, on the classroom walls?

Figure 4.11: Availability of visual aids



Question 7 asked whether there are visual aids, such as posters and flashcards, on the classroom walls. This was coded as a binary response (1 = Yes, 2 = No). The analysis showed that 87.2% of the population sample responded with yes, indicating that most learners agree that there are visual aids in the classroom to aid learning. However, 12.8% of the population sample responded with no, possibly indicating that the visual aids are either lacking or not sufficient to aid learning English. This conclusion is consistent with the findings from the earlier Likert questions, further emphasising the systemic gaps in structured English support.

The combination of moderate averages and high frequencies of “sometimes” and “rarely” responses suggests that learners do not receive consistent grammar instruction, access to resources, or writing support. While some elements of support exist, they appear fragmented and insufficient for many learners. This can be seen in

learners not having access to other English sources, such as newspapers, brochures or magazines as well as learners feeling that not enough time is given to correcting learner English errors.

These findings highlight the critical need for targeted intervention at the classroom level, such as enhanced grammar instruction, regular use of prescribed materials, and improved reading support activities. Addressing these issues can help reduce grammar-related errors and improve English proficiency for FAL learners at this stage.

4.8 Discussion of the findings

This section will discuss the findings of the study and the connection of these findings to the research questions.

4.8.1 Research Question 1: What are the challenges that Grade 8 learners studying English as a second language face in secondary schools?

There were various responses from the respondents (both teachers and learners) to this question. The first finding was that Grade 8 English FAL learners struggle with learning parts of speech, pronoun usage, spelling and understanding English as a second language in general. These challenges are enhanced by learners' home language because learners apply their knowledge of language rules from their home language, which is not necessary the rule for English language.

The second challenge discovered was that Grade 8 English FAL learners struggle with reading in English. This challenge is enhanced by the fact that some learners are not even able to read in their home language. If learners cannot read in their home language, then they will struggle even more with learning to read in English.

The third challenge discovered was that teachers spend more time scolding learners who are misbehaving than teaching during the English period. This challenge affects the efficiency in which learners can acquire English as a First Additional Language (FAL) because an English period is only 45 minutes long. If teachers are spending most of the time trying to gain order in the classroom, there will not be enough time left for the teachers to thoroughly unpack English content lessons, which could lead to learners not fully understanding the English content.

The fourth challenge is that learners are taught in their home language during other classes in school. Additionally, learners want to be taught English in their home language as well. When learners are taught mostly in their home language, they are not provided with the opportunity to practice speaking and understanding English. Furthermore, if learners are only taught other subjects, such as science or mathematics, in their home language, they will not learn the concepts in English. Therefore, it would create a further challenge for learners to express themselves in this subject content in English.

The fifth challenge discovered is time constraints for teaching English. Teachers feel that there is not enough time allocated to teaching English as a First Additional Language (FAL) because learners struggle with the content, and they need more time to practice correcting errors and learning the content.

The sixth challenge is that the learner to teacher ratio is very big. With no less than forty (40) learners per class with only one (1) teacher to teach them, this demonstrates that the learner-teacher ratio is overwhelming to teachers. Additionally, there are about six (6) Grade 8 English second-language classes and between two (2) and three (3) teachers.

The seventh challenge is the content gaps that Grade 8 English FAL learners have. Many of these learners are not effectively taught necessary English content in primary school. Some of these learners are not even taught necessary content, such as how to read, in their home language. This leads to big content gaps that learners enter high school with. Therefore, teachers will spend time in class teaching learners the content that should have been taught in primary school before they can begin teaching Grade 8 English FAL content.

The eighth challenge is that teachers do not have an acceptable grasp on the English language themselves. This became clear during the interviews with these English Grade 8 FAL teachers. Although these teachers are familiar with English content, they do not speak English fluently. Some teachers make errors with pronoun usage, such as those identified with the learners. Other teachers cannot effectively construct a full, fluent sentence in English. Learners will learn English from their teacher's example, so if the teacher cannot form correct English sentences, the learners will also struggle.

These responses indicate a significant perspective that intervention is needed to find solutions to these challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners face. Both the interview questions and the questionnaire questions responded to this research question above. The perspective from both the questionnaire responses and the interview responses responded well to this research question.

4.8.2 Research Question 2: How do the challenges (tense errors; pronoun errors) affect Grade 8 learners from acquiring English as a second language in secondary schools?

The respondents (both teachers and learners) provided various answers to this question. The following are a few responses:

Grade 8 learners struggle to grasp certain concepts, such as the tense errors and pronoun errors, in Grade 8, and this gap of understanding English carries through to the next grade, Grade 9. If learners are not taught how to correct the errors they make with English as a language, they can carry these gaps into university or even into adulthood.

Grade 8 learners do not spend time learning to read in English, so they continue into higher grades with this lack of ability to read English or to read it well. Reading is a vital skill that learners need to acquire to be proficient in English, so neglecting to develop this skill will negatively affect learners. An example discovered through the interviews would be learners answering comprehension questions through word association. Learners will answer questions by matching the word in the question to where the word is in the comprehension, even if they answer incorrectly. This is a result of learners not learning to read and fully understand passages in English, which can hinder learners in future Grades, in university, and in adulthood when they need to get a decent job.

The already little time that Grade 8 English FAL learners are allocated per day to acquire English is cut shorter with teachers needing to spend more time disciplining misbehaving learners than teaching English content. The large ratio of learners to teachers is a contributing factor to this misbehaviour because there are too many learners in a class for one teacher to handle. Therefore, the learners misbehave, and

it takes the teacher much longer to get the class in order. This leads to learners not being able to have time to focus on corrections of work because the teachers will need to move on to new content to not fall behind.

Learners do not spend enough time learning the important skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English, which affects them later in life when they might need these skills for their employment. Although all these skills are touched on during class, learners are not able to explore these skills more deeply due to the time constraints, which means that they do not develop these skills effectively. Additionally, too many learners in a class, time constraints and content gaps all affect the time learners must develop these skills effectively.

The responses from the teachers demonstrated their own challenges with English as a second language. This indicates the importance of learning English as a second language from an English teacher that is proficient in English with an English language degree. If a teacher is not proficient in English, learners can inherit the teacher's errors and lack of fluency in the English language because this is what they are exposed to.

These responses on how learners are affected by challenges they experience in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom also support the idea that these challenges need to be addressed. If these challenges continue to be ignored, learners will continue to struggle to express themselves in English.

Both questionnaire responses and interview responses respond to the research question because they were able to determine what challenges were experienced as well as how learners are affected. It is important to note that the questionnaire responses and the interview responses responded well to the research question.

4.8.3 Research Question 3: Which challenges do Grade 8 English second language teachers face in the classroom in secondary schools?

The respondents (both teachers and learners) provided various answers to this question. The following are a few responses:

Teachers indicated that Grade 8 English FAL learners have trouble concentrating in class. Additionally, these learners misbehave in class. Lack of concentration and misbehaving in class affects teachers because they are unable to effectively teach learners. Either teachers will need to keep asking learners to pay attention, or teachers spend too much time asking learners to behave and stop making so much noise. Both of these leads to teachers running out of time to teach the necessary Grade 8 English FAL content.

Grade 8 English FAL learners do not ask teachers for help if they do not understand their work. This is something that teachers raised, which affects teachers because they cannot help learners correct areas that they struggle with if they do not know that the learners are struggling. Therefore, areas of concern for learners go by unnoticed.

Some Grade 8 English FAL learners cannot read in their home language, which makes it difficult to teach them how to read in English. Teachers already have a set curriculum that they need to focus on for Grade 8 FAL. If learners are unable to even read in their home language, teachers will struggle to help learners develop this reading skill effectively enough to be able to learn how to read in English as well while also trying to stick to the curriculum for Grade 8. Therefore, teachers are negatively affected by this content gap because they are unable to address them effectively while still teaching the necessary Grade 8 FAL content.

There is not enough time allocated to teaching English every day. This affects teachers because the challenges mentioned above all play a role in how much time a teacher has to teach in their English period. This also goes hand in hand with the challenge that there is not enough time allocated to teach Grade 8 English FAL learners reading in English. Teachers cannot explore both English language and English reading in the time they are allocated.

Teachers of other subjects teach in the home language of the learners, which abolishes the hard work that English teachers are putting in to teach the Grade 8 English FAL learners English. This is because learners are only dedicating 45 minutes per day to practicing English, and they are spending the rest of their day learning in their home language. Therefore, learners are not practicing English, and they can

forget what they have learned by the time they return to their English class the next day.

The teacher-to-learner ratio is very big, so teachers may not be able to give enough attention to each Grade 8 learner in the English FAL classroom. Teachers are expected to address each learner's challenges individually, but having forty (40) learners to one teacher is overwhelming, and teachers cannot address each learner's challenges. Additionally, the large ratio leads to the learners being more unmanageable for teachers.

These responses support the need for intervention by employing additional qualified Grade 8 English FAL teachers and possibly breaking the classes up so that the learner-teacher ratio is lower, making classes more manageable. Additionally, there should be a reading Teacher employed that has a separate English period wherein learners only focus on reading in English. In this way, more time can be allocated to teaching English as a First Additional Language (FAL) daily because reading in English will be allocated its own time slot daily, and teachers will be able to focus on spending more time on teaching English language and grammar without needing to squeeze in teaching reading as well. Both the questionnaire responses and the interview responses responded to the research question. It is significant to note that both the questionnaire responses and the interview responses responded well to the research question.

4.8.4 Research Question 4: In what way can these challenges be addressed to produce solutions?

The respondents (both teachers and learners) provided various answers to this question. The following are a few responses:

Additional qualified Grade 8 English FAL teachers need to be employed, as learners learn by the teacher's example, and the teacher needs to be able to express himself/herself proficiently in English. Hiring additional English teachers that are efficiently qualified will also help address the issue of the large learner-to-teacher ratio. Such an arrangement could result in more order in the classroom, as classes will be smaller.

A qualified Grade 8 English FAL teacher should be employed to focus solely on teaching reading in English, as the activity is an important skill to learn. This will also allow Grade 8 English FAL teachers focusing on the other Grade 8 content to explore this content in more detail. Additionally, teachers will be able to spend more time on correcting learner errors so that they are not repeated.

A small library or book club should be made available to learners on the school premises so that Grade 8 English FAL learners can access English reading material. This will positively affect learners as they will have access to English resources that can help them acquire the language more effectively.

More time should be allocated daily to teaching Grade 8 English as a First Additional Language. It would be beneficial to both teachers and learners if more time was allocated to teaching Grade 8 English FAL because then there will be more time to explore the content as well as address errors that need to be corrected.

Grade 8 English FAL learners should be encouraged to ask for help if they do not understand their work. If learners are not asking for help when they do not understand something, they will continue to struggle with the concept. Encouraging learners to ask a teacher for help can help learners feel more comfortable to address errors. Additionally, if classes are smaller, learners might feel more comfortable asking for help because there will not be an overwhelming number of learners intimidating the learner that is struggling.

Teachers of other subjects should teach their Grade 8 learners in both their home language and English so that the learners learn subject content in English. Encouraging other teachers to also teach in English can help support the work of English teachers. Learners will benefit because they will get additional practice in English, and they will also understand the subject content in both their home language and English.

Both the questionnaire responses and the interview responses responded to the research question. It is significant to note that both the questionnaire responses and the interview responses responded well to the research question.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, data from both the questionnaire responses and the interview responses were presented and analysed. Additionally, the researcher analysed how responses from both teacher interviews and learner questionnaires connects to the research questions of the study. The following Chapter 5 will discuss the summary of the study, recommendations, limitations, conclusions, and suggestions for future research with regard to finding solutions for Grade 8 English FAL learner challenges.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

After analysis of the data in chapter 4, it has become clear that there are many challenges that learners and teachers experience in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. The discovery of these challenges warrants recommendations to help overcome the challenges. This chapter will summarize the study and its findings, as well as highlight relevant recommendations to overcome the challenges analysed. Suggestions for further research will also be mentioned in this chapter.

The aim of this study mentioned in Chapter 1 was to determine the possible challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners experienced in the classroom. Using a questionnaire handed out to forty-seven (47) Grade 8 English FAL learners, as well as interviewing four (4) Grade 8 English FAL teachers, valuable data was collected. This data was analysed in the previous Chapter. The main research question relates to this study as it aims to determine the challenges that these Grade 8 English FAL learners face in the classroom. The use of the questionnaire and the interviews not only confirmed that these learners face challenges in the classroom, but they also highlighted possible causes of these challenges, which creates a path to finding solutions.

This study focused on Vygotsky's social constructivist theory used by Prawat (1992), as cited in Davis and Smits (2017) and Mishra (2023). This theory was key to the study as it focused on teacher-learner interaction and how learners rely on their understanding of English concepts while learning. This theory highlighted the need for more interaction between learners and capable teachers in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom.

5.2 Summary of the study

5.2.1 The problem

This research study was designed to determine the possible challenges that Grade 8 English FAL speakers face in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom. The following research questions stated these challenges:

Main research question:

(i) What are the challenges that Grade 8 learners studying English as a second language face in secondary schools?

Sub-questions:

(ii) How do the challenges (tense errors; pronoun errors) affect Grade 8 learners from acquiring English as a second language in secondary schools?

(iii) Which challenges do Grade 8 English second language teachers face in the classroom in secondary schools?

(iv) In what way can these challenges be addressed to produce solutions?

5.2.2 The objectives of the study

- To determine what challenges, such as tense errors and pronoun errors, that grade 8 learners face in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom.
- Ascertain how these challenges affect Grade 8 English second language learners from acquiring proficient English.
- To determine what possible challenges Grade 8 English FAL teachers face in the classroom.
- To discover ways in which these challenges can be addressed to find solutions and enhance English FAL learning in the Grade 8 classroom.

5.3 Summary of key findings

The analysis of interviews conducted with Grade 8 teachers of English as a second language revealed the following findings:

- Teachers struggle with the learner-to-teacher ratio. This means that there are many learners in English classes. At Nanabolela Secondary High School, it was indicated that there are six (6) Grade 8 English classes with no less than forty (40) learners in each classroom. At Letsete Secondary High School, it was also indicated that there were multiple Grade 8 English classes with learners ranging between forty (40) and fifty (50) per classroom with only two English teachers to teach all those learners. Such an arrangement creates a problem with

teachers being overwhelmed with the number of learners that they need to teach, and this also prevents teachers from being able to attend to each learner effectively to see what challenges they might be facing and how they can be helped.

- The interview analysis also indicated that learners can be disrespectful to the teachers.
- Learners prefer to speak in their home languages.
- Some learners struggle to understand English grammar, parts of speech, sentence construction, and certain English words or sentences in general.
- Some learners cannot even read in their home language, which makes teaching the reading of English extremely challenging for the teachers.
- It has also been a common challenge that learners in Grade 8 have extreme content gaps in their learning because the content that they were supposed to be taught in primary school was not taught. Therefore, when learners come to Grade 8, they are extremely overwhelmed with the work allocated to them and struggle to understand their English work.
- It was also a common challenge that teachers of other subjects teach these learners in their home language because they are desperate for the learners to understand the content of their subjects. By doing this, these teachers undermine the hard work English teachers are putting in to help these Grade 8 learners acquire English.
- It is also important to note that even though the English teachers interviewed understood English and what needs to be taught, such as parts of speech, the teachers themselves were not fluent in speaking English. It appeared that at some points, the teachers struggled to find the right words to express themselves in English, and their sentence construction was also not always correct. This was observed during the interviews when teachers answered the interview questions. This could indicate a problem where the teachers teach the learners English according to their level, which can also lead to learners acquiring incorrect English.

5.4 Recommendations

The aim of this study was to determine the challenges Grade 8 English FAL learners face in the Grade 8 English FAL classroom with the purpose of finding solutions to these challenges in order to improve learners' acquisition of English as a language. Keeping this purpose in mind, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

5.4.1 Recommendations for teachers

- Primary schools should be monitored to ensure that the learners are being taught the correct content. If teachers can attend to content gaps that learners might have in primary school, these gaps can be addressed, and learners will be sent to Grade 8 with a much better grasp of the English language. Therefore, Grade 8 teachers will be able to focus on the content required to be taught in Grade 8 instead of having to reteach content that these learners should have mastered in primary school.
- Employ more English teachers that have the relevant English qualifications. These teachers who are to be hired must have an English qualification as a major subject and be proficient in the English language. It can be a problem in certain schools where teachers that do not hold a degree in English (or hold a degree in a different subject) are allocated English as a subject, which can lead to devastating consequences for learners. It is a common misconception that teaching English is something that can be done by anyone that can speak English, but this belief is the reason that many learners are struggling to acquire the English language proficiently. Learners need a teacher who understands the English language fully to effectively teach it. To help Grade 8 English FAL learners effectively acquire English, they need to learn from the teacher's example. This means that the teacher needs to be able to understand exactly how to express himself/herself in English correctly and fluently so that the learners will be exposed to the proper use of the language every day in the classroom.
- Another teacher should be hired at each secondary high school to focus only on reading in English.

- A small English library or book club should be established to provide learners with a selection of English books for practicing their reading skills. Reading is a critical skill for learners to master, and they are unable to do so in their allocated class time because the “ATP” (Teacher A, 2025, Academic Interview) requires teachers to finish specific content by a specific time in the classroom. Therefore, there is not enough time for teachers to teach all the necessary content and focus on reading as well.
- Allocate more time for English teaching. This could be in the form of more time allocated per period per day. This can give teachers more time to focus on the challenges that learners are experiencing and attend to them. Perhaps an extra English period could be added to the end of the day so that in this period, teachers could focus on developing a deeper understanding of English parts of speech and grammar.
- Classrooms should be decorated with clear and colourful visual aids such as posters, flyers, or flashcards with English grammar, parts of speech, sentence structure, etc., displayed for learners. Visual aids are critical for learners, as not all learners learn in the same way. Visual aids can help learners who grasp the concept better visually, whereas audio tasks, such as listening to a story read aloud in class or listening to a recorded comprehension, can help learners who learn better by listening. Additionally, the other subject teachers should have their subject content displayed on posters, flyers, or flashcards in English, and these teachers should teach in English as well.

5.4.2 Recommendations for learners

- Learners should ask teachers for help when they are not understanding a concept in English.
- Learners should make use of the library or book club that is provided for them so that they can improve their reading skill in English.
- Principals of secondary schools need to explain exactly how important it is for learners to acquire English as a second language and send out a notice to all parents to stress this point as well. Parents need to know how vital their role is in their children’s learning, and learners need to know how important it is for them to continue practicing English at home with their parents. Allowing their

children to watch the news at home in English, ensuring that their children are doing their homework, and ensuring that their children are reading English books at home can have a big impact on the learners' acquisition of English.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The following are the outlines of the limitations of the study:

- This study only focused on forty-seven (47) Grade 8 English FAL learners from two (2) secondary high schools.
- Only four (4) English FAL Grade 8 female teachers were interviewed from two secondary high schools.
- This study only took place at two secondary high schools in the Lejweleputswa area in the Free State, South Africa.

Despite these limitations, the study achieved its goal of determining the challenges that Grade 8 English FAL learners face in the classroom. These challenges that were highlighted indicated that solutions need to be implemented in the form of properly educated English teachers as well as more time allocated to teaching the basic skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in English, as well as focusing on English grammar and spelling.

5.6 Suggestions for future research

The following are possible suggestions for future research:

- It could be beneficial to investigate primary school teaching (Grades 1-7), such as what these learners are being taught, what they should be being taught regarding English, and where there are possible challenges or gaps.
- Research English language teaching in secondary high schools for higher grades, such as Grade 9, 10, 11 or Grade 12, which can help the researcher see what gaps are still present in these grades and what challenges these learners face. For example, these learners may still be struggling with English acquisition and may struggle to write coherent essays. Therefore, future research can be done to identify what challenges are leading to these learners' struggle with writing coherent essays.

5.7 Closing statement

In this chapter, the summary, summary of key findings, recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research were discussed. These suggestions could help researchers further determine what challenges are present in the teaching of English as a second language. This research also highlights the importance of employing educated English teachers to enhance FAL English teaching for Grade 8 English FAL learners. By being able to complete this study and create these suggestions, an opportunity has been created to enhance the Grade 8 English FAL learner's learning experience in a positive way. Challenges that these learners experience were investigated, and thereafter, suggestions of solutions were created in order to ensure a more effective teaching and learning experience for the Grade 8 English FAL classroom, which will hopefully help future generations to come.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: FRIC OUTCOME

 <p>Central University of Technology, Free State</p>	<p>FACULTY OF HUMANITIES</p> <p>FACULTY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE (FRIC)</p>
<p>DATE: 02 October 2024 SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF FRIC APPLICATIONS REFERENCE: FRIC 24.11</p>	
<p>Dear Applicant</p> <p>The LS262b form for Marks T was presented at the FRIC meeting, which was held on Friday, 20 September 2024 referenced 24.11</p>	
<p>FRIC OUTCOME</p> <p>3.3.7. Marks T - <u>D. FRIC 11.24.17</u>, Approved.</p>	<p>RESOLUTION – FHUM_FRIC 17.24.11</p>
<p>Kind regards,</p> <p>Signature:</p> 	
<p>Prof. Modise, M A Assistant Dean: Research, Innovation, & Engagement: Faculty of Humanities Chairperson of the FRIC</p>	
<p><i>N.B:</i> This letter is issued for ethical clearance purposes, and it should <u>only</u> serve as evidence of the approval of the submission from the FHUM FRIC Committee.</p>	
<p>FRIC: Humanities • Private Bag X20539 • Welkom • SOUTH AFRICA • 9460• Tel: +27 57 910 3791 • E-mail: mamodise@cut.ac.za • Website: www.cut.ac.za</p>	

ANNEXURE B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



3 April 2025

Mrs T. Marks
224028608@stud.cut.ac.za
Communication Sciences
Degree: Master of Communication in Language Practice
Risk Category: Low
Approval Number: CUT/HREC 2024/000468
Approval Date: 3 April 2025
Expiry Date: 2 April 2026

Project title: Guidelines to Master Challenges: Investigating the Problems of Grade 8 Learners Studying English as a Second Language.

Dear Mrs Marks,

This letter serves to notify you that your application for study for the title mentioned above was reviewed by the CUT Human Research Ethics Committee (CUT HREC). I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the CUT HREC that the study has been approved, and you have been granted ethical clearance for your project.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is **CUT/HREC 2024/000468**.

The ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from the date of issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension using the Clarivate Converis System or contact the Research Ethics Office for assistance.

We request that any changes that may take place during your research project be submitted to the HREC for approval to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise. This includes any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

All data collected by CUT applicants must be stored in a secure and encrypted storage cloud that has restricted access to only those researchers involved in the study. Please contact Ms Dora Ackerman (dora@cut.ac.za) on how to store data on the secure CUT SharePoint.

Kind regards

Laetus O.K.
Lategan



Digitally signed by Laetus
O.K. Lategan
Date: 2025.04.03 20:40:03
+02'00'

Prof. Laetus O.K. Lategan
CUT HREC: Chairperson
Human Research Ethics Committee
Research Development Office
T: +27 (0)51 507 4328 | E: REIC@cut.ac.za

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ANNEXURE C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Grade 8 English First Additional Language (FAL) Teacher Interview Questions

The aim

The aim of this questionnaire is to determine what challenges, such as errors with tense usage and pronoun errors, that Grade 8 learners face in the English FAL classroom so that solutions can be found.

Ethical considerations

Participants can participate in the study voluntarily. A participant can also decide to leave the study at any time without any consequences. To further protect the participants of this study, all data collected will remain anonymous, and no personal data will be collected. Participants will **not** be paid for participating in the study.

Questions

1. What do you like about teaching learners, especially English as second language?
2. What are the challenges faced by Grade 8 learners in English as a second language, specifically in tenses and pronouns?
3. What could be the challenges faced by Grade 8 educators in teaching English as a second language?
4. Do you think the time allocated for English as second language is adequate? If yes, please elaborate, if not, what can you suggest?
5. In what way can the above-mentioned challenges be addressed to yield better results or understanding by learners?

ANNEXURE D: QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

Grade 8 English First Additional Class Questionnaire

The aim

The aim of this questionnaire is to determine what challenges, such as errors with tense usage and pronoun errors, that Grade 8 learners face in the English FAL classroom so that solutions can be found. The university through with this study is being done is Central University of Technology Welkom. The contact number for the university is 051 507 3911. The supervisor of this study is Dr Hlohlolo from the CUT Welkom campus. His contact number is 063 594 8743.

Completing this questionnaire should take between 10 and 15 minutes.

Ethical considerations

Participants can participate in the study voluntarily. A participant can also decide to leave the study at any time without any consequences. To further protect the participants of this study, all data collected will remain anonymous, and no personal data will be collected. Participants will **not** be paid for participating in the study.

Biographic Information

Please fill in the following information:

Age:	
Gender:	
Ethnicity:	
Home Language:	

Question 1

Do you struggle with English grammar, such as correct pronoun usage and tense usage, in the classroom?

Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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Question 2

Does your teacher spend time helping you correct grammatical errors?

Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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Question 3

Do all learners have access to prescribed textbooks for Grade 8 FAL English class?

Yes, all learners have the prescribed book	Most learners have the prescribed book	Only some learners have the prescribed book	No learners have the prescribed book
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Question 4

Does your teacher allocate time to read through other media material such as newspapers, magazines or brochures?

More than twice a week	Once a week	Once every two weeks	Never
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Question 5

Do all learners have access to dictionaries?

Yes, all learners have access to dictionaries	Most learners have access to dictionaries	Only a few learners have access to dictionaries	No learners have access to dictionaries
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Question 6

Does your teacher read aloud or use audio during your lessons?

Yes, for 1 hour weekly.	Yes, for 30 minutes weekly.	Rarely	Never
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Question 7

Are there visual aids, such as posters and flash cards, on the classroom walls?

Yes	No
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Question 8

Write down anything you would like to add regarding your experience learning English as a second language.

ANNEXURE E: EDITOR'S LETTER

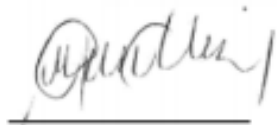


Marieta Grundling (MBA)

9 Akasia Street
Vierfontein Ontwikkelingsgroep
2615
081 354 1596
edit@profeditmba.co.za
12 June 2025

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that the thesis: **GUIDELINES TO MASTER CHALLENGES: INVESTIGATING THE PROBLEMS OF GRADE 8 LEARNERS STUDYING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE** by Tiffany Marks was edited. The language, presentation, referencing system (both in-text and against the Reference List), were checked and corrected.



M Grundling
12 June 2025

ANNEXURE F: DATA ANALYST LETTER

Dr Hangwelani Magau

Lecturer/Researcher in Applied Mathematics]
Central University of Technology
Magau.hangwie@gmail.com
0731170839

14 May 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

Subject: Confirmation of Data Analysis

I hereby confirm that I conducted a statistical analysis of the dataset titled **“Cleaned_Questionnaire.xlsx”**, which captures responses from Grade 8 learners regarding their challenges with English as a second language. The data includes demographic information (such as age, gender, ethnicity, and home language) and responses to a series of structured questionnaire items.

The analysis involved:

- Cleaning and organizing the dataset.
- Generating descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation).
- Producing frequency distributions, pie charts, and bar graphs for each questionnaire item (Questions 1 to 6).
- Separately analyzing responses to Question 7.
- Visualizing demographic data using bar charts.
- Computing reliability metrics (including Cronbach’s Alpha) to assess internal consistency of the questionnaire items.

The results provide a clear overview of the learners’ perceptions and challenges related to English language learning. All analysis was performed using MATLAB, incorporating both statistical and graphical methods to ensure comprehensive insight.

Please feel free to contact me should you require further details or clarification regarding this analysis.

Sincerely,

Hangwelani Magau

Lecturer , Department of Mathematical and Physical Sciences



