

The use of Differentiated Instruction by English teachers in building a reading culture in rural high schools in Seshego in Limpopo, South Africa

Andries Podudu Moswane, University of Limpopo, South Africa

John Wankah Foncha and Afungmeyu Jane-Francis Abongdia, CPUT, South Africa

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to explore the use of differentiated instruction by teachers in teaching reading to EFAL learners in rural schools. This is based on the fact that reading is a fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends. Thus, any child who does not learn to read early and well, would not easily master other literacy skills and is therefore unlikely to perform well in school or in life. However, teaching reading to EFAL learners comes with a lot of challenges. This article is framed by the socio-cultural theory and is qualitative in nature premised within an interpretation of teachers' experiences and practices in teaching reading. The participants included 25 EFAL teachers from Seshego District in Limpopo Province. The empirical investigation revealed that, teachers in rural schools in South Africa do not have the necessary skills and expertise to teach reading to EFAL learners. They fail to show a know-how about the approaches to teaching reading. In addition, they treat reading as a separate entity from speaking and writing. Among the main challenges identified, the lack of teaching skills, remuneration, lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms are the major challenges encountered by the teachers. The study concludes that in-service training and workshops are required to peach rural schoolteachers to the expected level.

Keywords: Differentiated instruction, second language learning, learning challenges, reading culture, academic writing

Introduction/Background

Nowadays, teachers face a great deal of diversity in their classrooms that requires them to go beyond the conventional methods of teaching by using differentiated instruction. This is because differentiated instruction attends to the academic needs of the learners as a pedagogical approach to teaching and learning for students at differing levels of abilities. Differentiated instruction involves the ability to adjust the content, process, or product of teaching and learning (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010). In line with constructivism, implementing

differentiated instruction becomes needful in the educational system especially in second language learning.

According to Van Rooy et al. (2015), academic performance in South African high schools is a cause for concern. It is therefore not news that the language of instruction in schools is English, an additional language to most students in South Africa. In view of this, Foncha et al. (2018) assert that English first additional language (EFAL) requires students to develop their potentials in English academic writing to become successful in their education. To this end, students' needs should steer the EFAL curriculum design such that they are actively evaluated to identify gaps in their academic writing to come in with some interventions. It is in this light that differentiated instruction is seen as a resourceful and effective means to addressing diversity in the classrooms that may allow teachers to modify the curriculum, outcomes, and strategies to address diversity. In line with the constructivist perspective, teacher-student interaction should be seen as being pivotal to every student's development with the classroom and providing a learning environment that is conducive for all students. It is on these grounds that Williams et al. (2009) opine that there is a high failure rate recorded among South African students due the lack of teachers' abilities to implement differentiated instruction in schools leaving the learners unprepared to embrace Higher education institution. De Jager (2017) concurs that school teachers need a good knowledge of differentiated instruction to deal with multi-cultural South African schools. In view of this, the Language of learning and teaching (LOLT) curriculum in the SP/FET phase of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology strives to instil such skills in the student teachers who will in turn use it as a pedagogical tool once they are recruited to teach after their studies.

The decline of reading culture in schools seems to hamper learners from reading and acquiring language forms and content. In particular, learners who are doing English first additional language (EFAL) seem to be the most affected. This is a cause for concern because it follows them into tertiary institutions and even in their job performances if they may not be forced to drop out. Hence, this paper strives to investigate teacher's practices and experiences in teaching reading at the intermediate phase. The main aim is to explore the strategies and methodologies used in the teaching of reading. In view of this, it is believed that espousing a reading culture is vital to the individual and to the total growth of any nation. Thus, it is thought that if learners are allowed to choose what they read and are guided within their own appropriate reading levels, there is a good likelihood that their reading ability or reading culture can grow tremendously. Atwell sums this up in the following quotation:

For students of every ability and background, it's the simple, miraculous act of reading a good book that turns them into readers, because even for the least experienced, most reluctant reader, it's the one good book that changes everything. The job of adults who care about reading is to move heaven and earth to put that book into a child's hands (Atwell 2007, pp. 27-28).

The above quotation attests to the perception that learners seem to be limited to reading prescribed books which fundamentally does not really assist them towards reading and response. This is worrisome because this approach does not seem to inspire them to read joyfully as they seem to lack interest, enthusiasm and passion.

By the same token, Moats (1999, p. 5) remarks that:

Reading is the fundamental skill upon which all formal education depends. Research now shows that a child who doesn't learn the reading basics early is unlikely to learn them at all. Any child who doesn't learn to read early and well will not easily master other skills and knowledge, and is unlikely to ever flourish in school or in life.

According to Maswanganye (2010) and Kepe (2017), the main problem with teaching EFAL reading in South African schools is the lack of teaching skills and approaches that can make learners read. The same sentiments are shared by Mather (2012) who posits that glitches may be related to the insufficient training and inadequate knowledge of teaching reading to many South African teachers. The problem that goes hand in hand with EFAL teacher's inability to teach reading at the intermediate and senior phases in secondary schools, is using a language of teaching and learning (English) for which the teachers do not have a good command (Kepe & Foncha, 2017). Not only do they lack sufficient subject knowledge, but they also lack the skills and abilities to teach English, the language of teaching and learning. Teaching reading to English first additional language learners have its challenges because teachers are not proficient enough in the language. Learners who are not taught by teachers proficient in English might not have the necessary foundation on which to build the reading skills that they require to become literates. Alexander (2000) argues that if learners from their first school year are taught reading by teachers who are not proficient in the English language, they would have problems with reading and writing either at home language or the language of teaching. The point of departure here is to promote communication and reading comprehension amongst the learners. It is necessary to know whether teachers have the skills and expertise to teach that language (English). In this regard, Lenyai (2011) comments that the key to achieving the goal for literacy lies in teachers' expertise in teaching reading. This is to suggest that once a learner is taught to

read for pleasure, the reading for pleasure would then lead to a habit of reading that would lead to 'reading to learn'. To this effect, teaching reading is a job for an expert contrary to the popular theory that learning to read is natural and easy. Thus, learning to read is a complex linguistic achievement.

Research in South Africa indicates that teachers' reading skills are poorly developed and this applies from primary school to tertiary institutions (Pretorius & Machet, 2004). Based on this, many teachers have reading problems and there has been a misunderstanding of whether it is the role of the teachers in teaching reading or the National Curriculum statement or continuous assessment policy statement (CAPS) that can be blamed for the reading challenges of learners. To this effect, many teachers believe that they do not have to "teach" reading but instead they simply have to "facilitate" the process. This is meant to suggest that it is the duty of the learners to learn by themselves to read (Hugo 2010; DOE 2008b). Hugo worsens the situation by arguing that teachers do not know how to teach reading. In South African schools, the challenge facing teachers in the Intermediate and FET phases, is that they have to develop their own teaching materials and reading programmes independently. These teachers neither have the required experience nor the expertise to develop the required materials because in the past the Department of Education provided them with prescribed books for the different grades (DOE, 2008b). The teachers need to be well versed with teaching strategies and methods applied to teaching EFAL learners to read before they may be able to teach reading efficiently.

Issues and insights

Socio-cultural perspective

The socio-cultural perspective involves social and cultural contexts that are responsible for making learners read. This means that the environment around the learner should be considered as essential in the improvement of reading. Heath (1983) asserts that children's language development depends on the cultural context and is extremely inclined by the community discourse within which the child belongs. To this end, reading improvement may be affected by the community that does not consider reading as its culture. Moreover, when the community does not speak the language being read, it becomes very difficult to develop. Hadi-Tabassum (2005) argues that learners learn the language more when surrounded by people speaking that language. Although the child's interaction with the text at home differs from what is done at school, Marsh (2003) argues that it is the home literacy that is recognised when the learner is learning to read in school.

This article is framed within the constructive view of language learning which seeks to investigate teachers' practices and experiences in the teaching of reading to EFAL learners in high schools. In view of the above, language teaching is seen as a social practice. The teaching of English as social practice should be understood against the backdrop that the meaning of the words that we use, our actions and our behaviours, are socially constructed and personally interpreted (Dyers & Foncha, 2012). In other words, language (the use of words and signs) is unable to present an objective world (Foncha *et al.*, 2016). In this regard, Sivasubramaniam (2011) observes that words are not pictures of the world – but a representation of social practices that allow a community of human beings to understand each other. In light of this, there seem not to be any universal language through which reality can be explained. Thus, an understanding of a given context can account for the degree of competency in the language being used (Foncha, 2013). Nunn (2016) explains that there is no central community where we can define norms or standards of English competence for all communities. Hence, competence in academic language use is a holistic construct that needs to be pluralised to reflect the broad diversity of international settings in which it is used (Nunn, 2016). This implies that every individual has a different perspective of any given phenomenon. This is to suggest that, each EFAL teacher in a particular school applies his or her own approach and interpretation in teaching reading. Based on this, negotiation and re-negotiation of meaning becomes indispensable for knowledge to be generated. As such, there is no quick fix approach to teaching reading but rather, it is a given context that determines which approach(es) may be suitable for teaching reading in schools. It is on these grounds that the constructivists insist on co-construction of knowledge.

Reading

For most people living in today's modern world, reading is an everyday ordinary task to which little thought is given. Yet, it is one of the most important skills that learners acquire in schools and which forms the foundation for all further learning. Reading is a transactional process as the reader brings meaning to the text and constructs personal meaning through exchange with the author. Davenport (2002) asserts that reading is an active search for meaning that involves the relationship between thought and language. Reading is also seen as a cultural process in which what counts as acceptable reading is culturally defined. In light of this, Oberholzer (2005) describes "reading" as the basic life skill and a cornerstone for a learner's success at school throughout life. Johnson *et al.* (2002) concur that reading is an essential learning tool which if learners have not properly mastered may handicap their potential for success in a

learning context. In line with the above, Gunning (2007) argues that reading is important for learning as it gives learners independent access to a vast world of information as well as fulfilment and enjoyment. It is also important to note that the National Department of Education acknowledges that reading is part of nation-building and that it is the most important linguistic skill that needs to be developed in young learners (DoE, 2008a). It is for this reason that Schmidt *et al.* (2002) posit that the ability to read is a critical component of school success and a strong correlation exists between poor reading ability and school failure.

Models of teaching reading

A reading model is a theory of what is going on in the reader's eyes and mind during reading and comprehending (or miscomprehending) a text (Davies, 1995). These models of reading process try to explain and predict reading behaviours. They are the bases on which reading instruction are built.

Gough's model

The model considers two important stages of reading and those are initial graphical association stage as well as translation-based learning stage (Perfetti & Marron, 1998). The knowledge of interpreting or translation is inattentive in the first stage and the learner uses several possible sources of information provided by the teacher to discriminate one word from another. By doing this, the visually accessible vocabulary is developed. Gough emphasises that all the letters that are available in a text have to be administered separately before the reader can give meaning to any group of letters (Redondo & Mancha, 1998). Although the learner is not making sense from what he or she is reading in the first place, accessible vocabulary words are advanced because they lead to the development of phonological awareness, thereafter to letters of the words and later to the identification of words (Perfetti & Marron, 1998).

Ehri's Model

Beech (2005) provided a concise analysis of Ehri's influential four phases of reading development which are pre-alphabetic, partial alphabetic, full alphabetic and consolidated alphabetic reading. The learner in his first stage of reading only articulates the words that are part of all the logos around him (Beech, 2005). Learning to read is expected to start from the known to the unknown which happens because the readers do not have a clear understanding of what they are reading.

This model regards stages of reading as very important in learners' development to read. In the second stage, partial alphabetic stage, learners are expected to learn letters of alphabet and are expected to combine those letters in the word and then try to pronounce the word (Beech, 2005). In view of this, learners need to be taught words that are alphabetically similar so that they may be able to read well (Ehri & Wilce, 1985). In the full alphabetic stage, a reader can be assisted in the development of the phonemes of those words that have been read before (Beech, 2005).

Teachers need to expose their learners to more sight words that are seen in the second stage because that would make it easier to read. This is meant to suggest that learners with full alphabetic skills, tend to recognise more words than those who are not (Beech, 2005). This means that, the learners are able to learn to read new words by combining the produced articulations. The consolidated stage involves learning by consolidating repeated letter patterns of words. The knowledge of letters of alphabet is indispensable in Ehri's model. Teachers are expected to teach the letters of the alphabet for the learners to be able to read and thereafter make meaning from what they read.

Perfetti Interactive Model

Perfetti and Marron (1998: 11) assert that learning the alphabet is the key that moves a child into the first stage of reading, resulting in a stage called 'phonetic cure reading'. Learners' first chance towards reading is to use the names of sounds of letters as encouragement to word identification. Although it is the letters of the alphabet that provide reading opportunity, letter names do not generally appear as they have enough phonetic connection to be used.

Perfetti Restricted-Interactive model of teaching reading accepts that the illustrations for regular and irregular words are not qualitatively different. That is found to be divergent to the models that accept that only regular words contain valuable phonological information (Perfetti & Marron, 1998). They refer to it as a way of signifying knowledge that the learning reader acquires which he/she can later consider in an adult learner. Perfetti and Marron (1998) also recognise learning to read as the acquisition of developing numbers of words that the learner can be able to read. It is recommended that learners be taught the correct pronunciation of words in connection to the individual letters to read. In establishing those connections, phonemic awareness and then increasing context-sensitive decoding knowledge is required.

There is need for understanding all the models of teaching reading since all the learners are different and therefore, learn to read differently. Gough's model considers the importance of translating what the learners are reading. Ehri looks at the reading levels while Perfetti considers the information obtained from the text. The three models can be used together in reading development as they all highlight the important aspects of reading.

Although the three theories presented in this chapter share an essential assumption that moving into a true stage of reading necessitates some use of the alphabetic principle, some knowledge of phonological structure is also involved (Perfetti & Marron, 1998). The acquisition of reading skills differs from one learner to another learner and that requires different models in teaching reading. This will mean understanding the kind of learners that you are teaching. However, more approaches and guidelines are essential in the teaching of reading. Different approaches in the teaching of reading will be discussed in the section below.

Methodology

This article is drawn from Moswane's Doctoral thesis based on the challenges that teachers encounter in the teaching of reading in high schools. The empirical evidence that is used for this article comes from interviews with the teachers. To gather data, we organised a seminar with 25 EFAL teachers from Seshego Circuit. Based on their presentations during the interviews, 5 of them were selected purposefully to participate in the interviews where they expressed their practices and experiences in the teaching of reading. The questions for the interviews were guided by themes generated from the review of literature where prominent challenges were identified.

Findings and discussion

The following data was generated from the interview questions to the teachers who participated in the study concerning their teaching of reading.

Question 1: Do you prepare your lessons before going to class?

EFALT5: I am a sports organizer and SADTU site steward at my school and my timetable is often interrupted by attending meetings of the above activities. In case where a period had been missed, I sometimes ask my learners to remain behind after school to catch up on what reading.

EFALT3: *the choice and use of reading activities in designing reading lessons or sessions should come first. The use of recent materials in teaching reading would directly or indirectly pushes learners to read harder.*

During the planning phase, the teacher needs to ask him/herself the following question: what do I want my learners to know, understand, appreciate and be able to do? There is justifiable evidence that the major problem with teaching reading is the lack of preparedness on the part of the teachers. This is coupled with the Department of Education's inability to give in-service training to language teachers. In view of this, Foncha et al. (2018) argue that the Department of Education officials are only window dressers who do not have the capacity to give proper in-service training to teachers. Even in situations where the department of Education sends personnel to workshop the teachers, the type of training given is simply to fulfil the concept of a workshop rather than professional development.

Question 2: What could be some of the reasons that hinder preparations ahead of time?

EFALT2: *Eish! I don't want to lie; I don't do planning as I am supposed to. I am a senior teacher who knows that, for a year I need to teach three papers in English. My main goal each year is to cover all three papers my learners have to write.*

EFALT3: *In this Department of ours, no one has taught us to plan. What they did was to stop us from doing the scheme of work book and left us with nothing. To show they do not care about the planning, they wouldn't even ask about it when visiting our schools.*

Given the participants comments above, there is justifiable reason that the participants did not have sufficient time to teach reading to their learners and so they have to rush the syllabus. The time allocated on their school timetable is insufficient to effectively teach reading as well as lack of planning on how and when to teach reading. It is also noticed that teachers are busy attending to the union meetings and extra mural activities therefore neglecting their responsibility of teaching learners (Perfetti & Marron, 1998).

Question 3: Are there available libraries and computer laboratories?

EFALT4: *Our school does not have any library. The principal and SGB have written so many letters to the department of education asking for library to be build but all in vain. The DoE has never responded to those application letters.*

EFALT5: *We use to have a small building that was used as a library, but the community has looted doors and windows and the goats of the whole village used that as their kraal.*

The euphoria of South Africa's new-found political freedom has been largely replaced by the sober reality of limited resources (at all levels) that have to be pitted against a multitude of problems (Masitsa, 2004:240). The government is to a larger extent to be blamed for its unaccountability and lack of resources at schools. In addition, the government's averted interest in poor education and its cynical disregard for the interest of the people on the ground is also accountable for dwindling education in the country. In fact, most of the rural high schools in this study were built by the communities and characterized by poor infrastructure and decrepit buildings without administration blocks and let alone libraries. Hancock (2018) is particularly bitter over the lack of resources in the teaching of reading.

Question 4: What kind of resources assist you in teaching reading?

EFALT2: *Year in year out we place an order of English- Sepedi dictionaries, but the department is not supplying us with those books. These types of dictionaries will help learners to refer difficult English words in their mother tongue. This shows how the department is not taking us serious.*

EFALT3: *Our school is surrounded by the mines. We have written so many letters to the management of the mines asking for the donations of libraries and computer laboratories, but no respond. If the mines cannot help us where are going to get helped?*

The participants seem to concur with (Beech, 2005) that the lack of resources makes it difficult for teachers in schools to do their work. It is further noted that there is little exposure of newspapers reading in the rural areas since this is dominated by those children who do not read newspapers and magazines on monthly basis and those who never read that. It is also indicated that the parents should create a conducive culture of reading at home where learners would be able to improve their reading ability and vocabulary.

Question 8: Are teachers paid well according to their workload?

EFALT5: *Teachers are not paid well. That why most teachers have to extra lessons either during weekends or at the garages at their homes. They need extra cash that will help them survive since the department is not providing.*

EFALT1: *the most fundamental root cause of all the problems and challenges teachers are facing in the teaching of reading is to deal with the low morale of performing this huge task without being paid sufficiently. Teachers are not well remunerated equal to the task they are doing.*

The state is obliged in terms of section 34(1) of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) to fund schools from public revenue in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress the past inequalities in education provisions. Despite funding from the state to schools, which has increased in real terms since the enactment of the schools Act, there are concerns regarding the adequacy of resources for the provision of quality education in public schools (Bloch, 2010:8). The responses above appear to reinforce Botha's (2013: 123) observation that the funds which government apportions to schools are not sufficient to meet all educational needs, particularly in the so-called "no fee schools".

In addition, the data above reveals that poor salaries in rural schools is the major reason why the Department of Education has failed to attract bright young minds and to keep competent and experienced teachers in the teaching profession. The data attests to Mona's (2004:3) claim that many teachers are leaving the profession in thousands (7% yearly) to join the industries because of poor salaries.

Question 10: Is there any team teaching taking place in schools?

EFALT2: *I do not want any teacher near my learners in my absence because they do not know how to teach my learners.*

EFALT4: *even if you see that some particular teachers are not coping well with his/ her work, when you want help he/she will not like because he/she too shameful to ask for a help.*

Teachers collaboration during the reading lessons should be done by inviting other teachers, teacher assistants or special teachers to give learners an additional support apart from the one offered by the classroom or subject teacher when the lesson is in progress. O'Connor and Vadasy (2011) say that team teaching enables teachers to acknowledge their weaknesses without any feeling of embarrassment. Also, it affords teachers the opportunity to accept corrections from their colleagues positively in order to assist their learners. Based on this, it is our view that the job of teaching can be made easier through cooperation and collaboration amongst EFAL teachers and that so much can be learnt considering the perspective of others

and building ideas together. Effective teaming in this sense may lead to better results for both teachers and learners. The main challenge(s) would be how to establish an effective team and working towards its continued success through regular productive interaction

With respect to the above comments, it appears that English language teachers are not working as a team in their schools. Some teachers as noticed are shy to ask assistance from their colleagues whereas some display a feeling of pride and jealousy. The research revealed how political squabbles interfere with the teaching and learning where teachers end up not talking to each other because of their political affiliations. It is further identified from the participants' responses that there is a lack of support from the schools on how best to foster this team work spirit amongst the teachers.

Question13: What kind of support do teachers get from parents?

EFALT2: *We don't get chance to talk to parents as they don't respond to the letters that we give to their children when having meetings.*

EFALT4: *Parents do not attend meetings in our school. There are even those parents who don't allow their children to participate in other school activities.*

The participants also show that parents do not bother to help their children with their school work after school. In light of the above comments, the participants seem to concur that illiteracy appears to be the common factor in the absence of parental involvement in the education of the children in the rural schools. Children could not be helped with their homework or any school related activities simply because there are not educated enough to understand English.

The empirical evidence revealed that parents in rural areas do not have the necessary skills to be able to assist their children with homework and helping them in reading at home. This was supported by Pomerantz (2005) who asserted that parents typically do not become involved with their children's education unless difficulty arises, which then can lead to frustration from the parents.

Question 14: Are teachers well trained to teach reading?

EFALT1: *there are teachers who have just being appointed at schools and they know nothing about teacher training or empowerment. They have not attended any kind of training since and they have to do research on their own to get any material that has to do with the teaching of reading.*

EFALT4: *In the workshops they attended, the department sends incompetent facilitators who know nothing with regard to teaching reading. To some extent those facilitators were often late and in other centres teachers have to be send back home because the facilitators fail to pitch.*

Flutter (2007) argues that many innovations in teaching reading are not successfully implemented because teachers seem not to fully understand the nature of change. In this study, EFAL teachers are not trained nor workshopped to be developed in teaching reading in their respective schools. In light of this, successful curriculum change projects depend on the implementation strategies that include effective staff training. In other words, if EFAL teachers are not well trained, there might not be effective teaching of reading.

Question16: What are the sizes of these classes?

EFALT2: *the overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for me to deal with ill-discipline learners during reading sessions.*

EFALT: *teachers should be empowered with the skills on manage their classrooms and how best to implement effective disciplinary measures in their classes*

Many schools in the rural areas are overcrowded because they cannot refuse admission to local learners because of the traditional belief that the school belongs to them as residents of a particular community in which the school is located. The National Department of Education does not have a fixed rule about admission of learners and overcrowding (Hancock, 2018). The data above pointed to the fact that the department of education is partly to be blame for failure to build new schools and provide mobile classrooms mobile classrooms in rural areas as sign of addressing this problem. In addition to overcrowded classrooms is poor classroom management. The study also revealed that larger classes are noisier, and more prone to pushing, crowding and hitting to the extent that this can impact negatively on classroom discipline.

Question 21: Are teachers fluent enough to teach reading?

EFALT2: *teachers who are not fluent or proficient enough to speak English found it difficult to teach the subject English in the classroom. They do not have the competency in speaking the language and as a result cannot teach reading best as per curricular needs of the subject.*

EFALT3: *teachers with low self-esteem felt intimidated by some learners who are fluent to speak English efficiently. I can say that I am not fluent; I still make a lot of mistakes when speaking English.*

The data presented affirms Hoffman's (1991) claim that 'code-switching' refers to the alternate use of two or more languages within a similar expression or during the similar discussions. Teachers who are not fluent and competent enough to speak English cannot teach reading well in the classroom. The research further revealed that the recruitment of new teachers from the teacher training institutions bears negative impact on teaching of reading.

Overall, the findings revealed that EFAL teachers' strategies to teaching reading placed emphasis on the development of English language comprehension and vocabulary. In this regard, majority of their learners were able to understand and communicate informally in English. However, an academic understanding of English was still developing. This is in line with Foncha et al. (2018) who argue that both teachers and learners with poor English proficiency require individual support in guided reading groups where they are able to progress at their own pace and experience success. The study also found that a well-developed English vocabulary is essential to success in English reading (Kieffer, 2012; Castro & Sandilos, 2014). Thus, the use of smaller reading groups allows for the improvement of learners' reading levels. As such, EFAL teachers should expose their learners to variety of tasks in reading that are relevant to their daily experiences. In light of this, topics such as; HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and many more should be used as examples of lessons that may help learners to realize that whatever they are learning is a reality and language is used all the time.

Conclusion

This paper has shown a few challenges that the teachers face in their different schools. In addition, it shed some lights on the difficulties encountered by teachers' teaching English first additional language. The challenges that teachers face seem to cut across all rural schools. Although the school environments may differ, these schools have a lot in common as they appear to use similar methods in teaching reading. As such, EFAL teachers' strategies to teaching reading placed emphasis on the development of English language comprehension and vocabulary. It is also evident that many rural schools if not all, experienced scarcity of reading books and therefore, the teaching of reading is negatively affected. There is also justifiable reason to suggest that EFAL teachers are unable to provide intensive support to learners whose English language ability is poor due to classroom size as a result, teachers have to adjust their teaching approaches due to overcrowded classrooms. Another important revelation is the lack of English proficiency on the part of the EFAL teachers since most of them do not come from

English speaking backgrounds. In view of this, the teaching of reading is usually carried out without the engagement and participation of the learners.

References

- Alexander, R. (2000). *Culture and Pedagogy: International comparisons in primary education*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Atwell, N. (2007). *The Reading Zone: How to help kids Become Skilled, Passionate, Habitual, Critical Readers*. New York: Scholastic.
- Beech, J.R. (2005). Ehri's model of phases of learning to read: a brief critique. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 28(1): 50-58.
- Bloch, G. 2010. What is wrong with South African schools? *The Teacher*, 10: 12-36.
- Castro, D. C. and Sandilos, L. E. (2014). Early childhood. *Research quarterly* 29 (4), 715-733.
- Davenport, T. (2002). *South Africa: A Modern History*, 2nd Ed. Macmillan: Johannesburg.
- Davies, F. (1995). *Introducing Reading*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books.
- De Jager, T. (2017). Perspective of teachers on differentiated instruction in multicultural South Africa secondary school. *Studies in educational evaluation*, 53: 115-121.
- Department of Education (DoE). (2008). *National Reading Strategy: Department of Education. Republic of South Africa*. Government Printers: Pretoria.
- Department of Education (DoE). (2008). *Teaching and reading in the early Grades. A teacher's Handbook*. Department of Education: Pretoria.
- Dyers, C. and Foncha, J.W. (2012). "Us" and "Them": The Discursive Construction of "the Other" in Greenmarket Square, Cape Town. *Language and Intercultural communication*, 12(3): 230-247.
- Ehri, L. C. and Wilce, L. S. (1985). Movement into reading: Is the first stage of printed word learning visual or phonetic? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20:163-179.
- Flutter, J. 2007. Teacher Development and Pupil voice. *Curriculum Journal*, 18(3): 63-75.

Foncha, J. W., Abongdia, J. A. and Kepe, M. H (2018). Challenges Encountered by Teachers in teaching of reading in English first additional language (EFAL) in South African Classrooms. In V. Nomlomo, Z. Desai and J September (Eds.). *From Words to Ideas: The role of Literacy in Enhancing Young Children Development*. Cape Town, South Africa.

Foncha, J. W., Sivasubramaniam, S., Adamson, J. and Nunn, R. (2016). Investigating the role of Language in the Identity Construction of Scholars: Coming to terms with Intercultural Communication Competence. Cambridge Scholars: Cambridge.

Foncha, J. W. (2013). An Investigation of Students' and Teachers' attempts at Intercultural Communication: Exploring the connections between Intercultural Communication Competence and Identity Construction at the University of the Western Cape. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Western Cape, South Africa.

Gunning R. (2007). *The Technique of Clear Writing*. New York: McGraw-Hill International Book.

Hadi-Tabassum, S. (2005). The balancing act of bilingual immersion. *Educational researcher*, 62(4): 50-54.

Hancock, A. 2018. Learning Literacy in Multilingual contexts: Scotland and South Africa. In Nomlomo, V., Desai, Z. and September, J. (Eds.). *FROM WORDS TO IDEAS: The role of literacy in enhancing young children's development*. British Council South Africa: Cape Town.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Open University Press: Buckingham.

Hoffman, C. 1991. *An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Longman: London.

Hugo, A. J. (2010). Foundation Phase Teachers: The "battle" to Teach Reading. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 44(2): 133-144.

Johnson, B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J. and Turner, L. A. (2002). Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2): 112-133.

Kepe, M.H. (2017). Building a reading culture among Grade 12 learners in an English First Additional Language classroom: The Case of one High School in King William's Town Education District. University of Fort Hare: South Africa.

Kepe, M. H., Foncha, J. W., & Muruma, M.W. (2017). Overcoming poor Readership in Schools. Towards Building a Culture of Reading, *Gender and Behaviour* 15(2): 8790-8797.

Kieffer, M. J. (2012). Direct and indirect roles of morphological awareness in the English reading comprehension of native English, Spanish, Filipino, and Vietnamese speakers. *Language Learning*, 62(4), 1170-1204.

Lenyai, E. (2011). First additional language teaching in the foundation phase of schools in disadvantaged areas. *Journal of childhood Education*, 1 (2): 68-8.

Marsh, J. (2003). One-way traffic? Connections between literacy practices at home and in the Nursery. *British Educational Research Journal*, 29(3): 369-382.

Maswanganye, B. (2010). The Teaching of first Additional Language Reading in Grade 4 in selected School in the Moretele Area Project office. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of South Africa: South Africa.

Mather, N. (2012). Making the CAPS fit: An exploration of the reading development strategies of three Intermediate Phase language educators in a rural KwaZulu-Natal. Unpublished M Ed Thesis, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.

Moats, L. (1999). Reading is rocket science: what expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do American Federation of Teachers. online: <http://www.aft.org/pubsreports/downloads/teachers/rockets.pdf>. 25 July 2017.

Mona, V. 2004. The Teacher. Naptosa in Dispute over Wage Increase. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(11): 3-12.

Num, R. (2016). The Self, Anonymity and Non-blind Review: A Circulatory Perspective of Academic Global Commons. *English Scholarship Beyond Borders* 2(1): 2-6.

Oberholzer, B. (2005). The relationship between reading difficulties and academic performance among a group of Foundation Phase learners. University of Zululand. *Journal of Higher Education*. 16(3): 196-206.

O'Connor, R. and Vadasy, P. 2011. *Handbook of reading interventions*. The Guildford Press: New York.

Perfetti, C. A. and Marron, M. A. (1998). Learning to read: Literacy acquisition by children and adults. In D.N. Wagner (Ed.). *Advances in adult literacy research and development*. Sage Publications: London.

Pomerantz, E. M. 2005a. *Mother's assistance with homework: The importance of believing in Children's competence*. Unpublished manuscript. Sage Journals.

Pretorius, E. J. and Machet, M. P. (2004). Literacy and Disadvantage: Enhancing Learner's Achievements in the Early Primary School Years. *African Education Review*, 1(1): 128-146.

Republic of South Africa. 1996. The South African Schools Act No 84. Government Gazette. 377(19579). Government Printers: Cape Town.

Sivasubramaniam. S.D. (2011). Coming to Terms with EIL Competence. From Defining EIL Competence to Designing EIL Learning. Asian EFL Journal Press for the EIL Journal, 35-64.

Tomlinson, C A; Imbeau, M M, (2010). *Leading and managing a differentiated classroom*. 1st ed. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Van Rooy , B. & Coetzee-Van Rooy , S., (2015). The language issue and academic performance at a South African University. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 33(1), p. 31–46.

Schmidt, V. E., Chayes, D. N. and Gold, E. (2002). Performance Evaluation of INMARSAT Fleet 77 services aboard the R/V Ewing. *EOS, Transactions of American Geophysical Union*, 83(47): 710.

Williams, David R. and Selina A. Mohammed. (2009). "Discrimination and Racial Disparities in Health: Evidence and Needed Research." *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 32:20–47.