

**GRADE 4 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHERS’
EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILLS: A
CASE STUDY OF SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE UGU DISTRICT IN KWAZULU
NATAL**

By

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Declaration of originality

I declare that "Grade 4 English First Additional Language Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Listening Comprehension Skills: A Case Study of Selected Schools in the Ugu District in KwaZulu-Natal" is my work and that all sources consulted and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged employing complete references.

Signature:



Cleopatra Musa Mzobe

Statement by supervisor

This dissertation is submitted with my approval.

Signature:



Dr N. Nyika

Dedication

To God Almighty who gave me strength, persistence, and hope. To my late mother Thombi and my sister Bukeka.

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I acknowledge the people who made this journey possible:

I want to thank The Trinity of heaven: God almighty, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who despite all the hardships I have been through, enabled me to complete my dissertation.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CASME	Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education
CATC	Comprehension Across the Curriculum
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
DEAL	Drop Everything and Listen
EAC	English Across the Curriculum
EFAL	English First Additional Language
EFL	English Foreign Language
FAL	First Additional Language
FP	Foundation Phase
HL	Home Language
HOD	Head of Department
IP	Intermediate Phase
KZNDOE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
LEAP	Learn English Audio Project
LECP	Language in Education Collaboration Programme
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
NAESTA	National Association of English Teachers of South Africa
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PCK	Pedagogy Content Knowledge
PLC	Professional Learning Community
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACME	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Mentoring Education Quality
SASA	South African Schools Act
SIP	Subject Improvement Plan
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal

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ABSTRACT

Listening for comprehension is one of the fundamental skills in language learning. It is crucial because it interacts with other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. Teaching and learning methods across all subjects need to consider the central role of listening comprehension in language acquisition. However, it has been noted that listening comprehension is the most challenging skill to teach to English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners. This research aimed to contribute to the existing literature on the experiences of EFAL teachers when teaching listening comprehension to Grade 4 learners.

The study focused on exploring the experiences of EFAL teachers in the Ugu district as they taught listening comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. Guided by Schema Theory, this qualitative case study examined the experiences of seven female Grade 4 EFAL teachers in the Ugu district as they navigated the complex task of teaching listening comprehension. Using classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, the study identified four key themes: rote teaching, the use of resources, instructional techniques for teaching listening comprehension, and challenges affecting the effective teaching of listening comprehension.

Rote teaching was highlighted as a significant strategy for activating learners' background knowledge and enriching vocabulary. The second theme emphasised the importance of using diverse resources, particularly visual aids, to create an immersive learning environment. The third theme focused on instructional techniques, revealing innovative approaches that go beyond traditional methods, enhancing engagement and comprehension in the learning process. The final theme uncovered various challenges faced by teachers in teaching EFAL. The research provides insights that can be used to address obstacles that hinder the effective teaching of listening comprehension.

While the study specifically targeted Grade 4, its findings have broader implications for teaching and learning in content subjects. The researcher advocates for mandatory English training for all teachers, recognising the pivotal role language plays in effective teaching. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of creating dynamic and engaging learning environments and recommends that the Department of Education provide essential audio-visual resources. Lastly, the call for more listening programmes in primary schools underscores

the importance of fostering active listening skills from an early educational stage, contributing to comprehensive language development.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of Chapter One

This chapter outlines the research process used in this study, which explores the experiences of English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. The chapter begins with an introduction and background to the study, followed by the study's focus and purpose. It then discusses the rationale, teaching, and learning of Listening Comprehension skills, along with the research questions and research design that guide the study. The chapter concludes with an outline of the subsequent chapters.

1.2 Introduction and Background to the Problem

Existing literature has primarily focused on other language skills, with insufficient research on Listening skills (Ismail & Aziz, 2020; Nadhira & Warne, 2021). In a global context where English is an additional or foreign language, teaching Listening Comprehension is both essential and challenging (Hien, 2015; Sibanda, 2017; Ujihanti, Ardiansyah, & Aryanti, 2019; Zhang, 2022). Therefore, this study examines teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills in EFAL.

The teaching and learning policy for schools is provided by the National Department of Basic Education. Each phase of South African schools has its applicable policy document for each subject (Karlsson, McPherson & Pampallis, 2020). The policy document is referred to as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011; Kretzer & Kaschula, 2020). In the Foundation Phase (FP) (Grade R-3), the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is the learners' home language (IsiZulu in this study's context). This approach allows learners to master their mother tongue before learning English as the first additional language. Subsequently, English is used as the LoLT from Grades 4 to 12 (DBE, 2011; Slaughter & Cross, 2021). The aim of employing English as the LoLT from the Intermediate Phase (IP) (Grades 4-6) is to strengthen learners' language proficiency (DBE, 2011; Kretzer & Kaschula, 2021). This dual-purpose exposure enhances both language skills and cognitive abilities, supporting learners in studying other subjects.

The transition from the FP LoLT to the IP LoLT presents significant challenges for learners (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Balfour, 2019; Manditereza, 2021). In Grade 4, English becomes the LoLT for all subjects except the home language, making it difficult for learners to acquire Listening Comprehension skills while being introduced to more subjects (Manditereza, 2021; Lyons, Carroll, Gallagher, Merrick & Tancredi, 2022). This transition requires careful consideration of its implications for learners' language development and comprehension abilities.

The Department of Education has undertaken several initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning, focusing on EFAL teachers. Programmes such as English Across the Curriculum (EAC) and Comprehension Across The Curriculum (CATC) emphasise the importance of language skills, including Listening Comprehension, across all subjects (DBE, 2014; DBE, 2020; DBE, 2022). Collaboration with the British Council through the Language in Education Collaboration Programme (LECP) and support from the National Association of English Teachers of South Africa (NAETSA) further enhance EFAL teachers' capabilities (DBE, 2022). Additionally, initiatives like the Spelling BEE competitions and the Learn English Audio Project (LEAP) aim to improve Listening Comprehension skills (DBE, 2022).

The Department of Education's catching-up intervention specifically targets gaps in acquired skills among Grade 4 learners, with a direct focus on enhancing their Listening Comprehension skills (Makoe & McKinney, 2014; Meiklejohn, Westaway, Westaway & Long, 2021). This intervention recognises the foundational role of effective Listening Comprehension in academic success, particularly during the transition from home language instruction to English as the LoLT. Despite these efforts, challenges in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to EFAL learners persist.

1.3 Focus and Purpose of the Study

Existing research on Listening Comprehension skills has predominantly focused on learners' perspectives, leaving the teacher's perspective largely unexplored. This study addresses this gap by focusing on teachers' experiences and aims to understand the impact of teaching Listening Comprehension skills in English as a first additional language.

The study aims to explore teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills and to develop effective teaching methods for Grade 4 learners in EFAL classrooms, even under challenging circumstances. The purpose of the study is to examine EFAL teachers' experiences

in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners in four selected primary schools in the Ugu District of KwaZulu-Natal.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

This section discusses the study's rationale, focusing on the gap in teaching Listening Comprehension skills and the contribution of existing literature to the teaching of EFAL Listening Comprehension skills.

1.4.1 Teaching Listening Comprehension

EFAL Listening Comprehension influences other language skills and content subjects, leading to learners' poor academic performance. The Annual National Assessment (ANA) results from 2012 to 2014 consistently revealed challenges in EFAL performance among Grade 4 learners. KwaZulu-Natal's provincial averages during this period showed marginal improvement, with percentages ranging from 34% in 2012 to 41% in 2014 (DBE, 2014). This persistent struggle in EFAL, particularly in Listening Comprehension, underscores the importance of addressing gaps in this critical language skill.

Building on these findings, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results from 2016 to 2021 highlighted a concerning decline in reading comprehension skills among Grade 4 learners. South Africa's average PIRLS score dropped by 32 points during this period, reflecting a significant setback in reading literacy (DBE, 2023; Mullis, Davier, Foy, Fishbein, Reynolds & Wry, 2023). The Department of Basic Education (2023) noted a rise in the percentage of Grade 4 learners struggling with reading comprehension, from 78% in 2016 to 81% in 2021. Roux, van Staden, and Tshele (2023) reported that South Africa lagged behind other middle-income countries like Brazil, Jordan, Iran, and Egypt in reading proficiency, with only 19% of Grade 4 children able to read for meaning in any language in 2021. These trends highlight the interconnectedness of reading and Listening Comprehension and emphasise the need for targeted interventions to address this foundational aspect of literacy.

To address the learners' poor academic performance caused by EFAL as the LoLT, it is crucial to understand how teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills.

1.4.2 Contribution of the Study towards the Teaching of EFAL Listening Comprehension Skills

Numerous studies have focused on Listening Comprehension skills, covering both EFAL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Research has examined oral instructions in the FP, learner difficulties in high schools and universities, and the use of subtitles, social media, and differences across genres (Darti & Asmawati, 2017; Amir, 2018; Triyanti, Nonny & Moh, 2018; Kimathi & Bertram, 2019; Dumlao, Alfonso, Paguirigan, & Subia, 2020). Despite this research, little attention has been given to EFAL Grade 4 teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills as an entry point to the Intermediate Phase, where English becomes the LoLT.

Various instructional techniques have been documented to help learners develop a deeper understanding of Listening Comprehension skills (Lee & Levine, 2020; Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021). The effectiveness of Listening Comprehension lessons depends on the instructional techniques employed by teachers (Cao & Lin, 2020; Djabborova, 2020; Pratama, Arifin & Widianingsih, 2020). However, existing research in EFAL schools has focused mainly on other language skills, with limited attention to Listening Comprehension (Manten, le Roux, Geertsema & Graham, 2020; Meiklejohn et al., 2021; Shin, Lee & Lidster, 2021). By focusing on teachers' experiences and identifying effective teaching methods, this study aims to contribute meaningfully to EFAL education, enhancing Grade 4 learners' language development. The findings could benefit EFAL policymakers and teachers by providing insights that can improve the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills.

1.5 Exploring English in Particular

Listening Comprehension is a critical aspect of language education. The global recognition of English as a language that influences economic growth underscores the importance of teaching Listening Comprehension skills (Lim, 2013; Montgomery, 2013; Ramírez-Castañeda, 2020; Salomone, 2022). Listening Comprehension is fundamental to linguistic proficiency and plays a key role in understanding and interpreting spoken language.

Exploring English becomes particularly crucial when teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. Research indicates that primary exposure to English occurs within the school environment during teaching and learning activities (Tuan, 2017; Ramírez-Castañeda,

2020). To successfully teach EFAL, teachers need to create an immersive English language learning environment that enhances Listening Comprehension skills.

Thus, the exploration of English in this context goes beyond linguistic knowledge; it involves fostering an environment where learners can effectively engage with and comprehend spoken English.

1.6 Teaching and Learning Listening Comprehension Skills

According to Ahmadi (2016), Listening Comprehension involves grasping and interpreting spoken language, serving as a critical component in both language acquisition and effective communication. Possessing Listening Comprehension skills allows learners to absorb information, follow instructions, and engage in meaningful conversations. Developing these skills requires active engagement with spoken language, recognising nuances in pronunciation, understanding language structures, and applying background knowledge to interpret and make sense of what is being said (Gilakjani, 2017; Onetere, 2019). Listening Comprehension extends beyond passive hearing; it demands focused attention and mental effort for a comprehensive understanding of spoken discourse.

In the EFAL context, Grade 4 learners are often unfamiliar with Listening Comprehension skills because they have been exposed to the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in their home language. The transition from the Foundation Phase LoLT to EFAL LoLT presents a significant challenge (Evans & Nthulana, 2018). Since English is used as the LoLT throughout learners' education—from basic education to higher education and into their careers—it is crucial for learners to be adequately taught and to master Listening Comprehension skills.

The transfer of Listening Comprehension skills occurs when a teacher delivers lesson content in front of the class. Engaging learners requires teachers to employ strategies that facilitate their ability to perceive, analyse, and understand spoken language, thereby contributing to language acquisition (Elbes & Oktaviani, 2022). However, teaching Listening Comprehension is challenging because teachers encounter various obstacles during this process. Issues such as pronunciation difficulties, limited vocabulary, and poor concentration among learners are common challenges (Sibanda, 2017; Ujihanti et al., 2019). Success in language acquisition is closely tied to effective teaching (Umarova, 2021). Additional difficulties faced by EFAL teachers include managing the speed of information delivery, addressing limited vocabulary, and helping learners understand transitions between ideas—challenges that resonate with the

experiences of EFAL teachers in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners (May, 2018; Elbes & Oktaviani, 2022).

According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, EFAL includes four language skills: listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting, and language structure and conventions (DBE, 2011). While all language skills are essential, listening and speaking receive particular emphasis in daily practice (DBE, 2011). The South African educational system underscores the importance of teachers sparking and maintaining learners' interest, regardless of their diverse backgrounds (DBE, 2011; DBE, 2022).

Despite government efforts to provide equal education, teachers in EFAL schools face challenges in effectively teaching Listening Comprehension skills due to resource limitations, such as the lack of audio and audiovisual materials (Zano, 2023). This study intends to explore EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners in selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.7 Explanation of Key Concepts

1.7.1 English First Additional Language

South Africa is world-renowned for its eleven official languages, reflecting the diverse races and cultures within the country (South African Constitution, 1996). Often referred to as a rainbow nation, South Africa takes pride in respecting each culture and celebrating the diversity of its people. The Department of Education has implemented a clear policy in schools, stipulating that all learners must be instructed in two or more languages (DBE, 2011). According to this policy, the home language is considered the mother tongue, and the first or second additional language can be chosen from the eleven official languages. Any language selected after the home language is designated as a first additional language, with English often being chosen as the first additional language in many black South African schools.

1.7.2 Teaching

Mockler (2022) defines teaching as the process of imparting knowledge, skills, and values to learners in a structured and systematic manner. Teaching involves the use of various pedagogical techniques and strategies to facilitate learning and promote intellectual growth. The goal of teach skills and help learners gain a deep understanding of the subject matter,

develop critical thinking skills, and become independent learners (Zamora-Polo & Sánchez-Martín, 2019; Smith & Gillespie, 2023). Effective teaching requires a combination of subject matter expertise, instructional design, and interpersonal skills. It involves a supportive learning environment that encourages active participation, collaboration, and engagement among learners. Teaching can take place in a variety of settings, including schools, universities, and other educational institutions (Loughran, 2020).

1.7.3 Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is the ability to understand and derive meaning from spoken language (Syakur, 2020; Tran & Duong, 2020). It encompasses the skill of not just hearing words but also processing and interpreting the communicated message. This essential aspect of language development involves understanding vocabulary, grasping syntax and grammar in spoken sentences, discerning tone and intonation for contextual nuances, making inferences based on context, following verbal directions accurately, and responding appropriately to the received information (Syakur, 2020; Zhang, 2022). Whether in educational, professional, or social settings, effective listening comprehension is crucial for successful communication, decision-making, and overall language proficiency. Developing robust listening comprehension skills is foundational for individuals to navigate various linguistic challenges and engage meaningfully in spoken interactions across diverse contexts.

1.7.4 Teacher Experience

Teacher experience extends beyond the mere duration of service, encompassing the wealth of insights, skills, and contextual understanding that a teacher acquires over time in their professional journey (Almazova, Krylova, Rubtsova & Odinokaya, 2020). This broader perspective acknowledges that teacher experience is not solely about the passage of time but also about the depth and breadth of knowledge, pedagogical approaches, and the ability to navigate the intricacies of the educational landscape.

1.8 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

- Explore EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners.

- Investigate how EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners.
- Establish the rationale behind the teachers' choice of these teaching strategies.

1.9 Research Questions

This study aims to explore EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. This study was designed to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?
2. How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?
3. Why do EFAL teachers use these strategies when teaching Listening Comprehension skills?

1.10 Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited to seven EFAL Grade 4 teachers within the Ugu district of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The participants in this research were exclusively African females whose home language is IsiZulu. Their teaching experience ranged from 5 to 28 years. Teachers from four different schools within the Ugu district were involved, ensuring a varied representation within the identified geographical and educational context. These deliberate delimitations provide a focused and specific framework for understanding the experiences of EFAL Grade 4 teachers in this region, contributing to the depth and contextual relevance of the study.

1.11 Ethical Issues

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring respect for the dignity of the human participants involved (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To initiate the research process, the researcher obtained permission and clearance from key authorities, including the University of KwaZulu-Natal for ethical clearance, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, and the principals of the participating schools (see Appendices 1B-D). Detailed letters were subsequently provided to the participants, outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and potential benefits before data collection began. Recognising that the learners involved were minors, consent was sought from their parents or guardians, with all communication written in

their home language, IsiZulu, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the study's aims and objectives (see Appendices 1F and 1G). Participants were assured of the voluntary nature of their involvement and the confidential treatment of all information, fostering transparency throughout the research process (Smith, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of participants, schools, and locations.

1.12 Outline of the Study

This study is divided into seven chapters, plus references and appendices. The chapters of the research study are organised as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study's background as well as its motivation. The research questions are presented, and the research methodology of this study is also highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The content of this chapter is derived from a literature review that explores global and South African perspectives on the teaching of EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. The literature is grounded in research focused on how EFAL teachers teach Grade 4 learners the concept of Listening Comprehension skills. The chapter also delves into shared experiences and the instructional techniques employed by teachers, shedding light on their effectiveness in the teaching and learning process.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Chapter three presents the theoretical framework of this study. This research study is based on the schema theory. This chapter discusses the significance of schema to this study.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Chapter four focuses on the research methodology of this study. The study used the qualitative research approach as it aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the topic under investigation. Mason (2017) and Flick (2018) outline qualitative research as being useful in answering questions about any phenomena that are used to describe and understand the events from the participants' point of view. The study employed the case study as the

research design within the interpretive paradigm. The chosen methods, comprising classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, are meticulously detailed, signifying a deliberate strategy to comprehensively explore the subject matter.

Purposive sampling is used to target seven EFAL teachers, aiming to enhance the study's specificity and relevance (McBride, 2023). This chapter explores crucial components, including a thorough examination of the research context. It discusses detailed participant profiles, the intricacies of data generation procedures, and the methods employed for data analysis. Ethical considerations and the pivotal discussion surrounding trustworthiness principles are also presented.

This comprehensive treatment of these critical elements serves to establish a robust foundation for the subsequent phases of the research. By thoroughly addressing these facets, the chapter not only enhances the coherence and clarity of the study but also provides a clear framework for readers to grasp the approach and methods employed.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected. This chapter further explains the presentation of findings on the EFAL experiences when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The chapter further describes the participants' responses.

Chapter 6: Findings and Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as presented in Chapter Five. It outlines, interprets, and discusses the study's findings, aligning them with relevant literature.

Chapter 7: Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations and Limitations

This is the final chapter of this research study. The conclusions reached based on the information generated and analysed are presented. Chapter seven discusses the recommendations of this study as well as its limitations.

1.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a thorough foundation for the entire study, providing an introduction and background. The explanation of the study's focus and rationale has

illuminated the importance of teaching and learning Listening Comprehension skills. By exploring key concepts, the chapter has established a solid understanding of the subject matter. The inclusion of clear objectives, research questions, and thoughtful consideration of delimitations and ethical issues further contribute to the strength of the study. The chapter concludes by offering a concise outline of the subsequent chapters, providing a roadmap to navigate the forthcoming exploration of the research.

The next chapter will present the literature review of this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the experiences of English First Additional Language (EFAL) Grade 4 teachers in teaching Listening Comprehension skills. It addresses the critical questions: *How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners, and why do EFAL teachers use these strategies when teaching Listening Comprehension skills?* In the previous chapter, the researcher introduced the study. This chapter reviews the literature related to the key questions guiding the research. It explores literature centred on the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, with the primary question addressed in the literature review being:

What are the EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?

2.2 The Definition of the Concept of Listening Comprehension Skills

Mastering listening can significantly aid learners in acquiring English as a first additional language fluently. However, Listening Comprehension skills are a challenging concept to grasp. Providing an accurate definition of Listening Comprehension is difficult due to the various interpretations offered by scholars (Ebadi, Karimi, & Vakili, 2023). This complexity reflects the experiences of EFAL teachers as they navigate the challenges of teaching this crucial skill.

There is no single way to define Listening Comprehension skills. This study first defines the terms individually and then as a combined concept. It employs a sequential approach (Nushi & Orouji, 2020) by defining "listening," then "comprehension," and finally "Listening Comprehension" to offer a comprehensive understanding.

2.2.1 Listening

Brady-Myerov (2021) defines listening as a multifaceted process involving receiving sounds through the ears, constructing meaning with the brain, and responding verbally. It is not an isolated function but requires auditory discrimination, aural grammar, the ability to select relevant information, retention of information, and the capacity to bridge the gap between sound

and meaning. The listener engages with oral speech, categorising sounds into lexical and syntactic units to comprehend the overall message. Lavee and Itzchakov (2023) expand on this concept, portraying listening as a dynamic process that includes receiving, interpreting, negotiating meaning, and responding. Meaning creation involves active participation, creativity, and empathy, all of which contribute to understanding spoken language.

Nichols and Straus (2021) highlight the importance of listening in understanding the world and facilitating successful communication. Listening involves activating various types of information to interpret and respond effectively. It is a means by which thoughts and information are assimilated, with the listener accepting, interpreting, and responding through cognitive processes.

Welch and Mickelson (2020) propose five types of listening: discriminative, comprehensive, critical, therapeutic, and appreciative. Each type reflects the active nature of listening, emphasising its procedural rather than static nature. Contrary to the predominant focus on other language skills in EFAL research, this study aligns with a comprehension-focused approach to listening. In the EFAL classroom, discriminative, comprehensive, and critical listening, as described by Welch and Mickelson (2020), aims to make sense of oral language. Recognising speech sounds, understanding meaning, and grasping sentence syntax are pivotal objectives in this context (Nichols & Straus, 2021). Therefore, this study adopts Nichols and Straus's (2021) perspective on comprehensive listening as the primary aim, underscoring understanding meaning in Listening Comprehension as both a language skill and a method of teaching and learning.

2.2.2 Comprehension

According to Bano (2017), comprehension is a complex process that combines rationality, knowledge, teaching, and active participation. In the listening context, learners are expected to familiarise themselves with the text, requiring pre-, process-, and post-knowledge of comprehension. Understanding something is a fundamental component of comprehension, illustrating the complexity of this cognitive ability (Carlson, 2019).

Comprehension is an intensive reading process aimed at extracting specific information (Bano, 2017). It is a cognitive activity involving the interplay of words in the text and activating information beyond its literal transcription (Carlson, 2019). Engaging in comprehension not only fosters critical thinking but also taps into learners' background knowledge, facilitating the

acquisition of vocabulary, pronunciation, and additional knowledge. Similarly, Assiri and Siddiqui (2020) emphasise that comprehension involves deep reading to extract precise information from the text. The focus is on an active interaction with the text, implying a cognitive process that goes beyond surface-level understanding.

2.2.3 Listening Comprehension Skills

Ahmad (2016) describes Listening Comprehension as a multifaceted process encompassing elements such as pronunciation, language structures, and background knowledge. Emphasis is placed on pronunciation due to its importance for a comprehensive grasp of spoken language (Wangru, 2016; Bano, 2017; Darti & Asmawati, 2017). Beyond pronunciation, an awareness of language structures, including grammar and sentence construction, is crucial for holistic comprehension of spoken discourse (Bekker & Van Rooy, 2015; Sa'diyah, 2016; Gilakjani, 2017). Background knowledge serves as a foundational component, allowing learners to connect new information with their existing understanding. Hedgcock and Ferris (2018) introduce a layer of complexity, characterising Listening Comprehension skills as a mentally demanding activity that requires cognitive engagement. This engagement surpasses passive reception and involves active mental processing for meaning extraction.

Challenging the traditional view of passive listening, Darti and Asmawati (2017) advocate for an interactive and participatory approach, urging learners to actively engage with spoken language. This perspective aligns with the evolving understanding that Listening Comprehension requires dynamic involvement rather than mere reception of information. Nurhidayati, Machmudah, and Jalaluddin (2021) further enrich the discourse by framing Listening Comprehension as a step-by-step process and creative activity. They highlight the gradual unfolding of comprehension and the active role of listeners in meaning construction. This dual-dimensional view challenges the conventional notion of passive reception, portraying listeners not merely as recipients but as active participants engaged in interpreting and synthesising meaning from spoken language.

Ahmad (2016) provides a comprehensive definition, framing Listening Comprehension as a process that involves understanding, interpreting, and evaluating spoken language. In contrast, Azmi et al. (2014) and Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) characterise Listening Comprehension as recognising meaning through auditory organs, emphasising the understanding of the speaker's intentions, opinions, and purposes, particularly in oral resources. Ahmadi (2016) stresses that

Listening Comprehension goes beyond mere hearing. It involves active engagement to discern meaning, playing a crucial role in enabling learners to understand English in spontaneous conversations at a normal pace and contributing to effective communication (Darti & Asmawati, 2017). These evolving perspectives collectively highlight the intricate nature of Listening Comprehension, emphasising active participation, gradual unfolding, and creative meaning construction in the comprehension process.

2.3 Listening Comprehension Skills Problems

Listening Comprehension skills encompass three phases: perception, parsing, and utilisation, with perception being the initial stage (Tran & Duong, 2020; Arroyyani, 2021). These stages are interrelated and recursive; they can occur simultaneously in a single event. In the perception stage, the learner focuses on the spoken word (input), distinguishing words from sounds. The parsing stage involves converting this input into a meaningful representation in short-term memory, which relates to syntax and semantics. The final phase, utilisation, involves evaluating learners' ability to apply the absorbed input during Listening Comprehension (Jyoti, 2020; Vahdat, Shooshtari & Saba, 2020; Rukthong, 2021; Tosun, 2021).

Umarova (2021) argues that English language comprehension is closely linked to listening abilities, emphasising that listening plays a fundamental role in second language acquisition. He suggests that the success of language learners is related to their listening skills. However, despite its importance, many learners find listening challenging during second language acquisition due to both internal and external factors that inhibit the development of this skill (Ali, 2020; Goh & Vandergrift, 2021).

Tran and Duong (2020) counter Umarova (2021), noting that listening difficulties arise from both internal and external factors that impede text understanding. Internal challenges include lack of motivation, high anxiety, limited topic knowledge, and unfamiliar vocabulary. External factors include distractions such as background noise, which can affect learners' ability to effectively process information. Ozcelik, Van den Branden, and Van Steendam (2023) identify additional difficulties in Listening Comprehension, highlighting several obstacles: (1) listeners cannot regulate the speed of spoken information, which may be too fast for them to follow, requiring teachers to adjust their pace and repeat information as needed; (2) listeners cannot always have words restated during listening tasks; (3) listeners often have a limited vocabulary;

(4) listeners may struggle to identify transitions between ideas; and (5) listeners might have poor contextualisation skills.

Utilisation is a crucial stage in the cognitive processing of EFAL Listening Comprehension skills (Chiles, 2023). During this phase, EFAL teachers might address discourse-related issues, such as learners' difficulties in recognising the overall structure of sentiments in a text. Unfamiliar listening topics can also impede learners' comprehension (Khamsuk & Whanchit, 2021; Carrim & Nkomo, 2023).

In their research on EFAL teachers in South African townships, Bheki and Mthembu (2022) argue that learners understand the importance of learning Listening Comprehension skills to engage effectively in lessons. However, learners may sometimes find the lessons uninteresting due to their limited proficiency in English.

2.4 Teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension Globally

Farrell and Jacobs (2020) found that English has emerged as a fundamental language for learning and teaching across various subjects, especially in countries where English is not the native language. However, some nations choose to instruct in their home languages (Poudel & Choi, 2022; Schurz, Coumel & Hüttner, 2022; Widiawati & Savski, 2023). In these cases, English is often adopted as a Second Language (ESL) or referred to as English First Additional Language (EFAL). This linguistic duality reflects a widespread educational phenomenon, highlighting the crucial role of English as a medium of instruction in diverse academic settings worldwide (Hopkyns, 2020; Papi & Hiver, 2020; van den Hoven & Carroll, 2021; Das, 2023).

Farrell and Jacobs (2020) emphasise the importance of mastering four primary language skills—listening, speaking, writing, and reading—in EFAL teaching and learning. Among these skills, Listening Comprehension is often considered the most challenging (Zhang, 2022; Ozcelik et al., 2023). Numerous impediments pose challenges to EFAL learners in mastering Listening Comprehension, making it a crucial area of exploration. Despite its importance in language development, teaching Listening Comprehension skills is observed to be particularly challenging (Darti & Asmawati, 2017; Nushi & Orouji, 2020; Ozcelik et al., 2023). Mastery of Listening Comprehension skills is pivotal for effective verbal communication, making it essential to learn early in the educational journey.

Zano (2020) introduces three perspectives on teaching Listening Comprehension skills, emphasising the effectiveness of cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and socio-affective strategies for EFAL Grade 4 learners (Li, Koh, Geva, Joshi & Chen, 2020). The subsequent discussion delves into these strategies, shedding light on their potential to enhance Listening Comprehension in EFAL teaching.

2.4.1 Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies are learning techniques that help learners acquire knowledge more effectively. These strategies include organising new vocabulary, inferring meaning from context, repetition, memorising with imagery, and summarising meaning (Sharma, 2013; McDermott & Naaz, 2014; Sankalaite et al., 2023; Wenas, Liando & Rorimpandey, 2023). Azmi et al (2014) and Wenas et al. (2023) highlight that cognitive strategies can assist Grade 4 learners in processing, retaining, and creating new knowledge. This enables learners to solve problems independently when needed.

Zano (2020) and Sankalaite et al. (2023) suggest that translating word by word can help EFAL Grade 4 learners understand what they are hearing within context. Although word-for-word translation is not necessary for Listening Comprehension, understanding vocabulary can improve overall language skills. Words learned through Listening Comprehension can be useful in other language skills or activities (Barjesteh & Ghaseminia, 2023). Furuya (2021) and Xu and Qiu (2023) mention that advanced learners can use top-down strategies when applying cognitive strategies. Sa'diyah (2016) and Wenas et al. (2023) assert that cognitive strategies enable learners to comprehend what they are listening to, allowing them to summarise using their own words, provide a new title, and draw conclusions from the Listening Comprehension lesson.

2.4.2 Metacognitive Strategies

Hao and Lin (2020) define metacognitive as the process of thinking about one's thoughts. Azmi et al. (2014) and Padmanabha (2020) state that metacognitive strategies help learners develop Listening Comprehension skills by assessing, checking, and challenging their understanding. When EFAL teachers are teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners, they often read the text or play audio three times. Subsequently, the teacher asks questions to determine whether the learners understand the material. Using metacognitive methods to teach learners can enhance their self-esteem as listeners because they gain a clearer understanding of

what they are hearing (Al-Alwan, Asassfeh, & Al-Shboul, 2013; Cao & Lin, 2020; Limpkin, 2020).

Most Grade 4 learners are between nine and ten years old. Arsyad and Villia (2022) emphasise that improving the metacognitive abilities of learners at this age is crucial for their Listening Comprehension skills. Bouknify (2023) explains that metacognitive strategies include components such as monitoring, controlling, and self-regulating to guide learners in developing these skills.

Robson (2016); Cao and Lin (2020) explain that monitoring helps learners experience knowledge, set goals, and take action to achieve them. Therefore, teachers should practice monitoring in the classroom whenever learners are undertaking tasks, as it is a tool for achieving goals. Metacognitive knowledge involves understanding mental processes, tasks, and strategies. Whitehead (2020) asserts that metacognitive strategies assist learners in problem-solving. Learners who demonstrate higher metacognitive skills also tend to have better Listening Comprehension skills. Liu (2020) discusses how knowledge of cognition enables EFAL teachers to detect and select appropriate cognitive strategies for teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Kumar, Singh, and Chandra (2022) explain that metacognitive strategies allow EFAL learners to manage their thinking processes, such as organising, preparing, and assessing their learning progression.

2.4.3 Socio-effective Strategies

Azim et al. (2014) and Karina (2021) found that socio-effective activities are mental and physical actions that language learners consciously choose to regulate their behaviour, emotions, and interactions with others while learning a language. Socio-effective strategies involve collaborating with other learners, which fosters independence in developing Listening Comprehension skills. This approach reduces anxiety and enables learners to engage with various listening materials independently. Karina (2021) asserts that socio-effective strategies can enhance the Listening Comprehension capabilities of EFAL Grade 4 learners. Mastery of Listening Comprehension allows learners to communicate effectively in English within a society where their home language is English, making it a crucial component of daily communication.

According to Nguyen and Tran (2015), when socio-effective strategies are employed in Listening Comprehension, learners can develop an interest in listening for both enjoyment and

social purposes. Learners with strong Listening Comprehension skills are better able to transfer information in oral communication. Collaborative activities such as debates, and spelling BEEs help learners engage without fear. Sa'diyah (2016) adds that social strategies facilitate learning through interaction with others in their environment, including native English speakers.

Poor listening skills negatively impact learners' communicative abilities (Nguyen & Tran, 2015), highlighting the importance of Listening Comprehension skills for EFAL learners as they develop other language skills. However, Duong (2014) and Nguyen and Thai (2018) found that learners are generally better prepared for exams that assess reading, grammar, and vocabulary than for evaluations of oral communication skills. Duong and Chau (2019) agree, noting that Listening Comprehension skills are often undervalued in English language education. They add that many educational curricula for English language teaching and learning focus on exam-driven education, sidelining Listening Comprehension skills (Duong & Chau, 2019).

EFAL teachers have limited opportunities to teach Listening Comprehension skills due to the emphasis on grammar, reading, and writing skills. This over-reliance on these three skills, excluding listening, results from challenges teachers face when teaching Listening Comprehension. This imbalance has a detrimental effect because Listening Comprehension is a fundamental skill that underpins language acquisition. It is crucial for effective learning and teaching (Alrawashdeh, 2016; Nguyen & Thai, 2018; Duong & Chau, 2019). Effective education relies on a learner's ability to listen to the teacher and apply acquired skills. Success is achieved when listening, reading, and writing skills are seamlessly integrated. Struggles with Listening Comprehension can lead to long-term disadvantages, including ineffective discussions in English and potential negative impacts on academic performance, underscoring the vital role of Listening Comprehension in the teaching and learning process.

2.5 English in South Africa

The Department of Basic Education (2011) affirms that language is a tool for contemplation and the exchange of ideas. It makes learning productive and enables learners to acquire knowledge, collaborate with others, and convey feelings and ideas. South Africa has eleven official languages (Richards, 2022): Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, and Zulu (SASA, 1996). These languages are taught at different levels in schools, including Home Language (HL) and First Additional Language (FAL) (DBE, 2011).

In South African education, Home Language and English as a First Additional Language aim to develop four skills: listening and speaking (1); reading and viewing (2); writing and presenting (3); and language structure and conventions (4) (DBE, 2011). English is used as the Language of Learning and Teaching for all subjects, and all teaching and learning involve Listening Comprehension skills. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document begins with listening, emphasising its foundational role in learning all other language skills. This underscores the primary importance of Listening Comprehension in teaching.

In 2009, the Department of Education reviewed the implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades 4 to 9 (DBE, 2011). Following the review, the Department established guidelines that included “regular external systematic assessments of Mathematics, Home Language, and English First Additional Language” (p. 4). The Department then administered the Annual National Assessment (ANA) in language and Mathematics. The qualitative analysis revealed that learners' overall achievement was low, with average scores of 30% in languages and mathematics. The Department of Education (2012) noted that some learners struggled to answer questions in certain tests. Poor performance in English diminished the overall quality of education, as English is the LoLT for all subjects (Spaull, 2015; Ngidi, 2016). Despite the implementation of numerous education policies post-apartheid, primary school learners' academic performance remains subpar (Chisolm, 2022).

2.5.1 English in the Intermediate Phase

The Intermediate Phase refers to the second phase of the General Education and Training (GET) band. It includes Grades 4, 5, and 6, covering learners aged nine to eleven years. This three-year phase requires learners to study all subjects in English, except their home language (Zikalala, 2014).

According to the CAPS document, the First Additional Language level assumes that learners arrive at school with no prior exposure to the language (DBE, 2011). Consequently, the Foundation Phase focuses on developing learners' ability to understand the language through phonics and oral activities such as poems and rhymes.

In South African education, the EFAL curriculum, as outlined in CAPS, is divided into four language skills: Listening and Speaking, Reading and Viewing, Writing and Presenting, and Language Structure and Conventions. These skills play a crucial role in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners (DBE, 2011). Within the domain of Listening and

Speaking, the CAPS emphasis on these skills as central to learning in all subjects aligns with the experiences of EFAL teachers.

EFAL teachers consider Reading and Viewing skills important, particularly when using stories as a method for teaching Listening Comprehension. This approach not only improves comprehension but also aids in vocabulary and grammar development. Jakob (2018) supports this view, noting that storytelling enhances learners' Listening Comprehension and stimulates their interest in learning. Thus, integrating Reading and Viewing skills proves to be a valuable strategy for EFAL teachers, demonstrating the interconnected nature of language skills in fostering effective Listening Comprehension.

In the context of Listening Comprehension, Writing and Presenting skills, which emphasise the coherent expression of thoughts and ideas, are closely linked to EFAL teachers' focus on using stories as a communication tool. Kletzien and Dreher (2014) discuss the use of storytelling strategies in listening, revealing its potential to engage learners and improve comprehension. This aligns with EFAL teachers' efforts to use storytelling for effective Listening Comprehension, highlighting the role of writing and presenting skills in promoting understanding, critical thinking, and communication through stories. The findings underscore the interconnectedness of language skills in the holistic development of Listening Comprehension abilities.

EFAL teachers' efforts to enhance learners' understanding of language structures by combining Listening Comprehension with real-life examples align with the principles of Language Structure and Conventions (Matiso, 2023). This skill emphasises the importance of critical evaluation using a shared language, complementing the teachers' dedicated work.

Bertram and Kimathi (2020) emphasise the significance of oral language teaching in the EFAL classroom. This focus not only improves Listening Comprehension skills but also enhances vocabulary and grammar. Incorporating Language Structure and Conventions into teaching methods thus serves a dual purpose: enriching language understanding and supporting the main goal of fostering effective Listening Comprehension skills within the EFAL context. The connection between these elements creates a comprehensive framework for language learning and comprehension.

These CAPS language skills are interconnected elements that enrich the teaching and learning of Listening Comprehension in Grade 4 EFAL classrooms. The following diagram illustrates the link between Listening Comprehension and other language skills (Figure 1).

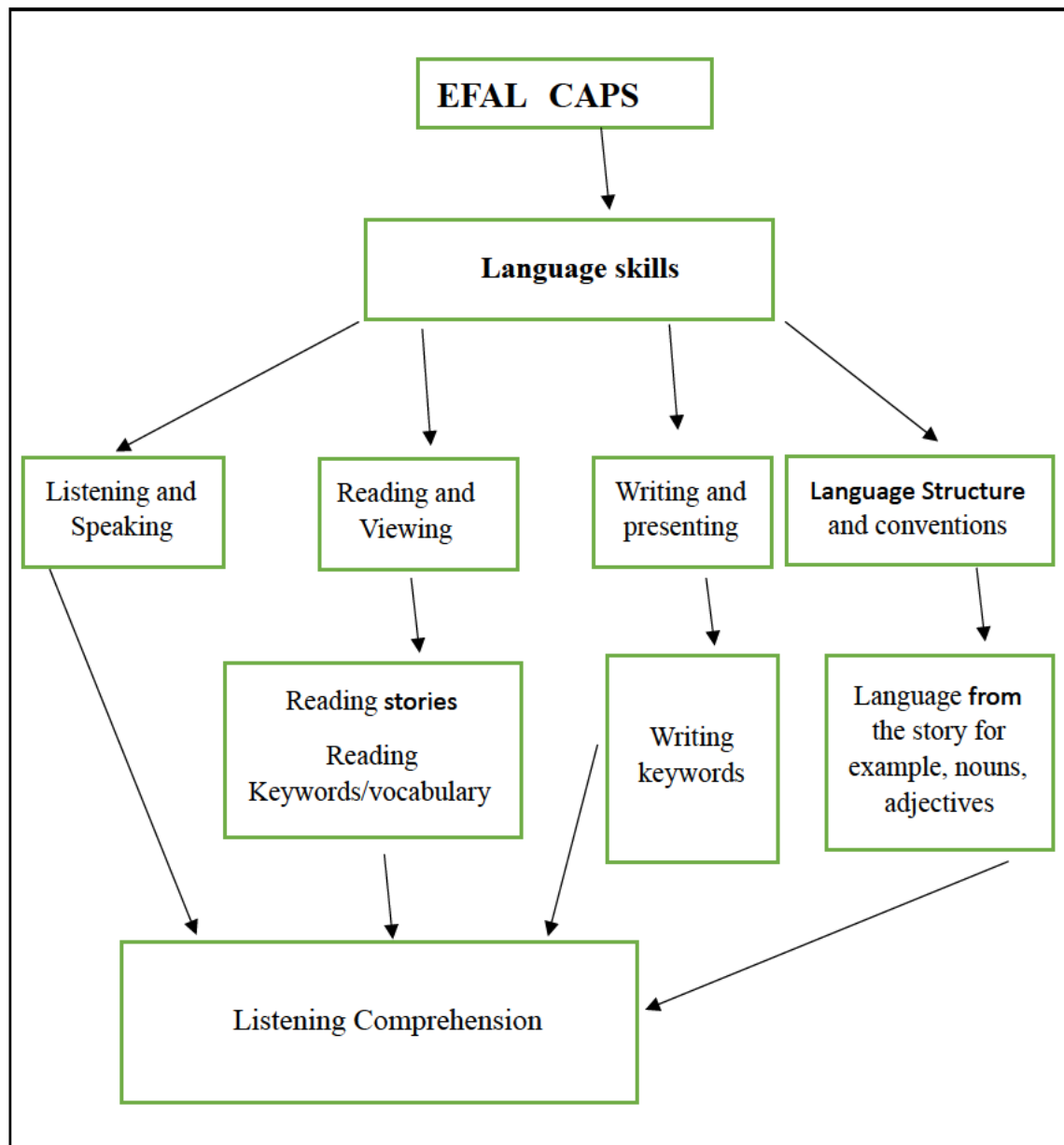


Figure 2.1: Alignment of Listening Comprehension with other language skills (DBE, 2011).

2.6 EFAL Primary Teachers in South Africa

This section focuses on English First Additional Language teachers in South African primary schools, specifically addressing how these schools allocate teachers to teach learners. The

discussion delves into the challenges faced by EFAL teachers, particularly in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. By examining the allocation of teachers and the specific hurdles encountered in delivering these skills, the literature gives insight into the complexities faced by teachers in the South African primary education system.

According to Onwu and Sehoole (2015), primary school teachers in South Africa are not hired based on their subject specialisations. At university intermediate phase teachers (grades 4-6) must select major subjects during their training, but when they start teaching, they get allocated to teach any subjects without considering their specialised subjects (Mzobe, 2015). This presents a significant issue for primary education (Onwu & Sehoole, 2015). This is due to the educational requirements set for teachers, which may not necessarily align with the subjects they are eventually tasked to teach. This mismatch between their qualifications and teaching responsibilities can lead to problems in delivering effective education. This practice can lead to a lack of subject expertise among teachers and may affect the quality of education provided to learners.

In a study conducted by Spaul (2015), it was discovered that EFAL teachers have limited basic knowledge. This problem became evident in the results of the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) test, taken by English Grade 6 teachers. Surprisingly, their scores were on par with those of their learners (Taylor & Spaul, 2013). South African schools fared poorly in SACMEQ and other global assessments (Spaul, 2013; Spaul, 2015; Zakharov, Tsheko, & Carnoy, 2016; van der Berg & Gustafsson, 2019). These findings highlight that the lack of knowledge becomes apparent when these teachers are required to teach subjects, they are not well-versed in, ultimately affecting the academic performance of the learners.

Taylor (2019) further resonates that most primary teachers in South Africa are teaching without having content knowledge of the subject. For teachers to teach EFAL Listening Comprehension skills effectively, they need to be qualified, major in English, and fully understand the content of the subjects they are teaching. De Klerk, Palmer and Papashane (2021) find that learners benefit from having teachers with EFAL-specific qualifications and eloquence in the learners' native language. It is important to value and affirm the diverse cultures and backgrounds of learners (Mensah, 2021). Teachers with diverse cultural capabilities can identify and appreciate differences and can create conducive environments that foster critical thinking, dialogue, and understanding of cultural differences in their learners

(Afzal, Kamran, & Naseem, 2023; Wenas, Liando, & Rorimpandey, 2023;). Teachers are also able to incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into their curriculum (Mensah, 2021; Afzal et al., 2023).

Lee (2019) highlights that teachers need to comprehend their subjects thoroughly to provide quality education. This understanding is crucial, especially when teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners who are in a critical stage of mastering the basics. If these learners do not get a strong foundation from the start, it is challenging to fix later. Teachers cannot effectively teach what they do not understand themselves, emphasising the importance of a solid grasp of subject content for quality education.

2.7 Transition from Foundation to Intermediate Phase

The transition from Grade 3 to 4 is challenging when learners have listening difficulties, are in under-resourced schools, and come from low socioeconomic communities (Pretorius, 2014). Some learners are hardly ever exposed to Listening Comprehension materials due to the school or community they are coming from being disadvantaged. Their verbal proficiency is inadequate, as they do not understand what they are listening to (Pretorius 2014).

To teach Listening Comprehension effectively, teachers need to understand the challenges faced by learners during the transition from Foundation to Intermediate Phase to teach Listening Comprehension efficiently. The Foundation Phase uses indigenous languages as a LoLT (SASA, 1996; DBE, 2011). Santrock (2017) found that EFAL learners view Grade 4 as a scary and tough class due to the increase in workload. Learners carry more books than in the Foundation Phase which means more work. The transition from the foundation phase (Grade 3) to the intermediate phase (Grade 4) brings challenges that lead the learners to inadvertently fail to cope academically.

In the Foundation Phase, Grade 4 learners, who were once the eldest and held the most influence, now find themselves in a new dynamic in the Intermediate Phase. They transition from being the most powerful to becoming the youngest and least powerful. This shift from where the learners were excelling to now falling to a lower level academically contributed to the failure of the Grade 4s (Santrock 2017).

Steyn (2018) states that during the first three years of formal schooling (Grade 1 to 3) teachers should emphasise the teaching of sound-letter relationships and improve translation skills. Evans and Nthulana (2018) add that Grade 4 learners move into the Intermediate Phase with

low levels of English proficiency and the gap persists if it is not monitored when they begin in the Intermediate Phase. Therefore, EFAL teachers should expect that learners will struggle since English is as new to them as the LoLT (Maodi, 2018).

The Grade 3 to 4 transition entails a demanding change in listening for EFAL learners. The study conducted by Pretorius and Stoffelsma (2017) found that English HL learners in Western Cape township schools had only 61% receptive language knowledge of the most regular words by the end of Grade 3, while the EFAL learners only knew 27% of these words in the same province. This not only demonstrates that there is a huge disparity in English between HL and FAL learners, but it also illustrates that there is a shortage of resources which makes it a challenge for the EFAL learners to produce the maximum effort they can in listening comprehension.

2.8 Teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension Skills in South Africa

This section delves into the intricacies of teaching Listening Comprehension skills within the South African educational landscape. The Department of Basic Education in South Africa has played a pivotal role in shaping this educational process by furnishing teachers with comprehensive guidelines encapsulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (DBE, 2011). Serving as a foundational resource, these guidelines provide teachers with a clear and structured framework to navigate when imparting the essential skills of Listening Comprehension skills to their learners. This discussion will further explore the nuances of how these guidelines influence the teaching practices and strategies employed in South Africa to foster effective Listening Comprehension skills among learners.

2.8.1 Teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners.

Listening comprehension activities provide a valuable opportunity for learners to develop essential listening skills. Many teachers opt to use stories as a means to teach Listening Comprehension, either by reading them aloud or playing audio recordings (Khamsuk & Whanchit, 2021). However, when teaching these skills to Grade 4 learners, the challenge arises in transitioning them from their native language to English as a First Additional Language. To tackle this instructional hurdle, the researcher in this study has developed a cycle model named APSERA/APSELA. This model is crafted by incorporating insights from literature while ensuring alignment with the Curriculum and Policy Statement.

APSERA/APSELA is an acronym for Ask, Predict, Summarise, Explain, Read/listen, and Assess. This model is strategically integrated into the three essential phases of teaching Listening Comprehension skills: pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening, as endorsed in CAPS (DBE, 2011; Madani & Kheirzadeh, 2022). The first four steps of the cycle model [Ask, Predict, Summarise, and Explain] fall under the pre-listening phase, 'Read/Listen' is situated within the during-listening comprehension phase, and 'Assess' concludes the post-listening comprehension phase.

By adhering to the APSERA/APSELA cycle model, teachers can gain the capacity to deliver Listening Comprehension skills systematically and comprehensively. This approach not only introduces coherence into the teaching process but also significantly enhances the overall learning experience for learners by incorporating a strategic and systematic methodology.

Figure 2 is an illustration of the APSERA/APSELA cycle model.

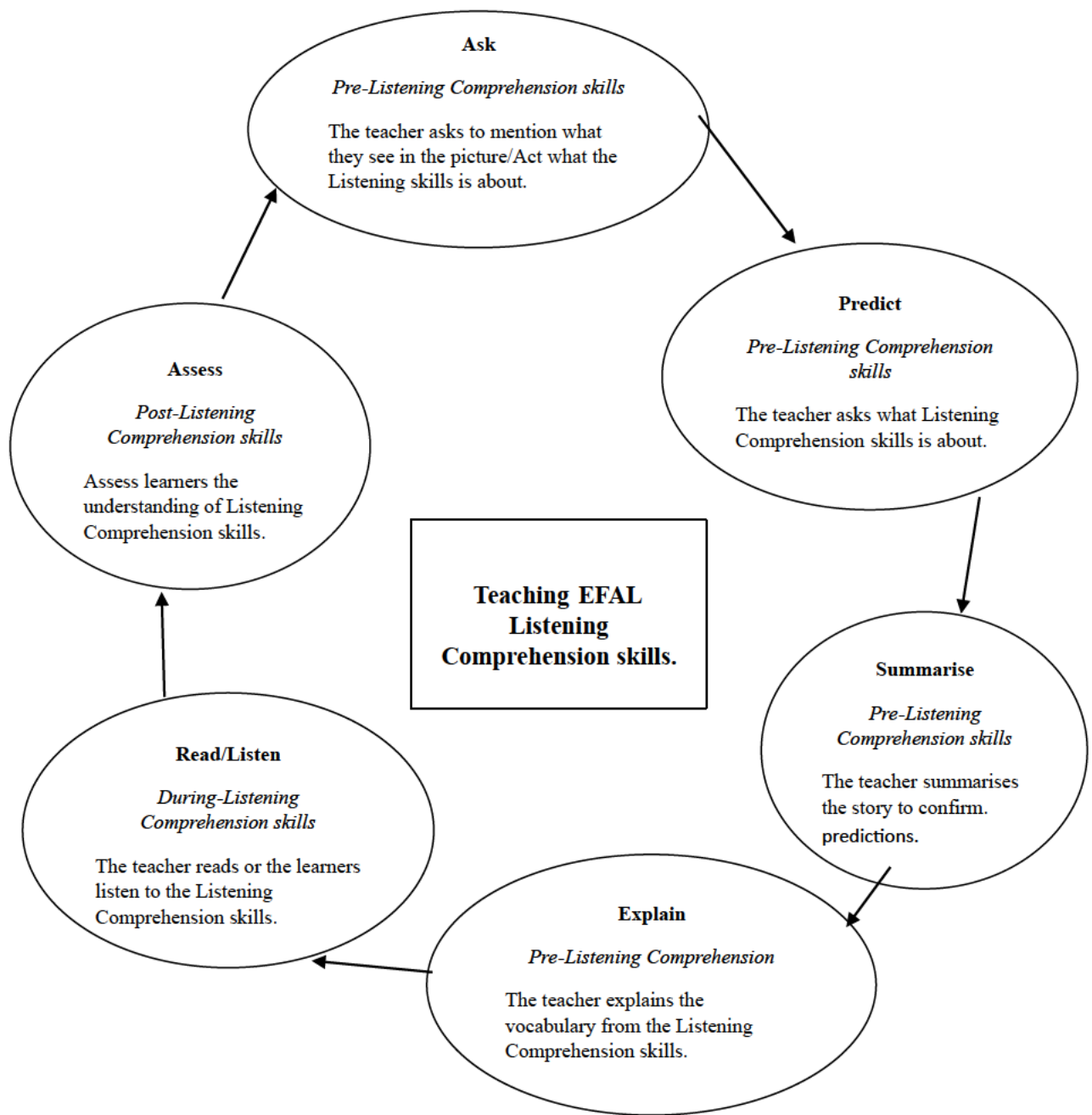


Figure 2.2: APSELA/APSELA cycle model (Researcher's illustration)

2.8.1.1 Pre-Listening Comprehension Skills

Pre-listening comprehension skills are activities designed to prepare learners for listening lessons (Setyarini et al., 2018; Madani & Kheirzadeh, 2022; Barjesteh & Ghaseminia, 2023). These activities, often serving as icebreakers, play a dual role in initiating a lesson and assessing learners' familiarity with the upcoming content. Barjesteh and Ghaseminia (2023) emphasise that the primary objective of these activities is to reinforce information, activate learners' prior

knowledge, set the stage for the lesson, stimulate curiosity, and enhance contextual understanding. These activities include reciting, rhyming, and singing songs (Duong & Chau, 2019; Eghbaria-Ghanamah, Ghanamah, Shalhoub-Awwad, Adi-Japha & Karni, 2020). Bear (2022) further proposes that effective pre-listening comprehension skills involve exposing learners to new vocabulary and structures while activating their existing knowledge.

Teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills corroborate the cognitive benefits of recitation as a mnemonic device (Muhibbuddin, Rahmi & Safrida, 2021). As teachers incorporate recitation into their instructional methodologies, they witness firsthand the impact of this mnemonic strategy on learners' retention and understanding. In the classroom, teachers observe that when learners engage in recitation, they actively participate in the learning process. Teachers often note the enhanced cognitive connections established by learners as they rhythmically repeat words and phrases during recitation. Furthermore, teachers recognise the role of sensory modalities in the recitation process. Learners actively involve auditory, verbal, and sometimes kinesthetic senses during recitation, creating a multisensory learning experience (Namin, Ketron, Kaltcheva & Winsor, 2021; Holmes, Moore & Holmes, 2023).

Teachers often emphasise the interconnected nature of these sensory modalities, acknowledging that the rhythmic repetition of words and phrases enhances learners' ability to retrieve information later. Lubis (2020) and Meimei and Jiaqi (2023) highlight that recitation allows learners to actively participate in the lesson, helping them overcome difficulties in learning. This approach enables teachers to effectively engage learners with diverse abilities in the learning process. Research by Gunbas and Guzikucuk (2020) on Turkish Grade 4 learners found that incorporating technological tools can facilitate learners' Listening Comprehension skills when their prior knowledge is taken into consideration. The scholars add that instructional multimedia materials can enhance the learning of Listening Comprehension more effectively than audio materials alone.

This suggests that including visuals, graphics, text, and interactive audio materials in teaching could significantly improve learners' Listening Comprehension skills. Furthermore, digital stories that incorporate multimedia features, such as animated objects, music, or sounds, positively and significantly enhance the listening comprehension process (Tackas, Swart & Bart, 2015; Gunbas & Guzikucuk, 2020). The two scholars argue that when instructional methods are delivered using multimedia theory, with simultaneously presented words and

visuals, learners' auditory, verbal, visual, and pictorial learning channels are activated, resulting in more effective learning.

As the teacher begins the lesson, the pre-listening comprehension skills phase becomes pivotal, requiring strategic steps for active learner engagement. Drawing insights from Choi and Kim (2015), this phase involves the implementation of various pedagogical methods such as question-and-answer sessions, discussions, and demonstrations in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. Notably, these methods align with Piaget's philosophy, which posits that children are born with inherent knowledge rather than being blank slates (Piaget, 2013; Locke, 2014; Schnegg, 2014; Lensing, Schwuchow, Oehlandt, & Haertel, 2018; Doğanay, 2020). This connection between instructional approaches and foundational theories enhances the effectiveness of the teaching process. In the pre-listening comprehension phase, discussion and question-and-answer activities allow learners to demonstrate their existing understanding before the formal lesson begins. This approach resonates with Piaget's notion that learners actively construct knowledge based on their prior experiences and cognitive structures (Piaget, 2013; Doğanay, 2020). By encouraging learners to share what they know, teachers tap into their pre-existing knowledge, creating a foundation for the upcoming lesson and fostering an interactive learning environment that aligns with Piaget's constructivist principles. The textbooks used are CAPS-approved and align with all language skills, including Listening Comprehension (Ramatlapanana & Makonye, 2012; Chirwa & Naidoo, 2014). Specifically designed for Listening Comprehension, these textbooks feature keywords, pictures, and pre-listening questions that learners review before listening to the teacher.

Building on the engagement strategies mentioned earlier, teachers further utilise visuals from approved textbooks, posing questions to learners that prompt observations and provide a preview of the upcoming comprehension lesson (Rajaei, 2015; Lensing et al., 2018). In tandem with this, teachers employ a variety of resources, including pictures, flashcards, and related objects, to enhance the effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

Through the strategic use of these resources, teachers initiate questions that not only activate learners' background knowledge but also offer a glimpse into the forthcoming lesson. This dynamic approach not only engages learners but also serves as a tool for assessing their understanding, fostering critical thinking, and cultivating a positive learning environment (Karimi, Chalak & Biria, 2019; Karimi & Chalak, 2021).

Moving forward in the lesson, after asking questions, learners are prompted to guess what the Listening Comprehension lesson will be about. This approach, influenced by Diana, Ambarwati, and Utami (2022), and Madani and Kheirzadeh (2022), is designed to attract learners' attention and enhance their focus. Predictions act as a sneak peek, motivating learners to connect their expectations with the upcoming content, making their listening experience more focused and engaging.

Building on the anticipation cultivated through predictions, teachers sustain learners' curiosity and attention by summarising the story. This crucial step, supported by McLean Davies and Buzacott (2022) as well as Ali Mansoor, Mohammed, Ahmed, Munasser Awadh, Abdulfatah & Sheikh (2023), serves to validate the predictions made earlier. The summary provides a focused overview of the upcoming Listening Comprehension lesson, guiding learners' understanding and preparing them for active engagement in the subsequent listening exercise.

In the final stage of the pre-listening comprehension phase, teachers address potential vocabulary challenges by providing explanations (Linh, 2021; Barjesteh & Ghaseminia, 2023). This step ensures that learners can effectively understand the material and fosters an enhanced vocabulary for EFAL learners. This meticulous orchestration of steps during the pre-listening phase effectively lays the groundwork for comprehensive Listening Comprehension skills. It not only provides learners with a broader perspective on the upcoming lesson but also facilitates a smoother teaching process. By addressing the core elements of the Listening Comprehension skills lesson during this phase, both learners and teachers are better prepared for subsequent stages.

2.8.1.2 During Listening Comprehension Skills

The key phase known as during-listening comprehension occurs in the middle of a listening lesson. This stage, emphasised by Ito (2019) and Syakur (2020), plays a vital role in language instruction. It is essential for improving listening skills, employing comprehension strategies, and creating a well-rounded language learning experience (Brothers, Dave, Hoversten, Traxler, & Swaab, 2019; Hardiyanto, Tanjung & Suharjono, 2021). According to various scholars, its goal is to boost Listening Comprehension skills and act as a bridge between the preparatory pre-listening activities and the reflective post-listening stage.

During the delivery of this phase, teachers use various resources such as audio, audio-visuals, storytelling, and human resources, tailored to the specific Listening Comprehension skills being

targeted (Obasi & Anyachebelu, 2020; Sawadogo, Kambou & Malgoubri, 2020; Dewi, Hartiwi, Yani & Sutiwi, 2023). In under-resourced schools, storytelling is commonly used to teach Listening Comprehension skills (Mojapelo, 2020; Nemadziva, Sexton & Cole, 2023).

The application of the Read/Listen process within the APSERA/APSELA cycle model is a key feature of this phase. Teachers read or play the audio three times, aligning with the recommendations in CAPS (DBE, 2011). This repetitive approach, advocated by Smelter and Calvillo (2020), is effective in enhancing understanding, allowing learners to grasp nuances and details that may have been missed in pre-listening comprehension activities.

Beyond memory enhancement, repetition offers benefits by increasing familiarity and helping learners navigate challenging language elements (Smelter & Calvillo, 2020). The iterative process also allows learners to refine comprehension strategies, build confidence, and actively participate through notetaking or discussions (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Sua, 2021; Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023). Active engagement, as noted by Özçakmak (2019) and Al-Ghazo (2023), fosters an interactive learning experience.

Moreover, repetition facilitates the integration of various language skills, providing a holistic language learning approach (Tsuboi, Francis & Jameson, 2021; Amin, 2022). This inclusive approach, accommodating different learning paces, ensures that playing or reading materials three times caters to individual needs, contributing to a more effective and inclusive language learning process.

The Listening Comprehension phase occupies a central position in language teaching, serving as the connection between preparatory activities and reflective stages. As emphasised by scholars like Ito (2019), Syakur (2020), Brothers et al. (2019), and Hardiyanto et al. (2021), this phase is pivotal in enhancing listening proficiency, applying comprehension strategies, and cultivating a comprehensive language learning experience. Teachers leverage a variety of resources, adapting to specific skills, with storytelling proving especially accessible in under-resourced schools. The Read/Listen process within the APSERA/APSELA cycle model, involving three repetitions, emerges as an effective strategy recommended by CAPS (DBE, 2011) and supported by scholars like Smelter and Calvillo (2020). This iterative approach not only enhances understanding but also contributes to memory retention, increased familiarity, and active learner engagement, fostering a holistic language learning experience. Ultimately, the during-listening comprehension phase stands as a dynamic and integral part of language

instruction, equipping learners with the skills necessary for effective communication in real-world contexts.

2.8.1.3 Post-Listening Comprehension Skills

The post-listening comprehension phase represents the conclusive segment in the comprehensive process of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. As the final key in this instructional sequence, its significance lies in providing learners with an opportunity for reflection, consolidation, and evaluation after engaging with the auditory material (Movva, Alapati, Veliventi & Maithreyi, 2022). In this phase, the aim is to assess the effectiveness of the teaching process and gauge the extent to which learners have grasped the content. Drawing from the APSERA/APSELA cycle model, this phase involves the Assess step, where teachers evaluate learners' comprehension skills and overall understanding of the material. Post-listening activities may include discussions, quizzes, or written reflections, enabling learners to express their insights and reinforcing the acquired knowledge (Chang & Ding, 2021; Kumar, 2021; Madani & Kheirzadeh, 2022). By emphasising this reflective component, the post-listening comprehension phase ensures a holistic approach to language learning, promoting a deeper understanding of the content and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Listening Comprehension instructional framework.

Incorporating pre-listening comprehension skills not only initiates the learning process but also serves as a powerful motivator for learners to actively participate in the upcoming lesson. As emphasised by Kumar (2021) and Movva et al. (2022), effective teaching is inherently linked to learner engagement, and the pre-listening phase becomes a catalyst for this engagement. By encouraging learners to be active participants in the lesson, the teaching process becomes a dynamic exchange, allowing them to build upon their existing knowledge and experiences. This proactive involvement sets the stage for the acquisition of new knowledge during the Listening Comprehension skills session, creating a seamless transition from prior learning to the exploration of new concepts and linguistic elements. Thus, the incorporation of pre-listening comprehension skills not only primes learners for the upcoming lesson but also establishes a foundation for effective and interactive teaching.

The exploration of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to English First Additional Language Grade 4 learners unveils a well-structured and dynamic instructional framework. The pre-listening phase establishes a connection between prior knowledge and new concepts, preparing learners for the lesson. The during-listening phase hones listening proficiency,

fosters engagement, and accommodates repetition for deeper understanding. The post listening phase allows for reflection, assessment, and consolidation, ensuring a comprehensive learning journey. Guided by the APSERA/APSELA cycle model, this approach not only equips learners with language skills but also cultivates a holistic understanding and appreciation for English as an additional language, underlining the importance of revisiting lessons until objectives are met.

2.9 The Application of Various Instructional Techniques

The inclusion of instructional techniques and styles refers to approaches that can be utilised by teachers across a range of subjects when teaching Listening Comprehension skills (Prasetyo, Rachmadtullah, Samsudin, & Aliyyah, 2021). This study aims to investigate teachers' experiences, both positive and negative, and to explore how they navigate the teaching of comprehension, including the reasons behind their chosen strategies. Numerous scholars have highlighted that the teaching techniques used by teachers significantly impact learners' academic performance (Dean & Hubbell, 2012; Meddings & Thornbury, 2017; Nyborg, Mjelve, Edwards, & Crozier, 2022). How learners are taught in the classroom directly affects their understanding of the material. These instructional methods involve giving learners appropriate tasks to enhance their language concepts through classroom interaction, creativity, and connections to prior knowledge (Sadik, 2008; Hamad Al-khresheh, 2020; Nyborg, 2022).

The consideration of technology in teaching has been discussed by Gunbas and Guzikucuk (2020) in their study on Turkish Grade 4 learners. They suggest that the inclusion of technological tools can facilitate learners' Listening Comprehension skills, especially when prior knowledge is considered. Additionally, they argue that instructive multimedia materials play a significant role in the learning of Listening Comprehension, offering advantages over audio materials alone. This implies that incorporating visuals, graphics, text, and interactive audio materials can significantly enhance learners' Listening Comprehension skills.

Furthermore, digital stories that include multimedia features such as animated objects, music, or sounds positively and significantly improve the listening comprehension process (Tackas, Swart, & Bart, 2015; Gunbas & Guzikucuk, 2020). These scholars argue that when instructional methods include simultaneously presented words and visuals, learners' auditory verbal/visual/pictorial learning channels are activated, leading to better learning outcomes.

Nushi and Orouji (2020) emphasise the importance of balancing the four skills of learning: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In primary schools, learners should be deeply engaged in a demanding and in-depth curriculum that enables them to explore linguistic competence (Giroux, 2018). Many instructional techniques used to teach Listening Comprehension skills are grounded in Piaget's theory, which posits that learning occurs through the activation of background knowledge (Piaget, 2013). When coordinated instructional techniques are employed, learners' academic performance is likely to improve (Dean & Hubbell, 2012; Tong, Uyen, & Ngan, 2022). Learner-centered instructional techniques are considered more efficient, as they empower and encourage learners to reach their full potential (Muraya & Kimamo, 2011; Tong et al., 2022). These techniques often include discussions that allow learners to interact during the lesson.

2.9.1 Question-and-Answer Technique

The question-and-answer technique, as presented by Damanik and Herman (2021), is a fundamental instructional approach to teaching and learning. This interactive method involves teachers posing questions to learners, fostering engagement, critical thinking, and knowledge recall. Bloom's taxonomy provides a framework for understanding the cognitive levels of these questions, ranging from basic recall to higher-order thinking (Aghaei & Rad, 2018). Bloom's taxonomy, with its six cognitive levels, guides the complexity of questions teachers should pose when teaching Listening Comprehension (Koksal & Ulu, 2018; Gul, Kanwal, & Khan, 2020; Ahmed, Lashari, & Golo, 2023). These levels range from knowledge and comprehension (lower-order thinking) to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (higher-order thinking) (Aghaei & Rad, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2023). Teachers are encouraged to engage learners at each level, inspiring them to draw conclusions, make correlations, and apply what they have learned (Faravani & Taleb, 2020; Navaz, 2021; Arwae & Soontornwipast, 2022; Tadesse, Lehesvuori, Posti-Ahokas, & Moate, 2023; Zeng, 2023).

In the context of Listening Comprehension teaching, this technique plays a pivotal role (Choi & Kim, 2015). Choi and Kim (2015) assert the multifaceted benefits of this approach, highlighting its dual role as an assessment tool and a facilitator of adaptive teaching strategies. Their findings emphasise the nuanced nature of the questioning technique, which goes beyond merely assessing correctness and involves active learner participation in formulating questions and engaging in evaluative processes. These insights underscore the enduring relevance and

effectiveness of the question-and-answer technique in teaching and assessing Listening Comprehension skills. This perspective is further supported by the works of McCoy, Smyth, and Banks (2012); De Jager, Rwodzi, and Mpofu (2020); Ntombela, Ngubane, and Govender (2020), all of whom highlight the prevalence and significance of this technique in classroom lessons.

The dynamic nature of the question-and-answer technique is evident in the reciprocal exchange between teachers and learners (Ndovela, Hlongwane, & Ngwenya, 2023). This interactive dynamic not only fosters engagement but also contributes to the creation of a vibrant learning environment, particularly conducive to effective Listening Comprehension instruction. The technique's nuanced nature, moving beyond a binary assessment of correctness or incorrectness, requires active involvement from learners, compelling them to respond, formulate questions, and engage in evaluative processes.

Collectively, the literature underscores the relevance and effectiveness of the question-and-answer technique in the intricate realm of teaching and assessing Listening Comprehension skills. This approach, guided by Bloom's taxonomy, encapsulates the complexity and versatility of the questions posed by teachers, highlighting its multifaceted benefits in engaging learners, fostering critical thinking, and facilitating effective learning in the context of EFAL (English First Additional Language) Listening Comprehension instruction (Gul et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2023).

2.9.2 Cooperative Technique

Kirbas (2017) defines cooperative learning as an instructional technique in which learners work in small groups under the supervision of a teacher to achieve a common learning objective. Muraya and Kimamo (2011) and Kirbas (2017) note that cooperative learning has a positive background in the shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered didactic paradigm. The use of the cooperative technique is crucial for the successful teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, as it allows learners to share their knowledge. While one learner shares, others exercise their listening skills, and assessment can be done as they provide feedback on what has been said. If learners can accurately relay what has been shared, it indicates that they were actively listening. Though listening is an individual activity, some exercises can be effectively done in groups to achieve objectives in listening comprehension practice.

The cooperative learning technique is a suitable method for teaching EFAL learners across all grades, demonstrating effectiveness not only in English language classes but also in other subjects and among diverse learners. This method was developed to enhance content areas across various subjects. It can be applied in all grades and with different types of learners, including those with learning barriers as well as gifted learners. Cooperative learning is effective across different races, cultures, and geographical settings, whether in urban or rural areas (Muraya & Kimamo, 2011; Zuo, 2011; Kirbas, 2017). Pardede (2020) emphasises that mastering this technique allows learners to share ideas, assist one another, and work collaboratively.

Alrayah (2018) highlights research studies conducted worldwide that demonstrate how cooperative teaching methods improve learners' achievements. This method is characterised by tasks that foster peer collaboration in learning EFAL Listening Comprehension. It helps learners develop language listening and speaking skills, as well as knowledge of ideas and content. Learners can engage in conversations with their peers without fear of not understanding what they hear. According to Vrhovec (2015) and Pardede (2020), Listening Comprehension skills can be significantly improved through the consistent use of cooperative teaching techniques, which often involve socialising activities that give learners opportunities to acquire all language skills.

However, Wangdi (2016) found that teachers face challenges in involving learners in cooperative learning methods during Listening Comprehension classes, as many learners do not understand English well. Rabgay (2018) points out that while the cooperative teaching method is well-known, it is seldom used due to EFAL teachers' lack of skills, and the inadequate training provided to them. Even though cooperative teaching methods are introduced to EFAL teachers during in-service training, they are rarely applied in actual teaching and learning (Alghamdi, 2014; Alghamdy, 2019). Learners, especially those for whom English is the first additional language, struggle to understand words in Listening Comprehension texts. Given their limited vocabulary, it can be difficult for them to effectively participate in cooperative learning under such constraints.

2.10 The Role of EFAL Listening Comprehension in Academic Performance

EFAL Listening Comprehension plays a significant role in learners' academic performance since all teaching and learning is conducted in English from Grade 4 onwards, as English is the

Language of Learning and Teaching (Arslan, 2020). Ujihanti et al. (2019) and Arslan (2020) assert that a lack of English listening skills has impeded EFAL learners across the board because English has become the language of instruction. If learners fail to understand the language, they are likely to struggle in all subjects. This issue extends beyond the classroom, affecting social relations in a multicultural society where effective communication often requires proficiency in English.

Burger (2020) notes that South African academic performance is notably low, especially in comparison to other countries. In South Africa, the Department of Education uses Mathematics and English as benchmarks to measure the quality of education from Grades 1 to 9. The Department of Education employed the Annual National Assessment (ANA) as an external examination (Spaull, 2015). However, Listening Comprehension was excluded from the ANA tasks, which were biased towards learners with strong reading and writing abilities (Bharuthram, 2012; Spaull, 2016). Despite not being directly used for learner progression, the ANA serves as an indicator of a school's educational quality, potentially enhancing or diminishing its reputation based on performance. The skills cultivated through these assessments are interconnected, with listening playing a crucial role due to its foundational importance in the learning process. Effective listening, when practiced through various stages and phases, leads to significant educational outcomes, underscoring its critical role in development.

Following the election of the new government in South Africa in 1994, the democratic government made several changes in education, aiming to equalise the previously advantaged ex-model-C schools and the disadvantaged African black schools during the apartheid era (Badat & Sayed, 2014; Sayed, Motala, Carel, & Ahmed, 2020). However, multi-racial schools that use English as their home language continue to outperform African schools that are taught in EFAL. This disparity indicates that the quality of education, particularly in terms of learner academic performance, has not significantly improved in EFAL schools since the transition to democracy (Spaull, 2012; Murphy, 2014). It also highlights the advantage that learners who speak English as a home language have over those who learn it as an EFAL, given that it is the chosen language of instruction from Grades 4 to 12.

Wildsmith-Cromarty and Balfour (2019) argue that mastering Listening Comprehension skills in Grade 4 could significantly impact South African education, as these skills are integrally linked with other language skills used across subjects. Most teaching is conducted through

spoken English, which learners must understand through listening. Consequently, learning becomes very difficult if Listening Comprehension skills are not mastered. Grade 4 is particularly crucial as it is a foundational grade where learners begin to communicate in a language that is not their home language (Ujihanti et al., 2019). A weak foundation in Listening Comprehension during these formative years can lead to long-term academic challenges.

2.11 The Experiences of EFAL Teachers When Teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

Alrawasdeh and Al-zayed (2016) assert that EFAL primary school teachers encountered different experiences when teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. Some of these teachers' experiences hinder the effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The next section discusses the experiences faced by EFAL teachers when teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

2.11.1 The lack of resources to teach EFAL Listening Comprehension Skills

In the realm of EFAL, the incorporation of visuals plays a pivotal role in enhancing the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. Visual aids, encompassing a spectrum of multimedia elements such as pictures, diagrams, videos, and infographics, serve as powerful tools to activate learners' background knowledge and create a dynamic and engaging learning environment (Bagila, Kok, Zhumabaeva, Suleimenova, Riskulbekova, & Uaidullakzy, 2019; Aziz, 2021; Carambas & Espique, 2023; Sotirov, Petrova & Nikolova-Sotirova, 2023). The importance of utilising visuals in teaching Listening Comprehension skills lies in the ability to stimulate learners' cognitive processes, facilitate a better understanding, and cater to diverse learning styles (Roose, Vantieghem, Vanderlinde & Van Avermaet, 2019; Schoonover, 2021; Silverman, 2022; Tomlinson, 2023). Each learner has a unique way of processing information, and some individuals may prefer visual modes of learning over purely auditory ones. Visual aids accommodate these diverse preferences, ensuring that learners with varying cognitive strengths and preferences can engage with the material in a way that suits their learning style. This inclusivity enhances the overall effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension skills by addressing the diverse needs of the learners in the classroom.

The research conducted in the United States of America (USA) focusing on newcomers from Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, as explored by Genova and Stewart (2019), provides valuable insights into the impact of teaching resources on Listening Comprehension. The study depicts

a notable difference in the learners' comprehension abilities when teaching using resources, particularly pictures, are incorporated into the instructional approach. According to Genova and Stewart (2019), the findings suggest that teaching Listening Comprehension without adequate resources poses challenges for learners, making it difficult for them to understand the lesson. In contrast, when teachers utilise visual aids such as pictures during instruction, learners demonstrate an improved understanding of the material. This aligns with the broader literature on multimedia learning and the positive influence of visuals on Listening Comprehension skills (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Genova & Stewart, 2019). The study contributes to the understanding that teaching resources, especially visual aids, play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of Listening Comprehension instruction, particularly for learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

In Indonesia, Syakur (2020) conducted a study focused on teaching Listening Comprehension to eighth-grade learners using dictation. During the first cycle, where visual resources were not utilised, showed limited learner engagement. However, in the second cycle, the first meeting saw improvement as teachers incorporated visual aids such as pictures, characters' voices, facial expressions, and gestures. Vijayalakshmi, Patchainayagi, Rajkumar, and Tilahun (2021) mention that teachers' use of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and visual emphasis allows learners to pay attention, fostering the imagination of a real story, and is referred to as interpersonal skill. The second meeting of the second cycle demonstrated even greater effectiveness as the stories became more familiar to learners and were accompanied by visual aids as teaching resources. This highlights the impact of teaching Listening Comprehension without resources, making the lesson challenging for learners. The study suggests that the integration of visual aids plays a pivotal role in enhancing the engagement and comprehension of learners during Listening Comprehension instruction.

The inclusion of visuals in teaching Listening Comprehension skills goes beyond merely attracting learners' attention; it serves as a multifaceted tool that enhances the overall learning experience (Bagila et al., 2019; Pratiwi & Ayu, 2020). Visuals offer contextual cues that act as scaffolding for learners, guiding them in the interpretation and retention of auditory information. When learners can connect what they hear with visual representations, it reinforces their understanding and memory retention. This integration of auditory and visual stimuli creates a more holistic learning environment, catering to diverse learning styles and providing additional layers of comprehension. Research by Pratiwi and Ayu (2020) and Sari and Aminatun (2021) underscores the importance of this symbiotic relationship between

visuals and auditory input, emphasising their collaborative role in the cognitive processes underlying listening comprehension skills development.

When EFAL teachers conduct Listening Comprehension skills lessons without visual aids, the effectiveness of the instruction diminishes. Resources play a crucial role in facilitating optimal teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, a sentiment supported by Maja and Du Plessis (2023), who note that many EFAL schools, particularly those in rural areas or townships, lack the necessary teaching resources. According to research (Bettini, Jones, Brownell, Conroy & Leite, 2018; Shandu-Omukunyi, 2023), the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills becomes challenging in the absence of audio or audio-visual materials. Unfortunately, most EFAL primary schools in rural and township areas lack access to resources such as radio and television, further exacerbating the issue (Maluleke, 2022; Shandu-Omukunyi, 2023). This scarcity extends to deep rural areas, where the absence of magazines and libraries hinders the effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019; Dube, 2020; Maja & Du Plessis, 2023; Zano, 2023).

Some teachers resort to non-verbal communication techniques, such as body language and facial expressions (Mpiti, Makena & Maphla, 2021; Matiso & Makena, 2022; Ramaoka, Mogashoa & Motlhaka, 2022). The purpose of employing these techniques is to teach English without code-switching and to capture learners' attention (Matiso & Makena, 2022). However, the application of these techniques requires careful consideration, as they may lead to misinterpretations by learners if executed haphazardly. The overarching issue of resource scarcity emerges as a significant challenge, profoundly impacting the efficacy of Listening Comprehension instruction in EFAL contexts.

The Department of Basic Education (2014) highlights that only 37% of primary school learners in South Africa have access to a multimedia centre. Spaul (2017) further examines the significant issue of inadequate resources in EFAL schools. Particularly in rural and township schools, there is a notable scarcity of audio listening equipment compared to written text materials. This shortage of resources for Listening Comprehension is most prevalent in historically disadvantaged South African townships and rural areas, stemming from inequalities that persisted from the apartheid era (DBE, 2014; Mojapelo, 2022).

Spaul (2013a) mentions that Quintile 1 to 3 schools have poor levels of teaching and learning resources, as these schools are serving deprived communities. These schools are especially poor in resources for teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. The question is how

EFAL teachers can effectively teach learners Listening Comprehension skills without proper resources. Maulida (2018) expounds that the unavailability of adequate amenities in the school narrows the possibility of achieving the objectives of the lesson. Teachers often resort to using alternative materials that may not be conducive to the lesson objectives. As a result, learners become disengaged and struggle to grasp the information effectively.

2.11.2 Overcrowded Classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms pose a significant challenge to both teaching and learning. A study in Ghana by Osai, Amponsah, Ampadu, and Commey-Mintah (2021) found that teachers experience high levels of stress in such environments. They report facing issues like inadequate space, safety concerns, limited interaction with learners, disruptive behaviour, emotional strain, increased workload, and less time for teaching (Osai et al., 2021). These challenges are exacerbated by a lack of support from administrators, weak policy enforcement, insufficient teacher training, limited professional development, and a shortage of teaching materials.

Marais (2016) notes that in many rural and township schools, learners face a variety of classroom conditions that hinder effective learning, one of which is overcrowded classrooms. Muthusamy (2015), and Küçükler and Kodal (2019) define an overcrowded classroom as one where the number of learners exceeds the limit set by the Department of Education for each teacher. Each country has a different learner-to-teacher ratio. In South Africa, the ratio is 31:1, meaning any class with more than thirty-one learners is considered overcrowded, as documented in the South African School Act of 1996 (SASA, 1996). Küçükler and Kodal (2019) support this by stating that globally, any classroom with more than 35 learners is overcrowded. Maluleke and Cross (2019) add that overcrowding occurs when the number of learners exceeds the available space in the classroom. It is not uncommon today to find classrooms with 40 to 80 learners, which significantly diminishes the quality of education and puts the entire learning process at risk (Mzobe, 2015; Marais, 2016; Matsepe et al., 2019).

Most South African schools in rural and township areas suffer from overcrowded classrooms (Bayat et al., 2014; Khumalo & Mji, 2014). Overcrowded classrooms create chaos, inattentiveness, and disruption of lessons (Osai et al., 2021), leading to teacher frustration as they struggle to teach effectively. Coşkun (2020) identified the environment as a significant barrier to effective listening comprehension, categorising it into social, educational, and technological factors. In the social category, he advises parents to provide suitable listening

environments, such as cinemas, where artistic and literary listening occurs. Although parents are not professional teachers, they are the first educators of every child, making their role in Listening Comprehension relevant. Gunbas and Guzikucuk (2020) emphasise the importance of incorporating technological tools in learning, but caution that parents should monitor the time learners spend on these tools, as excessive internet use can erode patience (Gunbas & Guzikucuk, 2020). The inclusion of multimedia instructional materials is noted as a vital technique that teachers can use in addition to audio materials (Gunbas & Guzikucuk, 2020). Tackas, Swart, and Bart (2015), along with Perez (2022), argue that multimedia theory, when used in instruction with simultaneously presented words and visuals, activates learners' auditory verbal, visual, and pictorial learning channels, enhancing learning outcomes.

However, as previously mentioned, some learners lack access to technological tools, and there is often insufficient space for effective learning in impoverished schools. Govender (2020) explains that many environmental factors impede Listening Comprehension skills, so teachers must be equipped with strategies to manage overcrowded classrooms, particularly in South African schools. Marais (2016) and Govender (2020) therefore recommend that South African teacher training institutions offer adequate programs to prepare student teachers for the challenges of overcrowded classrooms, as the experience can be overwhelming and traumatic (Matshipi et al., 2017). These skills are crucial, as learners can physically withdraw from the learning environment if not properly managed (Meier & West, 2020).

Overcrowded classrooms exacerbate discipline issues, making learners difficult to manage (Marais & Meier, 2010; Muthusamy, 2015; May, 2018; Zenda, 2020). Dedicated teachers try to make the best of the situation, but this often means spending more time settling learners than actually teaching them (Khumalo & Mji, 2014; May, 2018; Meier & West, 2020). Learners in overcrowded classrooms are exposed to arguments, pressure, and behaviours that disrupt the process of learning listening comprehension. They lose focus due to the noise caused by the limited space in the classroom (Du Plessis & Letshwene, 2020).

The teacher's role is to convey information to all learners in the classroom. Richard (2018) argues that each learner's thought process is unique, and when teaching Listening Comprehension skills, learners have their own methods for understanding English as a foreign language. Since Listening Comprehension is taught in a second language, learners must first translate the information into their native language to understand it better before translating it back into the foreign language. Therefore, a learning-friendly environment is crucial (Ntsala,

2021). Govender (2020) states that EFAL teachers are concerned about their performance due to overcrowding. In overcrowded classrooms, learners can easily skip lessons without their absence being noticed. Overcrowding makes it more challenging for teachers to engage all learners, assess their knowledge, and provide feedback during Listening Comprehension lessons.

Crowded classrooms consist of learners with varying abilities. Du Plessis (2020) defines a typical class as having a small number of fast learners, a small number of slow learners, and the majority being average learners. In overcrowded classrooms, however, the number of fast and average learners is small, with most learners being slow, making it difficult for teachers to achieve their lesson goals and teach English effectively (Vandiver, 2011; Mzobe, 2015; Leah, 2018; Du Plessis, 2020; Ntsala et al., 2021). Slow learners struggle more in overcrowded classrooms, leading to even poorer performance.

Putra (2021) notes that slow learners fall further behind in overcrowded classrooms than in normal settings. These classrooms are overcrowded due to a shortage of space, which interferes with the teacher's ability to teach and the learner's ability to learn. Listening Comprehension is particularly difficult to teach in such conditions (Vieira & Pillay, 2020; Mpu & Adu, 2021). Teachers must constantly monitor disruptive learners, which strains their ability to deliver lessons effectively and may result in unmet lesson objectives. Individual attention is nearly impossible due to the large number of learners and limited time (Cappy, 2016; Du Plessis & Letshwene, 2020; Meier & West, 2020; Osai et al., 2021). These learners are not receiving the support they need, and it is difficult for EFAL teachers to learn their names or understand their weaknesses to assist them. Often, the school term ends without some learners having had the opportunity to participate orally in Listening Comprehension lessons (Ntsala, 2021; Mokala, 2021).

The challenges associated with overcrowded classrooms extend their impact on teaching and learning dynamics, notably affecting Listening Comprehension skills among Grade 4 learners and shaping the experiences of EFAL teachers. Engelbrecht et al. (2015) emphasise the importance of effective classroom management, aligning with the concerns of EFAL teachers who struggle to maintain a conducive environment for teaching listening comprehension skills. Marais (2016) highlights the negative consequences of overcrowded classrooms, such as decreased learner interest and increased absenteeism, reflecting EFAL teachers' difficulties in engaging learners in chaotic conditions.

Abrar (2016) and Makielski (2018) discuss the academic repercussions of overcrowded classrooms, particularly for slow learners, echoing the challenges EFAL teachers face in addressing diverse learning needs in such crowded settings. Leah (2018) observes the scarcity of teaching aids in overcrowded classrooms, paralleling the struggles of EFAL teachers who contend with limited resources while aiming to provide effective Listening Comprehension instruction. The disruptive behaviours noted by Leah (2018), where some learners intentionally disrupt the class due to comprehension difficulties, directly relate to the hurdles faced by EFAL teachers in fostering a focused and conducive learning atmosphere for Listening Comprehension among Grade 4 learners. Despite these challenges, EFAL teachers strive to overcome the constraints of overcrowded classrooms and deliver meaningful learning experiences to their learners.

The challenges posed by overcrowded classrooms resonate through the experiences of teachers striving for an optimal learning environment. Despite the pedagogical aspirations for collaborative group work, the row seating arrangements highlighted by Uduku (2015) and Leah (2018) underscore the practical constraints teachers face. Insights from Gunbas and Guzikucuk (2020) shed light on the specific limitations surrounding outdoor activities for listening comprehension, emphasising the discipline-specific obstacles within this academic landscape. Furthermore, Putra's (2021) discussion on the importance of a conducive classroom environment highlights the ongoing struggle against the constraints of overcrowded educational spaces. Thus, the cumulative impact of these challenges on effective teaching and learning within overcrowded classrooms calls for thoughtful interventions and strategic reforms in education.

2.11.3 Time Constraints

The Department of Education instructs teachers to follow the CAPS policy document in teaching and learning (DBE, 2011). Each subject has its own CAPS policy document. The first additional language includes four language skills: listening and speaking; reading and viewing; writing and presenting; and language structures and conventions (DBE, 2011). These language skills have specific time allocations. The first additional language is allocated ten hours in a ten-day cycle.

This study focuses on listening and speaking skills. The time allocated for these skills is two hours in the ten-day cycle, which equates to one hour every five days (DBE, 2011). According

to CAPS, the activities that need to be covered in these skills include prepared or unprepared speech, Listening Comprehension, conversation, presenting, role play, interviews, dialogues, dictation, and spelling (DBE, 2011). These activities are spread throughout the year. However, one hour per week is insufficient to teach Grade 4 listening and speaking skills, especially when trying to help learners master essential Listening Comprehension skills, which require more time to teach effectively.

2.11.4 Pronunciation

Embarking on the exploration of pronunciation challenges in the teaching of Listening Comprehension, Ockey and French (2016) provide a foundational definition, characterising pronunciation as the extent to which speech patterns differ from the local variety and influence listener comprehension. Adding depth to this perspective, Thir (2016) and Gilakjani (2017) advocate for a nuanced understanding achieved through comparative analysis, while Haghighi and Rahimy (2017) and Pennington (2021) highlight the role of accents in defining group-specific verbal communication. According to these scholars, a comprehensive grasp of pronunciation emerges from dissecting diverse speech patterns and recognising the impact of variations on the formation of distinct accents within linguistic groups. This sophisticated comprehension of pronunciation and accents becomes pivotal, serving as the bedrock for unravelling the challenges faced by both learners and teachers in the intricate domain of Listening Comprehension skills. As we delve into this exploration, it becomes evident that the nature of pronunciation and accentuation carries profound implications for successful communication, particularly within the dynamic context of Listening Comprehension.

Bekker and van Rooy (2015) assert that Listening Comprehension skills, especially in English, pose challenges due to inconsistent pronunciation. This challenge is particularly pronounced when learners encounter words with varying pronunciations, making it difficult to grasp the intended meaning during Listening Comprehension activities. The inconsistent pronunciation of words further underscores the need for learners to develop a robust understanding of pronunciation for effective comprehension in listening exercises. Pronunciation is acknowledged as a challenging aspect of language acquisition (Hassan, 2014; Gilakjani, 2017; Haghighi & Rahimy, 2017). It has been marginalised, receiving minimal consideration for its importance (Manditereza, 2014; Farhat and Dzakiria, 2017). This disregard for the critical role of pronunciation has resulted in limited efforts to integrate effective teaching methods, leaving learners with inadequate support in mastering this crucial skill.

Farhat and Dzakiria (2017) emphasise the potential consequences of pronunciation errors, noting that such errors can lead learners to misinterpret words during Listening Comprehension activities. The misinterpretation of words, stemming from pronunciation challenges, highlights the integral connection between accurate pronunciation and effective understanding in listening exercises. The connection between pronunciation and spelling presents a significant challenge in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. A study conducted by Daffern and Mackenzie (2020) in Australia indicates that a substantial number of learners encounter difficulties in spelling, ultimately impacting their academic performance.

The findings from this research shed light on a prevalent issue where teachers face challenges in implementing effective strategies to teach spelling. The intricate relationship between pronunciation and spelling in the realm of Listening Comprehension poses a notable hurdle, demanding further exploration and targeted pedagogical approaches to address these interconnected language skills. Furthermore, Low (2021) highlights the discrepancy between written and spoken words, posing challenges for learners. This discrepancy can create difficulties as learners navigate the nuances of pronunciation and spelling, affecting their ability to accurately reproduce words in written form based on their spoken counterparts. The study by Jahara and Abdelrady (2021) in Saudi Arabia aligns with the broader literature on the impact of mother tongue influence, articulation disorders, and a lack of systematic teaching on learners' pronunciation skills, emphasizing the global concern in language education. Experiences of EFAL teachers teaching Listening Comprehension reflect these challenges, highlighting the need for systematic pronunciation teaching.

The significance of pronunciation in Listening Comprehension skills cannot be overstated, as it plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' capacity to comprehend English (Jyoti, 2020; Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021; Pennington, 2021; Yenkimaleki, van Heuven, & Moradimokhles, 2023). Accurate pronunciation is a key factor that directly impacts the clarity and intelligibility of spoken language, ultimately influencing the learners' grasp of the content being presented. In essence, the precision with which words are pronounced forms the foundation for effective communication and comprehension in the context of Listening Comprehension activities. Teachers' pronunciation, when inaccurate, poses a hindrance to effective Listening Comprehension among learners. Despite teachers aspiring to achieve native-like pronunciation, the challenge lies in the lack of adequate training to attain this proficiency (Daffern & Mackenzie, 2020; Nangimah, 2020; Vančová, 2020; Abdul-Abbas, Rashid & RasimYounus, 2021). This struggle among teachers underscores the critical need for comprehensive training

programs to enhance teachers' pronunciation skills, facilitating improved Listening Comprehension outcomes in the classroom.

The significance of pronunciation instruction is underscored by researchers who contend that phonetics lays the groundwork for effective learning of Listening Comprehension skills in English as a second language (Murphy, 2014; Akbari, 2015; Julkowska & Cebrian, 2015; Irfan et al., 2021; Koffi, 2021; Jose, 2021). Phonetics, as a foundational element, plays a crucial role in mastering accurate pronunciation. It provides learners with the necessary skills to comprehend the nuanced sounds and articulation inherent in spoken language. By focusing on phonetics, learners can better grasp the subtleties of pronunciation, leading to enhanced Listening Comprehension abilities and overall language proficiency. Therefore, incorporating phonetics into pronunciation instruction becomes imperative for fostering effective communication skills in English as a second language. The ultimate goal of pronunciation instruction is not to achieve native-like pronunciation but rather to ensure accurate comprehension (Uchida & Sugimoto, 2020; Saito, 2021; Derwing & Munro, 2022). This perspective aligns with the understanding that learners should prioritise clarity and understanding over attempting to replicate a native accent, acknowledging that effective communication is the primary objective in language learning. Therefore, pronunciation instruction should aim at facilitating learners' ability to comprehend and be understood in diverse linguistic contexts.

In the South African educational context, the correlation between poor academic performance and insufficient foundational learning is evident, particularly concerning the fundamental skills of pronunciation and spelling (Vukosi, Smith et al., 2021; Cronje, 2022). Many schools in South Africa have adopted English as the LoLT (Schaffler et al., 2021; Vukosi et al., 2021). The deficit in basic learning, encompassing the correct pronunciation of words and spelling, can significantly impact learners' academic achievements, hindering their ability to effectively respond through writing or listening.

To address the challenge of poor academic performance associated with inadequate foundational learning, a concurrent introduction of pronunciation and spelling has been implemented during the Foundation Phase. This dual focus aims not only to enhance vocabulary but also to fortify the overall effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. According to Manten et al. (2020), vocabulary is intricately linked with pronunciation and spelling, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive understanding of these components.

Echoing this perspective, Rautenbach et al. (2021) advocate for active engagement by teachers in teaching pronunciation and spelling to enrich vocabulary, particularly within the realm of Listening Comprehension skills. This strategic approach, rooted in the foundational teaching of pronunciation and spelling, serves as the bedrock for learners to cultivate a robust language foundation. By adopting such an integrated methodology, teachers not only address academic challenges but also foster a more holistic and effective language learning experience for South African learners.

The intertwined challenges of pronunciation and spelling in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills demand targeted pedagogical strategies. The global literature, experiences of EFAL teachers, and specific studies underscore the urgency of addressing pronunciation systematically to enhance language learning outcomes in the EFAL context.

2.11.5 Lack of Concentration During EFAL Listening Comprehension Lessons

Listening Comprehension skills rely on full concentration, but learners often face challenges in maintaining focus. Prammoney (2012) points out that learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, may come to school without breakfast, affecting their ability to concentrate. Although the South African government provides school nutrition, it typically happens two hours into the school day (Kupolati, Gericke & MacIntyre, 2015), making the period before eating crucial for learners who have not had breakfast.

Some learners struggle with sustained attention due to factors like poverty, hunger, hearing impairments, and overcrowded classrooms (Probyn, 2015). A study conducted by Maraisa (2020) in South African schools emphasises that challenging classroom environments hinder learners' concentration during Listening Comprehension lessons. Concentration is crucial for learning these skills, as Listening Comprehension is acquired through hearing, not visual means. Addressing these challenges becomes essential for creating an environment conducive to effective Listening Comprehension learning.

Sa'diyah (2016) stresses that concentration is a barrier to Listening Comprehension. Learners require a focal point and a learning environment that stimulates their learning. Not all learners listen at the same level; some catch on quickly, while others take time to understand what they are listening to (Hardiyanto, Tanjung & Suharjono, 2021). Even though the policy states that teachers should repeat the reading or play for Listening Comprehension three times, some learners may still need more time (DBE, 2011; Mpungose, 2020). While repeating the activity

three times aligns with CAPS instructions and helps accommodate different learners, it has both positive and negative consequences. While teachers focus on some learners, others may feel left behind, become distracted, or get bored. Concentrating becomes challenging in activities that require thinking, especially in noisy environments. The ability to concentrate is closely connected to working memory, which is crucial for Listening Comprehension (Wallace, 2022).

Alrawashdeh and Al-zayed (2017) mention that Listening Comprehension involves understanding individual words to comprehend the syntax of sentences. It is important to teach very short stories or paragraphs to maintain learners' concentration. The short story or paragraph should relate to something familiar to the learners (Khair & Misnawati, 2022). Long Listening Comprehension activities can cause learners to lose focus. Once a learner stops concentrating, the objectives of the lesson cannot be achieved.

Sa'diyah (2016) also mentions that poor audio-listening material can contribute to a lack of concentration and distract learners from effective Listening Comprehension lessons. EFAL teachers should prepare by using high-quality audio materials. Darti and Asmawati (2017) state that it is not only poor audio materials that lead to a lack of concentration; limited vocabulary also contributes. Learners may disrupt each other's concentration, both intentionally and unintentionally (Jyoti, 2020; Ahmad, 2022). Learners who struggle to maintain attention during lengthy Listening Comprehension exercises or when faced with unfamiliar topics may inadvertently disrupt their peers by engaging in activities that divert attention from the task at hand. For instance, some learners may request to leave the classroom for various reasons, interrupting the flow of the lesson. In such cases, teachers often opt to resume the lesson without addressing the loss of focus among learners. Consequently, learners' attention may wane, particularly if they encounter unfamiliar vocabulary (Ali, 2020). Despite their efforts to listen, the challenge of limited vocabulary remains a significant obstacle for these learners.

Jeffery and Bauer (2020) claim that, in general, human beings can remember information for only a short time. They add that average learners can recall 50% of the information after one day, 35% after a week, and 20% two weeks after listening to the lesson. This suggests that memory retention declines over time. If average learners' recall decreases over time, what happens to slow learners? It can be hard for listeners to concentrate on what they are hearing in a first additional language. Inattentiveness, even for a short period, might lead to misinterpretation of what they are listening to.

2.11.6 Notetaking During Listening Comprehension Skills

Zoghi and Drood (2017) define notetaking as a strategy used by learners to enhance their attention on what they hear and to recall it for later use. Note that listening is typically complex in a native language, and even more so when listening to a second language. Grade 4 learners are still adjusting to a new medium of instruction, making notetaking during a teacher's reading of Listening Comprehension skills even more challenging for them. Hidayati, Dewi, Nurhaedin, and Rosmala (2020) mention that learners' limited vocabulary complicates the process of writing notes while listening. In this grade, learners struggle with the pace of learning as they do not understand some of the words. They must quickly grasp what they hear and write at the same time. Due to their limited vocabulary, it is not easy for them to effectively take notes during Listening Comprehension lessons.

Drood, Zoghi, and Asl (2020) emphasise the importance of recognising the main ideas in Listening Comprehension while notetaking. They add that many learners find it difficult to organise their thoughts and observe the relationships between ideas (Ahour & Bargool, 2015; Drood et al., 2020). Grade 4 learners are often confused about how to extract important ideas from Listening Comprehension activities. They struggle to summarise the entire Listening Comprehension in detail because they fall behind while trying to take notes (Zarei & Vijayan, 2019; Djabborova, 2020).

Djabborova (2020) asserts that teaching learners to take notes from audio materials in English as a first additional language is challenging. For Grade 4 learners, taking notes during Listening Comprehension is even more difficult because the language of instruction is still confusing to them. Grade 4 learners are in a new phase with significantly more work compared to the previous phase. The logic of ideas, sentence structure, and sounds of words are still complex for them. Learners need to be taught how to take notes during Listening Comprehension after they have a firm grasp of the listening elements. Drood et al. (2020) state that mastering notetaking skills is crucial for EFAL Grade 4 learners to succeed in Listening Comprehension.

2.11.7 Learner Progression

South African primary schools follow the Departmental guidelines for progression and promotion requirements for learners advancing to the next grade (DoE, 2011). These guidelines prevent learners from staying in a phase for more than four years (Department of Education [DoE], 2011). Each phase consists of three grades. According to the Departmental progression

and promotion guidelines, learners are allowed to repeat only one grade within the phase. This means that if a learner fails Grade 4, they are not permitted to fail in Grade 5 or Grade 6, regardless of their academic performance in those grades. This policy applies to the Foundation Phase from which Grade 4 learners are progressing. Learners are moved to the next grade based on age and the number of years in the phase, even if they do not meet the academic requirements (DoE, 2011).

Learner progression significantly impacts EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. Mojapelo (2018) underscores the prevalent lack of a listening culture in many African countries, including Rwanda, where writing often takes precedence over listening. This disparity poses a considerable challenge to teaching Listening Comprehension skills to South African EFAL learners. Research findings indicate that Grade 4 EFAL learners face numerous challenges and constraints in acquiring Listening Comprehension skills. Their ability to listen is notably low, which is significantly misaligned with the expected goals of additional language education. Moreover, learners struggle to master Listening Comprehension skills, and teachers unfortunately lack the necessary expertise to effectively teach this aspect of language learning (Mojapelo, 2018).

2.11.8 Curriculum Coverage

Ndalen (2013) highlights a crucial challenge faced by teachers in the educational landscape, where the pressure from the Department of Education to swiftly cover the entire curriculum often takes precedence over ensuring that learners master the content. This rushed approach to curriculum coverage significantly impacts the effective teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, particularly for Grade 4 learners who are novices in using English as the Language of Learning and Teaching. The modern educational paradigm, as noted by Van Deventer (2022), frequently prioritises covering the curriculum rapidly rather than focusing on the depth of knowledge imparted to learners. This poses a specific challenge for Listening Comprehension, a skill that demands more time for effective instruction, especially given its foundational nature for Grade 4 learners. Teachers may find themselves compelled to move swiftly through various language skills to align with curriculum requirements, potentially leaving learners struggling to grasp the intricacies of Listening Comprehension skills, which requires a more gradual and in-depth approach.

2.12 Chapter Summary

The literature review chapter thoroughly explored the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills in the context of EFAL. The literature drew insights from both international and local perspectives, specifically delving into the experiences of EFAL teachers facing challenges in teaching Grade 4 learners Listening Comprehension skills. Through a synthesis of diverse perspectives, the chapter not only established a solid knowledge base but also paved the way for understanding the complexities within EFAL Listening Comprehension skills teaching.

Additionally, the exploration of the interconnectedness of Listening Comprehension with other language skills in Section 2.5.1 highlighted the integral relationship. This analysis emphasised how refining language skills collectively contributes significantly to enhancing Listening Comprehension within the broader language learning context.

In Section 2.8.1, the study shifted focus to introduce and discuss the APSERA/APSELA cycle model, serving as a structured framework for systematically teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. This model aims to guide teachers in achieving effective and lasting mastery of Listening Comprehension skills. The section provided a detailed exploration of the APSERA/APSELA cycle model's components and steps, offering clarity on how each phase contributes to the overall learning process.

As the literature review concludes, the next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework guiding this study, specifically focusing on schema theory. This theoretical framework further illuminates and provides an understanding of teaching and mastering Listening Comprehension skills among Grade 4 learners.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This study delves into the experiences of EFAL teachers teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of the literature that informed the study, paving the way for a deeper understanding of the research context. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework guiding and underpinning this study. The chosen theoretical lens for this study is schema theory.

3.2 Schema Theory

Schema theory, pioneered by psychologists Frederic Bartlett and Jean Piaget, offers a compelling framework for understanding how individuals organise, interpret, and assimilate information within the vast landscape of cognitive processes (Cherry & Lumley, 2019). According to Onetere (2019), schema theory involves the activation of background knowledge in language comprehension. A schema does not function in isolation; it necessitates external stimuli for activation. The background knowledge embedded in the schema serves as a cognitive resource, aiding individuals in interpreting and organising incoming information. Importantly, a schema actively influences how individuals process information. Expanding on this, Cherry and Lumley (2019) and Jung, Lim, and Kim (2022) further define schema theory as a mental framework that actively aids in the organisation and interpretation of information. A schema is not a passive storage unit but an active cognitive structure. It dynamically shapes how individuals perceive and comprehend new information, implying that a schema is more than a repository of knowledge—it is a tool that individuals employ to navigate and make sense of the complexities presented in the information landscape. In essence, these definitions collectively portray schema theory as a dynamic, interactive process in which background knowledge, activated by external stimuli, actively participates in shaping cognitive processes during language comprehension.

Piaget's theory posits that learners possess inherent knowledge, emphasising acquisition through exploratory processes and the construction of schemas requiring background knowledge (Piaget, 1971; Neumann & Kopcha, 2018; Onetere, 2019). In the context of EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the application of schema

theory, rooted in Piaget's (1971) work, becomes significant. Schema theory encourages self-education and idea generation, aligning with the notion that innovations often arise from identified problems and the utilisation of background knowledge (Oogarah-Pratap, Bhola, & Ramma, 2020; Shehata, Andersson, Glogger, Hopmann, Andersen, Kruikemeier & Johansson, 2021; Hewitt, 2022; Ma'fiyah, Riyani, & Annisa, 2023). As EFAL teachers navigate the classroom, it is essential to recognise the role of schema theory in fostering independent learning among learners. EFAL teachers drawing on schema theory demonstrate adaptability and creativity in addressing varied experiences while teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

3.3 The basic ways of schema theory in Listening Comprehension skills

Gouws and Kruger (2014) present the basic ways of schema theory namely assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium. These basic ways are the progression of Piaget's work where assimilation is the integration of new information into existing mental structures. Whereas accommodation is the modification of schema to incorporate fresh knowledge forming the cornerstone of this exploration with equilibrium being the balance between assimilation and accommodation (Gouws & Kruger, 2014).

3.3.1 Assimilation

Assimilation is the cognitive process of fitting new information into existing cognitive schemas, perceptions, and understanding. Assimilation unfolds as a cognitive process wherein individuals seamlessly integrate external elements into their evolving or completed mental structures. This intricate mechanism serves as the cognitive procedure through which people absorb new information and experiences, seamlessly incorporating them into existing cognitive frameworks (Gouws & Kruger, 2014). Assimilation is the mental process that allows learners to interpret and comprehend new information by seamlessly integrating it into their pre-existing knowledge (Carbajal et al., 2020; Satori, 2021; Vidal, 2019). This dynamic process contributes to a cohesive and organised understanding of the broader context, allowing for the continual adjustment of background knowledge to assimilate new experiences. Furthermore, assimilation in the context of listening is a process where sounds in separate words undergo alteration when combined (Nigro, 2022). Afshar and van Heuven (2022) specifically view assimilation as a linguistic phenomenon, wherein a sound in a sequence adopts characteristics from an adjacent sound, thereby modifying its features. This phonetic transformation underscores the dynamic interplay and mutual influence between neighbouring sounds during the teaching

of Listening Comprehension skills. As sounds interact, they trigger background knowledge, empowering Grade 4 learners to create new information based on their existing cognitive frameworks. This intricate process involves the second sound adapting to align more closely with the first, showcasing the dynamic nature of assimilation in cognitive and linguistic.

Applied to teaching EFAL learners, assimilation taps into their native language as a preexisting knowledge base for Comprehending Listening skills activities. The incremental nature of this process occurs through code-switching when learners encounter challenges in understanding the teaching language (Nyati-Saleshando & Mokotedi, 2022; Firman et al., 2023). This gradual adaptation fosters critical thinking skills, empowering learners to generate new solutions for existing problems. While learners may recognise words in isolation, the challenge lies in understanding them within casual conversations. Utilising flashcards and pictures stimulate background knowledge to assist the assimilation process when teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners (Tran, 2020). The incorporation of flashcards and visual aids becomes an essential instructional strategy, creating a multi-sensory learning environment that caters to diverse learning styles. By combining auditory input with visual stimuli, teachers facilitate assimilation, providing contextual cues and reinforcing key concepts through visual representations (Tran, 2020; Sator, 2021; Nguyen, Le, Vang, Phuong, Huynh, Nguyen & Pham, 2023). This approach enhances comprehension, offering a facilitative tool for assimilating information from auditory sources effectively.

Proficiency in connected speech sounds, particularly assimilations, significantly contributes to effective comprehension of EFAL (Tran, 2020; Nigro, 2022). Mastery over connected speech, where sounds adapt and blend together, plays a pivotal role in refining Listening Comprehension skills (Firman, Hastuti, Parwati, Sudiana, Rahayu & Malini, 2023). This expertise enables individuals to navigate the complexities of EFAL, fostering a deeper engagement with various linguistic features such as assimilations. In essence, a command of connected speech substantially contributes to the development of robust Listening Comprehension skills capabilities, facilitating a nuanced understanding of EFAL.

3.3.2 Accommodation

Tallman (2023) defines the concept of accommodation as an active cognitive process that promotes the learners' ability to adjust or modify existing assimilatory schema in response to new information. Accommodation involves a more active approach by requiring individuals to modify or adjust their existing mental structures to better assimilate and incorporate novel elements (Tallman & Bryan, 2024). Accommodation takes the form of constructing new knowledge from existing frameworks in EFAL Listening Comprehension skills (Netti et al., 2016; Jung, Lim, & Kim, 2022). Alexandrowicz and Hansen (2023) mention that learners are encouraged to develop personal dictionaries and notebooks, where they record unfamiliar words encountered in listening exercises. This practice exemplifies how accommodation contributes to learners' understanding that English, despite being a universal language, possesses dialects and nuances akin to their home languages. EFAL learners recognise that different subjects or disciplines may employ certain words in unique ways, showcasing the adaptability and flexibility fostered by the accommodation process.

Accommodation plays a pivotal role in teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. In EFAL, learners engage in the dynamic cognitive process of accommodating new linguistic information, refining their language schema to assimilate unfamiliar vocabulary, syntax, and linguistics encountered in listening activities (Lefa, 2014; Netti, Nusantara, Subanji, Abadyo & Anwar, 2016; Faizah, Nusantara & Rahardi, 2022). This transformative process enables learners to adapt and refine their understanding of the English language, ensuring a more accurate interpretation of English.

Moreover, accommodation in EFAL teaching extends beyond individual cognitive processes to encompass the educational environment (Afshar & van Heuven, 2022). Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating accommodation by providing diverse and challenging listening materials, prompting learners to adjust their language schema. This emphasis on accommodation in EFAL teaching contributes to the creation of an adaptive and flexible learning environment, enabling Grade 4 learners to navigate the difficulties of EFAL Listening Comprehension skills effectively.

Accommodation serves as a multifaceted cognitive process with implications for both individual learning and EFAL teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. This dynamic concept not only shapes learners' cognitive development but also significantly influences how they engage with and comprehend English language teaching, particularly in the domain of Listening Comprehension skills.

3.3.3 Equilibrium

According to Gouws and Kruger (2014), equilibrium is the balance between assimilation and accommodation. Bormanaki and Kooshhal (2017) posit that equilibration involves a dynamic and engaging process, suggesting that it is not static but an ongoing and interactive procedure. Equilibrium implies that individuals actively participate in adjusting and responding to new information, indicating a continuous interplay between existing cognitive structures and the assimilation or accommodation of novel ideas (Vidal, 2019). This dynamism underscores the notion that equilibrium is a vibrant and evolving state, requiring constant adaptation to maintain balance amid changing circumstances and information.

Teachers provided learners with opportunities to express their ideas about the lesson by using what they heard as assimilation and developing their perspectives as accommodation in teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. Assimilation and accommodation play crucial roles in facilitating the learning process in EFAL Listening Comprehension skills teaching (Netti, 2016). Assimilation involves integrating new information into existing mental schemas, while accommodation entails adjusting or altering these schemas to accommodate new insights. The equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation is particularly evident in EFAL classrooms, where teachers aim to enhance learners' language skills through Listening Comprehension skills activities (Bormanaki & Kooshhal, 2017; Dorko, 2019).

Assimilation in EFAL Listening Comprehension skills occurs as learners integrate the information they hear into their existing linguistic knowledge and understanding (Dorko, 2019). For example, when learners encounter new vocabulary or grammatical structures during a Listening Comprehension lesson, assimilation enables them to incorporate these elements into their existing language framework, reinforcing and expanding their language proficiency.

On the other hand, accommodation comes into play when learners encounter language nuances, cultural references, or novel concepts that may not align seamlessly with their existing linguistic schema (Faizah et al., 2022). EFAL teachers encourage accommodation by prompting learners to adapt their language frameworks to these new elements. This could involve modifying their understanding of certain words, structures, or cultural references based on the context of the Listening Comprehension skills activity.

The dynamic interplay between assimilation and accommodation creates a rich and engaging learning environment (Netti, Nusantara, Subanji, Abadyo & Anwar, 2016; Vidal, 2019; Tran, 2020; Nigro, 2022). EFAL teachers, recognising the need for equilibrium, design activities that challenge learners to not only assimilate new linguistic elements but also accommodate diverse language contexts. Sivira-Gonzalez (2023) states that teachers may incorporate various accents, idioms, or cultural references in Listening Comprehension skills lessons to broaden learners' linguistic perspectives.

EFAL Listening Comprehension skills are achieved through a deliberate balance between assimilation and accommodation (Gouws, 2014). This balance promotes the active and active nature of equilibration, wherein learners continually adjust their language schema to incorporate new information and experiences, fostering a more comprehensive and adaptable linguistic proficiency.

3.4 Schema theory processes

The foundation of Schema Theory rests upon the recognition of two distinct modes of information processing: Bottom-Up and Top-Down processing modes (Wang, 2023). Guiding the processing of information, schema theory delineates a fundamental dichotomy in data processing referred to as bottom-up and top-down processing (Piaget, 1976; Perdede, 2017; Wang, 2023). These two processes unfold concurrently or interchangeably within the realm of teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

3.4.1 Bottom-Up Processing

According to Batoya (2013), Bottom-Up Processing (BUP) is a cognitive information processing approach characterised by its analytical starting point with individual components or details, gradually constructing a comprehensive understanding or interpretation. BUP refers to the cognitive capacity of listeners to identify information by analysing the arrangement of linguistic phonemes in what learners hear, without relying on their preexisting background knowledge (Akbari, 2015; Siegel & Siegel, 2015; Birch & Fulop, 2020; Jose, 2022). In the intricate realm of cognitive processing, Bottom-Up processing emerges as a foundational mechanism that begins with the meticulous analysis of individual components. This cognitive approach involves perceiving elementary features, sequentially processing information, and incrementally assembling details to construct a comprehensive understanding (Sulistyowati, 2019; Akbar & Sofian, 2020; Yalçın & DiPaola, 2020). For example, like building words,

Bottom-Up processing operates by detecting and recognising patterns, fostering objective and unbiased interpretations of incoming information.

In the exploration of Bottom-Up processing, researchers unveil its crucial role in providing the raw material for higher-order cognitive functions, shaping the foundation upon which mental representations are built (Siegel, 2018; Akbar & Sofian, 2020; Jose, 2022). This intricate cognitive mechanism, as emphasised by Xu and Qiu (2023), operates driven by a deliberate approach to information. Their [researchers] insight underscores the significance of the effort invested in approaching and analysing information as the bedrock for Listening Comprehension skills. As the researchers delve deeper into the interplay between Bottom-Up processing and cognitive functions, the subsequent discussion will illuminate its interconnectedness with Schema Theory, providing a holistic understanding of how these cognitive processes collaborate in the intricate tapestry of information processing.

- ***Bottom-Up Processing in Teaching Listening Comprehension skills***

The implementation of bottom-up processing assumes a crucial role in fostering a nuanced grasp of listening passages when teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. This cognitive approach hinges on the methodical extraction of meaning from raw sensory data (McBride, 2011; Perdede, 2017). Throughout Listening Comprehension skills activities, learners actively participate in extracting significance directly from the sounds and patterns presented, forming a foundational understanding.

Siegel (2018) mentions that teachers employ visual aids in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. These visual aids include pictures and flashcards as strategic tools. This approach assists learners in navigating through a Listening Comprehension lesson, providing them with a contextual understanding even if they do not comprehend the English language intricacies initially (Siegel, 2018; Sulistyowati, 2019; Jose, 2022). The bottom-up process within this context encompasses the meticulous decoding of individual words, the discernment of tones, and the identification of various linguistic elements (Jose, 2022). These fundamental components serve not only as building blocks for linguistic development but are also gradually integrated, resulting in the construction of a coherent and meaningful understanding of the spoken message.

The step-by-step engagement with auditory input is instrumental in nurturing essential Listening Comprehension skills. Through this process, learners progressively enhance their ability to decipher and interpret spoken language, ultimately contributing to increased proficiency in EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. The systematic integration of bottom-

up processing in teaching endeavours facilitates a holistic and developmental approach to language comprehension among Grade 4 learners.

- ***Linking Bottom-Up Processing to Schema Theory in Teaching Listening Comprehension skills***

Linking Bottom-Up Processing to Schema Theory, the cognitive approach aligns with the idea that comprehension is built incrementally from the ground up, where the synthesis of basic sensory information forms the foundation for higher-level understanding (Khuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016). This process is exemplified as learners progress through the auditory input, demonstrating an analytical and sequential construction of comprehension (Khuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016). Bottom-up processing offers a structured and systematic pathway for learners to navigate and interpret information, providing a solid framework for the development of Listening Comprehension skills.

In Bottom-Up processing, the learner's dialect is intricately tied to Listening Comprehension sound input (Sulistyowati, 2019). To decode words in the listening content, learners might employ a strategy of matching initial sounds to familiar words in their mental dictionaries, gradually eliminating fewer probable matches until they find the most accurate fit (Khuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016; Siegel, 2018; Akbar & Sofian, 2020; Jose, 2022). This systematic decoding process, emphasised by Bottom-Up processing, aligns with Schema Theory's assimilation aspect (Jose, 2022; Wang, 2023). It equips learners with the ability to systematically decode and assimilate new linguistic elements into their existing mental frameworks, contributing to the ongoing refinement and adaptation of these cognitive structures. The step-by-step nature of this approach aids in maintaining equilibrium, allowing learners to gradually incorporate new information into their cognitive schemas (Khuziakhmetov & Porchesku, 2016; Furuya, 2021; Wang, 2023). This interconnectedness of Bottom-Up processing and Schema Theory holds particular significance in the context of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, highlighting the structured and sequential nature of the learning process.

3.4.2 Top-down processing

Ellis (2019) defines top-down processing as a cognitive mechanism in which listeners leverage their existing background knowledge to deduce meanings of unfamiliar words or presented information. This intricate cognitive approach involves the brain actively transmitting information to the senses while simultaneously receiving input from various stimuli (Ellis, 2019; Akbar & Sofian, 2020; Ma, 2021). It encompasses the strategic

application of pre-existing schema and memories to new sensory information, aiming to interpret incoming data more efficiently and accurately (Ma, 2021; Jose, 2022). The process unfolds by generating general predictions based on higher-level schema, which are subsequently refined at more specific levels to validate these initial predictions. Top-down processing represents a dynamic cognitive mechanism seamlessly integrating background knowledge with incoming sensory information, facilitating a streamlined and effective interpretation of the surrounding environment (Jose, 2022). This cognitive process is closely tied to the activation of pre-existing mental frameworks, embodying a proactive approach to shaping and understanding the world.

- ***Top-down Processing in Teaching Listening Comprehension skills***

Top-down processing in teaching Listening Comprehension skills begins with general predictions based on the higher-level schema, followed by a search for more specific information to confirm these predictions (May, 2020; Furuya, 2021). In this cognitive approach, general schemas are activated, creating an overarching structure that serves as the basis for interpreting incoming information. Learners engage in Listening Comprehension, they draw upon existing knowledge and experiences to form initial expectations or predictions, using these expectations as a cognitive roadmap to anticipate the nature and direction of the information. The general schema activated to provide a framework guiding the listener's understanding (May, 2020; Furuya, 2021).

May (2020) states that as new information is presented, the cognitive process seeks to integrate this input into the existing framework, with partially fulfilled higher-level schemas acting as placeholders awaiting additional details for overall comprehension. Learners actively process incoming information, adjusting and refining initial predictions based on the presented content. Top-down processing relies on learners' conceptual understanding and background knowledge to make sense of Listening Comprehension skills input (May, 2020; Furuya, 2021). For instances where learners lack specific pre-knowledge, top-down processing becomes a cognitive tool to navigate situations where information may be incomplete or unfamiliar.

Akbar and Sofian (2020) emphasise learners' active engagement in top-down processing. They draw upon background knowledge and expectations to interpret verbal content and decode the speaker's message. This process relies on schema, representing learners'

conceptual understanding and serving as a mental framework for interpreting new information. When faced with gaps in knowledge, learners utilise existing schema to infer meaning (May, 2020; Furuya; 2021).

Schema is continually created and upgraded, and learners engaging in Listening Comprehension skills activities refer to an assortment of schema to decipher content and anticipate outcomes (Ardini, 2015; Keshmirshekan, 2019; Mao & Zhou, 2020). This information helps learners make sense of the content and complete missing data (Sulistiyowati, 2019; Du, 2019). In cases of social or mental detachment, learners can adjust or create a new schema to facilitate Listening Comprehension skills (Akbar & Sofian, 2020; May, 2020).

Despite the advantages, Grade 4 learners might not always accurately translate the meaning of Listening Comprehension skills activities using top-down processing. Othman (2021) notes that pre-knowledge can lead to incorrect interpretations, especially when learners' interpretations require supporting evidence later in the Listening Comprehension skills. Nonetheless, top-down processing, as a fundamental approach to enhancing understanding, involves a continuous evaluation of plausible interpretations by incorporating inquiries and general world knowledge throughout the unfolding of spoken content (Mao & Zhou, 2020; May, 2020). Top-down processing allows learners to refine their understanding continuously by making connections, considering various possibilities, and adjusting interpretations based on evolving context, highlighting the ongoing and interactive nature of top-down processing as a vital component of the Listening Comprehension process.

• ***Linking Top-down Processing to Schema Theory in Teaching Listening Comprehension skills***

Top-down processing aligns seamlessly with Schema Theory's accommodation, illustrating how learners skilfully utilise their prior knowledge, context, and expectations to refine their mental schemas when encountering new linguistic elements (Du, 2019; Sulistiyowati, 2019). This accommodation process not only fosters cognitive equilibrium but also enriches the interpretation of novel information. In the specialised domain of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, top-down processing emerges as a valuable

approach, acknowledging the significance of learners' background knowledge in processing spoken information (Sulistiyowati, 2019; Furuya, 2021; Xu & Qiu, 2023).

As learners actively engage with spoken information, the deployment of top-down processing involves the intentional activation of their schema—tapping into background knowledge and prior experiences to make sense of presented Listening Comprehension content (Ostrom, Pryor & Simpson, 2022). This deliberate activation of schema proves notably advantageous as it enables learners to construct a meaningful framework for processing spoken material, facilitating more effective comprehension and interpretation of the conveyed information (Du, 2019; Keshmirshekan, 2019).

When learners activate their existing mental schemas during Listening Comprehension tasks, they [learners] bring a personalised context to the content, creating connections between new information and familiar concepts (Akbar & Sofian, 2020; Ma, 2021). This process enhances cognitive efficiency by providing a mental scaffold that organises and structures incoming spoken language in alignment with learners' pre-existing knowledge and experiences. Du (2019) emphasises the importance of this cognitive strategy, suggesting that the activation of schema not only aids in the rapid assimilation of information but also contributes to a more accurate and nuanced understanding of spoken material. Keshmirshekan (2019) further supports this notion, highlighting how the intentional use of background knowledge through schema activation can act as a cognitive shortcut, enabling learners to navigate and make sense of spoken content more effectively. The deliberate activation of schema becomes a cognitive tool that empowers learners to navigate the complexities of spoken language, fostering a richer and more meaningful interpretation of the material.

Within the intricate landscape of real-life cognitive processes, a dynamic interplay unfolds between top-down and bottom-up mechanisms, with the emphasis shifting based on learners' specific goals and contextual demands (Fura, 2021; Ostrom et al., 2022). By strategically incorporating top-down processing into educational practices, particularly in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, teachers play a pivotal role in cultivating a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of spoken information. This integration with learners' existing knowledge and experiences not only enhances the learning experience but also contributes to the establishment of cognitive equilibrium,

where the assimilation of new spoken information harmoniously coexists with learners' pre-existing cognitive structures. The synergy between top-down processing, Schema Theory, and the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills offers teachers a powerful tool to foster enriched learning environments and facilitate a holistic understanding of complex spoken content.

3.4.3 Bottom-up and top-down processing

In teaching Listening Comprehension skills, a dynamic interplay between Bottom-Up and Top-Down processing is integral to fostering a comprehensive understanding of spoken language. These two cognitive mechanisms work in tandem, allowing learners to simultaneously decode individual elements and apply context and expectations, thereby shaping a holistic understanding. As emphasised by Karimi and Chalak (2021), learners employ top-down processing to implement claim-based information in Listening Comprehension skills, while relying on bottom-up processing to translate sounds and syntactic structures in English as a first additional language.

Listening Comprehension skills, when approached with both top-down and bottom-up processing, involve the utilisation of both pre-existing knowledge and linguistic understanding to comprehend messages from the lesson (Perdede, 2017; Wang & Yin, 2023). Furuya (2021) and Ma (2021) collectively highlight the simultaneous interplay of these processing modes during the teaching and learning process of Listening Comprehension skills. As learners navigate auditory stimuli, they seamlessly engage both modes, dynamically shaping their comprehension and assimilation of information. This reciprocal interaction underscores the complexity and richness of the cognitive processes at play, contributing to a nuanced understanding of teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

Top-down processing involves utilising pre-knowledge and experiences that are akin to the new input, allowing learners to speculate and gather what they already know to understand the content (Yalçın & DiPaola, 2020; Furuya, 2021; Ma, 2021; Xu & Qiu, 2023). On the other hand, bottom-up processing entails using raw data, involving linguistic components such as sounds, word meanings, and speech patterns to comprehend details in the input (Oh & Lee, 2014; Siegel & Siegel, 2015; Yeldham, 2018; Sulistyowati, 2019). Listening Comprehension is a cognitive process that unfolds rationally, demanding active involvement, effort, and enhancement of EFAL skills for learners. The integration of both processing modes is crucial to the multifaceted nature of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, creating a synergistic approach that addresses the intricacies of language understanding.

3.5 The Symphony of Schema Activation in EFAL Teaching Listening Comprehension Skills.

The next discussion delves into the intriguing realm of Schema Theory applied to the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, unravelling its impact across three distinct levels. To commence, the researcher explores the foundational layer of pre-listening Comprehension skills, investigating the intricate web of background knowledge that forms the scaffold for learners' understanding. Subsequently, the researcher navigates the nuanced terrain where the EFAL teacher becomes the orchestrator, skilfully activating schemas during the process of Listening Comprehension skills. Finally, the discussion ventures into the realm of post-listening Comprehension skills, where the researcher scrutinizes how these mental frameworks, or schemas, undergo evaluation and transformation. This exploration promises to illuminate the dynamic interplay between cognitive processes and language acquisition, shedding light on the pivotal role of Schema Theory in shaping the landscape of effective teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

3.5.1 Schema during teaching pre-Listening Comprehension skills

In the teaching of pre-listening comprehension, teachers strategically apply Schema Theory principles to prepare learners for lesson activities (Du, 2019; Karimi, Chalak, & Biria, 2019; Zhu & Chen, 2022). This process involves the intentional activation and organisation of learners' existing schemas, with teachers acting as architects in this cognitive priming phase. By tapping into background knowledge, connecting prior experiences, and introducing relevant concepts, teachers not only establish the foundation for effective listening but also construct a cognitive framework that enhances engagement and comprehension during subsequent Listening Comprehension skills activities.

The activation of learners' schema is seamlessly integrated into the fabric of their cognitive engagement, encompassing connections to background information, alignment with the content, and the incorporation of examples or key terms by teachers. Teachers employ different strategies in teaching pre-listening comprehension to activate learners' prior knowledge (Mahmoudi, 2017; Cao & Lin, 2020). These strategies may include writing keywords on the chalkboard or using flashcards with keywords, prompting learners to explain their understanding of these terms (Prastiyowati, 2019; Zhang, 2022). The use of teaching materials, such as flashcards, becomes instrumental in stimulating learners' minds before the actual listening activity, serving as cognitive triggers that prime the learners' schema for the upcoming content (Tran, 2020; Zhang, 2022). The intentional integration of these materials into the pre-

listening phase enhances learners' overall readiness, creating a receptive cognitive environment aligned with the forthcoming auditory input.

The pre-listening comprehension stage is a dynamic and intentional process that engages learners, identifies areas for improvement, and primes their mental frameworks for a more effective understanding of the subsequent listening activity (Mart, 2020; Zhang, 2022). This interactive process serves a dual purpose: first, it enables teachers to assess the existing knowledge base of learners, identifying words that may pose comprehension challenges. Subsequently, the teacher addresses these gaps by providing clear definitions, thereby enhancing learners' vocabulary. This preparatory step not only fosters a deeper understanding of the language but also equips learners with the ability to anticipate the focus of the upcoming lesson. This symbiotic relationship allows learners to accumulate a reservoir of understanding that resonates with their immediate environment, making lessons more accessible and comprehensible. Teachers are encouraged to design Listening Comprehension skills activities that resonate with learners, leveraging their familiarity or prior exposure to specific contexts (Keshmirshakan, 2019; Mart, 2020; Linh, 2021; Bakhtiyarovna, 2023). This deliberate alignment ensures a smooth flow of comprehension, creating a bridge between the known and the unknown in the educational landscape.

3.5.2 Schema during teaching- Listening Comprehension skills

The importance of schema becomes evident in the context of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, particularly during the during-listening comprehension phase. As the second level of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, EFAL teachers encourage learners to utilise the communication technique of Listening Comprehension (Cao & Lin, 2020). Within the process of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the schema plays a crucial role in information processing. Learners acquire and refine skills such as selection, processing, supplementation, judgment, and reasoning (Karim et al., 2019). The activation of a specific schema in a learner's mind establishes a framework for absorbing and processing the information they are listening to, with the relevant information tied to the activated schema being integrated into this cognitive framework (Du, 2019; Karim et al., 2019; Zhu & Chen, 2022).

During the teaching listening comprehension phase, teachers impart knowledge applied to the cognitive processing of Schema (Netti et al., 2016; Dorko, 2019; Oogarah-Pratap, Bhooloa, & Ramma, 2020; Faizah et al., 2022). Teachers must ensure that they teach

Listening Comprehension skills that captivate learners' attention (Onotere, 2019; Byrnes, 2021; Cao & Lin, 2020). This involves presenting Listening Comprehension materials familiar and interesting to Grade 4 learners, capturing their attention. All resources and vocabulary used during this stage should encourage learners to assimilate and accommodate, fostering understanding and the ability to assimilate new information (Mora-Plaza, 2023). Teachers play a central role in this phase, ensuring the content is well-mastered through continuous monitoring of learners' understanding (Netti et al., 2016; Dorko, 2019; Oogarah-Pratap, Bhola, & Ramma, 2020; Faizah et al., 2022).

In the intricate landscape of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, schema theory guides teachers through various stages to foster a comprehensive understanding among learners (Cao & Lin, 2020; Zhang, 2022). Researchers emphasise the during-teaching phase of Listening Comprehension skills for EFAL learners, a critical juncture where teachers play a pivotal role in harnessing the power of schema (Du, 2019; Mart, 2020; Linh, 2021; Bakhtiyarovna, 2023). During the Listening Comprehension skills lesson, learners actively engage, honing their abilities to select, process, supplement, judge, and reason (Cao & Lin, 2020). Teachers, as facilitators, must delicately balance by activating and aligning learners' schema with the ongoing auditory input, ensuring seamless integration of information into their cognitive frameworks. To enhance understanding, teachers should employ diverse strategies, such as incorporating relevant examples, encouraging learners to draw connections to their existing knowledge, and fostering an interactive learning environment (Cao & Lin, 2020). This intentional orchestration not only nurtures a deeper understanding of the language but also primes learners for subsequent post-listening comprehension skills. As we transition into the post-listening phase, the groundwork laid during the teaching process, enriched by schema activation, sets the stage for a more nuanced and comprehensive assimilation of the auditory content.

3.5.3 Schema in post-Listening Comprehension skills

Post-listening is a crucial phase in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, serving as the stage where teachers assess and evaluate the extent to which learners have mastered the content they were taught (Prastiyowati, 2019; Mart, 2020; Teng, 2022). This phase involves reflective practices that gauge the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed during the previous stages. Teachers use various assessment tools and strategies to measure the comprehension and retention of the material by learners. It is an

opportunity for both teachers and learners to reflect on the learning process and identify areas for improvement or further reinforcement. Additionally, post-listening assessments may inform future teaching strategies and help tailor instruction to address specific learning needs identified through the evaluation process.

In the realm of post-listening comprehension, teachers undertake a crucial role in assessing the extent to which learners have internalised the content (Prastiyowati, 2019; Mart, 2020). This phase serves as a critical checkpoint where the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed during the Listening Comprehension activity is gauged. Reflective assessment becomes a key element, prompting teachers to scrutinise the alignment between the lesson objectives and the achieved comprehension levels (DBE, 2011; Oo & Habók, 2022; Teng, 2022). Through this evaluative process, teachers can identify areas of strength and areas that may require further attention, thus informing future instructional strategies.

Furthermore, the integration of schema into post-listening comprehension activities is fundamental. Teachers aim not only to assess but also to solidify the learners' understanding by reinforcing the connection between new information and their existing mental frameworks (Kapanadze, 2019; Namaziandost, Nasri, & Akbari, 2019; Liu, 2020). This consolidation phase involves strategically designed exercises that prompt learners to actively engage with the content, drawing links to their pre-existing knowledge. By doing so, the learners are encouraged to internalise the information, ensuring a more robust and lasting comprehension.

An essential aspect of post-listening comprehension is the practical application of knowledge. Teachers guide learners in employing the acquired information in real-world scenarios, fostering a deeper and more practical understanding (Lui, 2020). This application-oriented approach enhances the transferability of knowledge, enabling learners to use the insights gained from the Listening Comprehension activity in various contexts. Additionally, fostering a feedback-rich environment is crucial during the post-listening phase. Constructive feedback provides learners with valuable insights into their performance, allowing them to address misconceptions, refine their understanding, and actively participate in discussions (Namaziandost et al., 2019; Teng, 2022). This dynamic interaction not only aids individual growth but also contributes to collective learning through shared insights and collaborative exploration of the listened material.

The post-listening comprehension phase is a multifaceted process where teachers evaluate, consolidate, and facilitate the application of knowledge. Through the strategic inclusion of

schema and a focus on practical application, educators play a vital role in ensuring that learners not only comprehend but also internalize and apply the insights gained from the Listening Comprehension activity.

Schema theory emerges as a fundamental and integral framework in the various phases of Listening Comprehension skills, encapsulating the pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening stages. Learners as individuals activate their pre-existing mental frameworks during the pre-listening phase, they [learners] establish a foundation that optimally prepares them for incoming information. The during-listening phase sees the dynamic application of these schemas in real-time, enabling learners to efficiently process and understand the linguistic input. Finally, in the post-listening phase, schema theory encourages reflection and consolidation, fostering the integration of new knowledge into existing mental structures. This holistic approach not only enhances language learning but also underscores the significance of leveraging prior experiences and knowledge in the continual development of linguistic proficiency.

3.6 Listening Comprehension Skills: Tailoring Strategies for Grade 4 Learners in Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage

Jean Piaget's profound insights echo, guiding teachers to recognise the organised patterns of cognitive development aligned with a child's intellectual journey (Gouws, 2014). Piaget's cognitive development is divided into Sensorimotor, Pre-operational, Concrete Operational, and Formal Operational stages, which lays the foundation for understanding how young minds evolve (Gouws & Kruger, 2014; Babakr, Mohamedamin, & Kakamad, 2019; Oogarah-Pratap et al., 2020). The focus of this study turns to the dynamic realm of EFAL teachers shaping the learning landscape for Grade 4 learners, nestled within the pivotal Concrete Operational Stage, ages 7 to 11. This age group, often referred to as the middle of childhood, represents a crucial juncture where linguistic transitions occur (Gouws & Kruger, 2014; Sevinç, 2019; Joubert, & Harrison, 2022). As Grade 4 marks the inception of the Intermediate Phase, introducing English as the language of learning and teaching, the need to comprehend and apply schema-based strategies becomes paramount. This section delves into the nuanced art of teaching EFAL to learners in transition, weaving Piaget's theory seamlessly into the fabric of cognitive development.

• *Navigating the Concrete Operational Stage: Teachers' Experiences in EFAL Listening Comprehension skills*

In the dynamic landscape of EFAL teaching, teachers become orchestrators of learning, shaping their approaches based on a nuanced understanding of developmental stages (Jenkins, 2020; Butera, Batruch, Autin, Mugny, Quiamzade, & Pulfrey, 2021; Harris II, 2023). The Concrete Operational Stage, as conceptualised by Piaget (1973), marks a critical phase in a child's cognitive development, particularly evident in Grade 4 learners (Gouws & Kruger, 2014; Lee, 2019). This section illuminates the challenges and opportunities presented by this stage in the domain of Listening Comprehension skills, drawing insights from teachers' experiences.

Teachers in the EFAL context implement cognitive strategies tailored to the concrete thinking of Grade 4 learners. These strategies encompass not only the theoretical underpinnings drawn from Piaget's stages (Blonder, Skinner, Ciancio, Cazzell, Scott, Jaquett, Ruddy & Thompson, 2019; Riswanto, Afriani, & Adini, 2022) but also the practical experiences of teachers fine-tuning their methods in the classroom. Techniques such as word repetition, introduction of new vocabulary, explanation of word meanings, and fostering memorisation are not merely theoretical constructs but the result of teachers' experiential knowledge.

Beyond the repetition-based strategies, Grade 4 EFAL teachers find themselves immersed in the task of guiding learners through the intricate patterns inherent in Listening Comprehension lessons (Allender & Allender, 2015; Riswanto et al., 2022). These patterns, gleaned from teachers' hands-on experiences, span comprehensive lesson preparations, optimal learning environment design, effective time management, and the adept use of suitable teaching methods. Teachers become not just instructors but navigators, steering learners through the complexities of language acquisition and comprehension.

Recognising the challenges posed by a new phase with a new LoLT, teachers are encouraged to exhibit patience and engage in continuous study alongside learners (DBE, 2011; Al-Nafisah, 2019). These recommendations, rooted in the experiences of EFAL educators, highlight the resilience and commitment required in guiding Grade 4 learners through the Concrete Operational Stage. The preparations, starting from lesson planning, involve accommodating unique learners to enhance their schema, showcasing the flexibility and adaptability that characterize effective teaching strategies. In resource-constrained settings, EFAL teachers exemplify diligence in preparing teaching resources, reaffirming that preparation is the

linchpin of effective teaching (Blonder et al., 2019; Tangkakarn & Gampper, 2020). The experiences of these teachers underscore that a well-prepared lesson not only streamlines teaching processes but also lays the foundation for successful comprehension and application in the intricate realm of Listening Comprehension skills within the Concrete Operational Stage.

• *Tailoring Strategies to Grade 4's Concrete Thinking: Enhancing Listening Comprehension Skills*

EFAL teachers, recognised as catalysts for change, play a pivotal role in tailoring strategies to the concrete thinking of Grade 4 learners during the Concrete Operational Stage (Jenkins, 2020; Butera et al., 2021; Harris II, 2023). The understanding of learners' developmental stages is paramount, aligning with the broader literature on the experiential aspect of teaching (Piaget, 1973; Gouws & Kruger, 2014; Lee, 2019). This recognition translates into the necessity for specialized teaching strategies, rooted in both theoretical frameworks and practical experience, to enhance Listening Comprehension skills.

Teachers draw on meanings and strategies such as word repetition, introducing new vocabulary, explaining word meanings, and fostering memorisation to not only enhance learners' information processing skills but also facilitate knowledge transfer and application (Blonder et al., 2019; Riswanto et al., 2022). Aligning with CAPS, teachers are advised to repeat audio or reading activities three times, reflecting shared experiences of providing learners with the necessary time to process information during the challenging transition to a new language of learning and teaching (DBE, 2011; Al-Nafisah, 2019; Tangkakarn & Gampper, 2020).

Piaget's cognitive development theory further supports the active engagement of learners during the Concrete Operational Stage (Piaget, 1976; Lefa, 2014; Dorko, 2019; Nigro, 2022). Assimilation and accommodation, integral concepts in Piaget's framework, emphasise the active, dynamic nature of learning. Assimilation involves incorporating new information into existing mental structures, while accommodation requires adjusting mental structures to accommodate new information. This aligns with the active learning paradigm, challenging the traditional notion of passive learning.

Piaget's perspective asserts that an active learner is essential, as problem-solving skills must be actively discovered rather than taught (Waite-Stupiansky, 2022; Zhang, 2022). Learners

engage in an ongoing process of exploration, interaction, and reflection to construct their understanding of the world, aligning with the active role of Grade 4 learners in shaping their cognitive development. Teachers, drawing from Piaget's insights, guide learners through the transformative process of assimilation and accommodation, recognising the active learner as a curious explorer assimilating new information into existing cognitive structures.

Grade 4 teachers extend their guidance beyond repetition-based strategies, delving into the intricate patterns inherent in Listening Comprehension skills lessons (Allender & Allender, 2015; Riswanto et al., 2022). Insights from experienced teachers encompass comprehensive lesson preparations, optimisation of the learning environment, effective time management, and the employment of suitable teaching methods. This structured approach empowers learners in processing and applying knowledge effectively, recognising the challenges posed by a new phase with a new language of learning and teaching.

Teachers are encouraged to exhibit patience and engage in continuous study alongside learners, aligning with the broader literature on teacher resilience and commitment (DBE, 2011; Al-Nafisah, 2019). These recommendations emphasise the importance of ongoing professional development and adaptability, reinforcing the notion that EFAL teachers are not only instructors but also navigators, steering Grade 4 learners through the complexities of language acquisition and comprehension during the Concrete Operational Stage.

3.7 Chapter Summary

In conclusion of this chapter, the comprehensive exploration of schema theory in the context of EFAL teaching Listening Comprehension skills has woven a rich tapestry of insights. The chapter begins by acknowledging the pioneers of schema theory and the diverse literary sources that contribute to the understanding of schema. Researchers assert that schema theory is fundamentally rooted in background knowledge (Cherry & Lumely, 2019; Onotere, 2019; Jung et al., 2022).

Building upon this foundation, the chapter introduces the core elements of schema theory—assimilation, accommodation, and equilibrium—in the specific context of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. These elements illuminate the intricate interplay essential for teachers working with Grade 4 learners in Listening Comprehension skills (Vidal, 2019; Byrnes, 2021; Nigro, 2022).

As the exploration delves deeper, the chapter explores the synergy between bottom-up and top-down processing, shedding light on the nuanced processes that underlie schema theory. This understanding is further enriched by the Symphony of Schema Activation, a holistic framework guiding EFAL teachers through pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening phases.

A pivotal focus emerges on the adaptation of Listening Comprehension skills tailored specifically to Grade 4 learners in Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage, providing a tangible application of schema theory within the classroom. The invaluable experiences shared by teachers in the field lend a real-world dimension to the schema theoretical framework, adding coherence and authenticity to the discourse.

These teacher insights serve as a crucial bridge between theory and practice, enhancing the narrative's coherence and consistency. The unfolding chapters orchestrate a symphony of schema activation within the dynamic landscape of EFAL teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Ultimately, this chapter underscores the significance of embracing schema theory as a pedagogical compass, guiding teachers in crafting effective and engaging learning experiences tailored to the unique needs of their learners.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

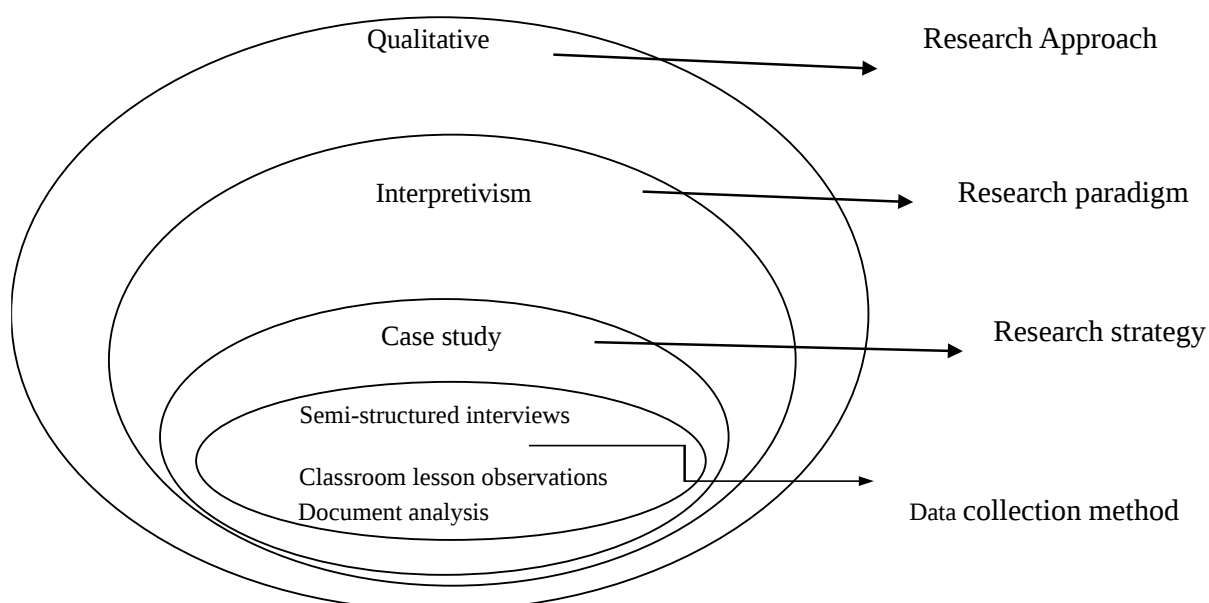
4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology used to generate empirical data to answer the research questions in this study. It describes the paradigm in which the study is situated, as well as the approach, design, and methods employed. Additionally, it discusses the sampling methods and data collection techniques used, along with measures taken to address ethical concerns.

4.2 Research Process

The research process, as articulated by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2023), serves as the guiding framework for this study. By employing this structured approach, the research aims to establish a clear and systematic direction. The framework encompasses a diverse range of elements, including paradigm choices, methodological tactics, and sequential steps. This deliberate selection of components illustrates the meticulous path followed by the researcher throughout the entire procedure. As the researcher delves into the intricacies of the study, it becomes evident that each stage is a deliberate and interconnected choice, demonstrating the thoughtful navigation of the research landscape. The research process was employed to provide direction for this study (Saunders et al., 2023). It demonstrates the variety of selections, paradigms, tactics, and steps followed by the researcher throughout the procedure (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: The research process onion (Saunders et al., 2023)



The depiction of the research process onion in Figure 4.1 serves as a metaphorical representation of the sequential stages inherent in the research journey (Saunders et al. 2023). Analogous to the layers of an onion, each stratum signifies a distinct phase undertaken in the research process. The initial layer delineates the chosen research approach, and in the context of this study, it takes a qualitative form. Moving outward, the second layer encapsulates the research paradigm, aligning with interpretivism. Progressing further, the third layer signifies the adopted research strategy, which, in this case, is the case study methodology. The central layer, at the core of the onion, symbolises the essence of the research process, focusing on data collection methods. For this study, these methods include semi-structured interviews, classroom lesson observations, and document analysis. The elucidation of each layer aims to provide a rationale for their selection in this study, ensuring transparency and coherence in the methodological choices made throughout the research endeavour.

4.3 Qualitative research approach

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), a research approach can be succinctly defined as an investigation outlining the procedures, plans, and tools employed in the research process. The research paradigm, research design, and methods used in a given research or study are directed by the selected research approach (Flick, 2018). Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that the research approach plays a pivotal role in classifying and categorising the philosophical worldview of the research or study. Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) emphasise that the philosophical worldviews in research are combined to create three distinct research approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative requires statistical data while qualitative method involves in-depth nonnumerical data (Cresswell, 2016; Patkar, 2018). The mixed method aims to bring qualitative and quantitative together in a single study (Patkar, 2018). However, since the focus of the study is on understanding the EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension, the qualitative research approach is deemed more suitable than other approaches.

The qualitative research approach emerges as a robust and insightful methodology, empowering researchers to generate nuanced and detailed data with elaborate descriptions of the subject at hand (Allen, 2016; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Furthermore, qualitative research is characterised by its depth, relying on direct quotations that capture the personal perspectives and experiences of individuals involved in the study (Smith, 2015; Patton, 2015). It is essential to note that the data in qualitative studies remain unaltered, presenting direct

responses grounded in the experiences of EFAL teachers as they respond to the research questions. This approach proves particularly advantageous for describing the experiences of EFAL teachers teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Tracy (2019) advocates for this viewpoint, asserting that the qualitative research methodology focuses on acquiring descriptive data in a natural context. Consequently, the exploration of the phenomenon is guided by inductive thinking and a genuine understanding of EFAL teachers' perspectives.

The foundation of qualitative research, rooted in the belief that research extends beyond mere observation and measurement, finds support from influential scholars in the field. As Denzin and Lincoln (2018) assert, qualitative research involves the synthesis of information from diverse sources to construct meaning, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of human experiences. This approach, as advocated by Creswell and Poth (2018), accommodates various data collection methods and scrutinises information from multiple perspectives, crafting a comprehensive portrayal of complex situations.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) contribute to this perspective by emphasising that the qualitative methodology encompasses spoken, written, or visual data in potentially infinite forms, allowing researchers to gather relevant information regardless of its format. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of the subjectivity of truth aligns with the insights of influential scholars such as Marshall and Rossman (2014), who underscore the importance of recognising diverse interpretations and perspectives in qualitative research.

In the context of the study on Grade 4 EFAL Listening Comprehension skills, adopting a qualitative approach aligns with the contemporary understanding of qualitative research as advocated by different scholars (Charmaz, & Thornberg, 2021; Kelly, 2020). This methodological choice allows for the exploration of how teachers conceptualise Listening Comprehension skills, facilitating the collection of rich and in-depth data reflective of the diverse perspectives held by the participants. The study's design is thus in line with the current scholarly consensus on the value of qualitative research in capturing the complexity and depth of human experiences and perceptions.

Qualitative research is a fundamental inquiry method wherein the researcher directly gathers firsthand information from participants. This methodology offers the researcher the unique opportunity to closely observe the practices and experiences of the research participants, enabling the development of in-depth accounts rooted in the specific contexts in which they

operate. Contemporary qualitative scholars, such as Creswell and Creswell (2017), emphasise the importance of this approach in capturing the richness and complexity of human phenomena.

In qualitative research, the aim is to construct meaning with a holistic understanding, considering factors such as knowledge and social circumstances within the authentic world. Scholars like Denzin and Lincoln (2018) stress the significance of exploring phenomena in their natural settings to gain a nuanced comprehension. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative inquiry leans towards the use of words rather than numerical figures and descriptions. Notable scholars in the field, including Charmaz and Thornberg (2021), highlight the qualitative researcher's emphasis on narrative and language as essential components of analysis.

Furthermore, qualitative research is often associated with small-scale studies, active researcher participation, and a flexible research design that evolves with the unfolding insights. Kelly (2020) contributes to the discourse by emphasising the need for researchers to adapt their designs to the dynamic nature of the qualitative inquiry. Contemporary qualitative research, as guided by these scholars, is characterised by its commitment to capturing the depth and intricacies of human experiences through immersive, contextually grounded exploration.

The researcher employed classroom lesson observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to compile a comprehensive understanding of EFAL teachers' experiences in instructing Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher documented and recorded the nuances of EFAL teachers' teaching experiences in Listening Comprehension. This research is framed within the interpretive paradigm, adopting a case study methodology to delve into the intricacies of the subject.

4.4 Interpretive paradigm

Paradigms are defined as all-inclusive systems of interconnected practices and thoughts that describe the purpose of researchers' queries across three dimensions (Flick, 2014; Hua, 2015; Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Allen, 2016). The three dimensions mentioned by the researchers are ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Hua, 2015; Yin, 2015; Schoonenboom, 2018). Ontology pertains to a researcher's conceptualisation of the nature of reality and individuals' perspectives on the world. In contrast, epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge

acquisition, while methodology predominantly addresses how the researcher obtains an understanding of the world and generates data (Flick, 2014; Smith, 2015; Mohajan, 2018). This study employed an interpretive paradigm. Building upon the principles of the mentioned paradigm, the researcher in this study chose to explore Listening Comprehension within the interpretive paradigm. Employing an interpretive paradigm perspective, the researcher delved into the experiences of EFAL teachers, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), ontology delves into the philosophical exploration of comprehending the fundamental essence and nature of reality. Within the interpretive paradigm, the underlying premise regarding the nature of reality is grounded in the belief that reality exists objectively, akin to a law of nature waiting to be unveiled (Stinchcombe, 2020). Leavy (2017) contends that in this paradigm, reality is socially constructed and is discerned through the interpreted meaning of Listening Comprehension skills experiences among Grade 4 EFAL teachers. This suggests that the interpretive approach empowers the researcher to navigate the reality of the EFAL teachers' world, embracing the facets of multiplicity, subjectivity, and social fluidity (Leavy, 2017; Schoonenboom, 2017).

Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research becomes evident when teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. Creswell and Creswell (2017) assert that ontology, situated at the broadest and most profound level, is a critical starting point. It is within this realm that the fundamental essence and nature of reality are contemplated, providing a foundational understanding for educational research.

Furthermore, teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills involves recognising the significance of ontology in shaping the researcher's approach. Ontology, as the basis for methodology, influences the distinctive ways of acquiring information (Stinchcombe, 2020). The methodological options available in educational research encompass various methods, each offering multiple avenues for data gathering and analysis. In this intricate process, the choice of ontology inherently guides the subsequent levels, such as epistemology, shaping how knowledge is acquired and, subsequently, how the data are generated (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Therefore, within the interpretive paradigm, where reality is considered socially constructed and discerned through shared experiences (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020), ontological considerations become paramount. Exploring the nature of reality through ontology empowers

teachers and researchers to navigate the nuances of teaching and comprehending EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. This philosophical foundation serves as the bedrock for developing effective methodologies, ensuring a more profound understanding of the learning process.

Research is about almost being astounded by the world around us, and the steps we take to comprehend it (Hennink et al., 2020). Creswell and Creswell (2017) point out that research concerns how we think the social world (which is ontology) is built, and this influences the way we accept the world we know. We view the world (epistemology) and utilise methods to form what we can see. Thus, research is concerned with achieving an understanding of the world around us, and our understanding is influenced by our worldview (Cohen et al., 2018).

In teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills, the paradigm of learning from one another and mirroring personal understanding holds significant relevance for EFAL teachers' experiences. In the area of EFAL teaching, the process of teaching and learning is inherently social, with teachers imparting knowledge and learners reflecting and internalising that understanding. The idea that social reality can be comprehended from both an external standpoint and through individual awareness aligns with the dynamic nature of classroom interactions. Cohen et al. (2017) advocate for a value-based view in obtaining information, emphasising collaborative and bidirectional learning. This perspective resonates with the reciprocal exchange between teachers and learners during Listening Comprehension skills exercises, where understanding is co-constructed through shared experiences. The qualitative method employed in the study, informed by this value-based view, suggests that information in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills is not merely objective and straightforward but is deeply intertwined with the diverse and subjective experiences of both teachers and learners. Consequently, a profound qualitative approach becomes essential in uncovering the unique nature of these experiences, facilitating a nuanced understanding that contributes to the creation of intelligible and usable outcomes in the EFAL classroom.

In the context of EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the choice of research paradigm plays a pivotal role in shaping the understanding and approach to this educational process. Hennink et al. (2020) aptly assert that being situated within a particular paradigm is akin to adopting a specific worldview. In this study, a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm is embraced, reflecting the researcher's commitment to delving into the nuanced and subjective aspects of EFAL teaching.

The differentiation of paradigms by Al-Ababneh (2020) provides a relevant framework for understanding the researcher's stance. The positivist paradigm, with its emphasis on measurable relationships, contrasts with the interpretive paradigm chosen for this study. Positivist scholars might seek universal rules and measurements in teaching methodologies, focusing on easily quantifiable aspects of Listening Comprehension skills. However, the interpretive paradigm acknowledges the complexity of human experiences and learning, aligning with the intricate nature of language comprehension.

Furthermore, the critical paradigm, as outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2017), introduces a perspective that challenges the status quo. In the realm of EFAL teaching, this could translate into a critical examination of existing pedagogical methods, seeking not only to understand but also to transform educational practices. Critical scholars in this context may strive to empower learners, particularly those facing challenges in language acquisition, and question traditional power dynamics within the learning environment.

As EFAL teachers navigate the multifaceted landscape of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the interpretive paradigm adopted in this study implies a dedication to understanding the subjective experiences and unique challenges faced by both teachers and learners. This qualitative lens invites a deeper exploration of the intricacies involved in language learning, encouraging teachers to go beyond the measurable and embrace the contextual richness of the EFAL classroom.

In the realm of English First Additional Language teaching, the interpretive paradigm provides a valuable framework for understanding the intricate nature of language education. As Marshall and Rossman (2014), Smith (2015), and Cohen et al. (2018) posit, interpretivism acknowledges the inherent difficulty in quantifying certain aspects of human experience, such as participants' actions, thoughts, perspectives, understanding, and insights. This paradigm is rooted in the belief that the world is best comprehended through the subjective experiences of individual participants.

In the specific context of EFAL teaching, where language acquisition involves more than rote memorisation of rules and vocabulary, the interpretive perspective gains significance. The focus on understanding the world as perceived by individual participants aligns with the complexities of language learning, acknowledging that learners bring diverse backgrounds and experiences to the classroom.

Flick (2018) emphasises the interpretive goal of achieving a deep understanding of the meaning individuals attach to their teaching experiences of Listening Comprehension skills. This resonates with the aim of this study, which seeks to explore EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. By adopting an interpretive lens, this study recognises the importance of delving into the subjective realm of teachers' experiences, acknowledging that effective teaching involves more than following predefined methods or strategies.

The methods employed by EFAL teachers in teaching in-depth understanding of Listening Comprehension skills passages are crucial to this study. By focusing on the insights and experiences of teachers, this research study aims to uncover the nuanced approaches teachers use to connect with learners and foster a meaningful engagement with the language.

The interpretive paradigm provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the subjective dimensions of language teaching (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Smith, 2015; Cohen et al., 2018; Flick, 2018). This study, centred on EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners, aligns with this paradigm by recognising the importance of individual perspectives, experiences, and the unique methods employed by teachers in achieving a profound understanding of language comprehension passages.

According to Cohen et al. (2018), the interpretive paradigm is defined as a consideration for the individual, seeking to comprehend the subjective realm of human experience from within. This approach emphasises actions as a means of uncovering the intentions of individuals and their willingness to share their experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. The researcher decided to select this paradigm based on the ontological belief that humans construct denotations and create a sense of their world on the assumption that events and participants are different, resulting in multiple truths and interpretations of events.

The researcher was in the natural setting and experienced the environment which created the participants' reality (Dewi, 2021). One of the advantages of this paradigm is that both the researcher and participants were viewed as interpreters (Kankam, 2019; Dewi, 2021). This is a significant characteristic of interpretive research. The interpretive paradigm was suitable for this study, as it allowed the researcher to gather in-depth information about the experiences and feelings of individual EFAL teachers teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners in their voice.

It was important to explore EFAL teachers' experiences. The researcher played the role of interpreter by conducting a classroom lesson observation to examine EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners, which further explored instructional techniques and how they employ these techniques to teach Listening Comprehension skills. The Listening Comprehension lessons were audio recorded, as were the discussions with the participants.

4.5 Research design

A case study is the research design for this study. The case study method was suitable for this research study because it allowed for a more in-depth examination of the EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Cohen et al. (2018) point out that the case study is the in-depth examination of a single instance of a sociological phenomenon. It entails the thorough exploration of a specific circumstance within its context to acquire information (Goodrick, 2020; Alam, 2021). According to Thomas (2021), a case study is defined as qualitative research that entails a thorough investigation of a specific, confined system over an extended period. This approach involves utilising various data sources within the given setting. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) assert that case studies can be used in a variety of circumstances to gather information about individuals, groups, organisations social, and related phenomena. The researcher employed a case study for this study to provide an in-depth insight into teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners in the primary schools of Ugu district. Case studies are used because they can be employed to answer exploratory and descriptive questions (Goodrick, 2020). This method aided the researcher's investigation of EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension. Case study necessitates in-depth investigation (Cohen et al., 2018)

Yin (2009) provides three main reasons for using the case study. The first reason is that research questions attempting to explain current circumstances justify the usage of a case study. All research questions in this study justify the employment of a case study as focused on: What are EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners; How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners and Why do EFAL teachers use these strategies when teaching listening comprehension? The second reason is that a case study is the method employed when the researcher has almost no influence on the circumstances surrounding the phenomenon. The third reason is that the case study focuses on a current phenomenon in the context of an actual situation.

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 42), the case study aims to “describe what it is like to be in any situation, so they are generally descriptive in nature, however they can also be used to generate claims for further verification.” Feroz, Zo and Chiravuri (2021) elucidate that case studies enable researchers to fully grasp environmental dynamics. They further add that the goal of a case study is to gain a thorough understanding of how participants interpret the phenomenon they are studying (Feroz et al., 2021). The researcher's goal in this study was to comprehend the EFAL teachers’ experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. The case study approach is more pertinent as it allowed for in-depth research through participation with participants in classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The case of this study centred on the Grade 4 teachers teaching EFAL in the Ugu district. In this study, four different primary schools served as the research sites. An exploratory case study has been employed in this study.

An exploratory case study investigates a phenomenon that has not been studied before and can serve as the basis for more in-depth investigation (Priya, 2021; Halkias, Neubert, Thurman & Harkiolakis, 2022). The researcher has not found another study that explores EFAL teachers’ experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Most current research focuses on learners and higher education institutions. This study wanted to understand the EFAL teachers' experiences when teaching Listening Comprehension skills, so the exploratory case study was selected. To thoroughly examine EFAL teachers' experiences when instructing Listening Comprehension, a case study approach was used in this study, supported by observations, interviews, and document analysis.

Using the case study method allows a researcher to conduct in-depth, intensive analyses of a case under study while also gaining a close relationship with research participants through observations and interviews (Sjoberg, Orum, & Feagin, 2020). Moreover, by employing a variety of data collection techniques, including observations, interviews, and document analysis, the researcher is likely to interpret subjective measures like participants' consciousness, feelings, and body language (Thomas, 2021). The researcher was able to explore EFAL teachers teaching Listening Comprehension because she was utilising the case study strategy supported by classroom lesson observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thus, by using a case study strategy, the researcher was able to capture the most significant aspects of the research activities, which may aid in making sense of the phenomenon being studied (O’Donoghue, 2018, Thomas, 2021). The following methods for

data collection were used because of the exploratory nature of this study and the research questions:

The semi-structured interview was divided into two sections. The semi-structured interviews have section A and section B.

- Semi-structured interviews in section A were prepared to collect the biographical information of the participants.
- Semi-structured interviews in section B were scheduled for individuals to explore teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills.
- Semi-structured notes were taken during the interviews.
- Classroom lesson observation schedules were created, and audio recordings of Listening Comprehension were made.
- Observation note-taking was used during EFAL Listening Comprehension lessons.
- Document analysis was prepared to review the documents used by teachers to teach Listening Comprehension skills.

4.6 Sampling Process

In the sampling process, honesty and reflexivity are crucial and it is important to document how sampling took place (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The researcher employed the system of purposive sampling to choose research sites and research participants (Ames, Glenton, & Lewin, 2019; Lohr, 2021). To explore the EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners, the researcher chose four rural primary schools where English was taught as a First Additional Language (FAL) to provide real-life cases of people in rural settings. The case study method allowed the researcher to observe the natural environment of the school and classroom and to probe profoundly into the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills in Grade 4 classrooms (Yin, 2009; Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015; Cohen et al., 2018).

Lohr (2021) suggests that sampling is convenient when participants are readily available and accessible. Therefore, the researcher used three criteria for selecting the samples for this study. The first criterion for selecting the participants was that participants had to be currently engaged in the teaching of EFAL Grade 4. The second criterion was that the participants had to have been teaching Grade 4 EFAL for four years upwards, as the study requires reflection

on teachers' experiences. For the third criterion, the researcher considered only EFAL teachers who were teaching in Ugu district, KwaZulu-Natal.

Shadowing the method of purposive sampling, the researcher targeted subjects likely to produce the richest data for the research questions under study (Cohen et al., 2018; McBride, 2023). The researcher planned to interview Grade 4 teachers teaching English in the selected schools in the Ugu district. She was also involved in the classroom observations which took four to five days per school.

The schools chosen for the main study were situated in rural areas, with a total of ten schools initially selected. However, only four of these schools ultimately participated in the study, with a total of seven participants taking part. It is worth noting that all the participants were females. The researcher did not specifically aim to have only female participants in the study. Instead, the selection of participants was influenced by the fact that, in the schools that agreed to participate, EFAL Grade 4 was taught predominantly by female teachers. The map provides a visual representation of the locations in the Ugu district where the research study was conducted.

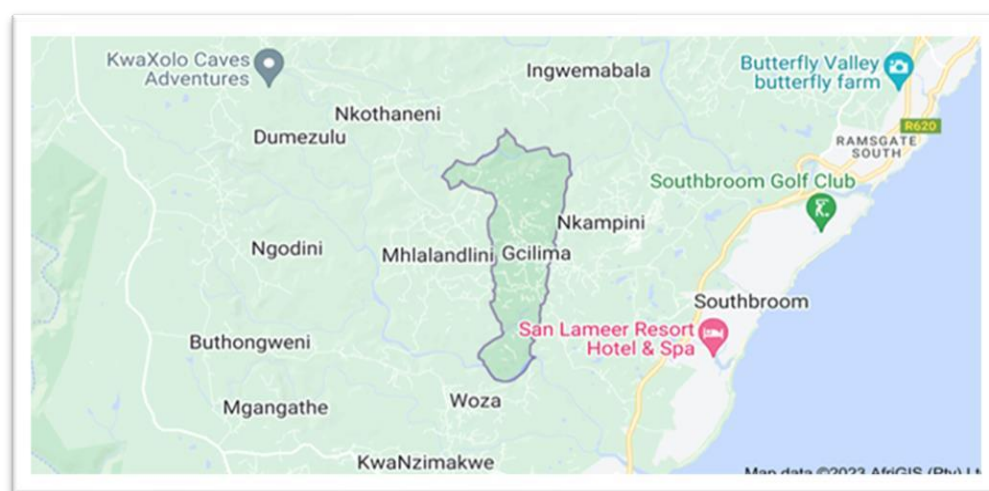


Figure 4.2 Ugu district (Google source 2019)

The Ugu district is situated on the South Coast of the KwaZulu-Natal province. The study specifically took place on the lower south coast of the Ugu district, in a locality known as KwaXolo. KwaXolo consists of small villages, all under the governance of Chief Xolo. The

schools in KwaXolo use English as the first additional language since the dominant language in the area is isiZulu. This area is surrounded by several farms and features tourist attractions, including the renowned KwaXolo Caves Adventures and Oribi Gorge, which are highly popular rock-climbing destinations on the South Coast.

4.6.1 School Profile

The study involved four participating schools located in a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In the South African education system, schools are categorised into five quintiles. Quintile 1 to 3 schools, characterised as poor and non-fee schools, receive more government funding, based on criteria such as the redundancy rate, unemployment levels, and the education and earning levels of the community (Govender, 2022). On the other hand, Quintile 4 to 5 schools, classified as ex-model schools, require learners to pay fees (Köhler, 2022). This categorisation reflects the economic conditions of the communities served by the schools, with higher quintiles typically indicating a higher socioeconomic status and the ability to pay fees. All participating schools were quintiles 2 to 3 operating under traditional and councillors' leadership.

- **Pseudonyms and coding used for the teachers and their schools.**

In the process of maintaining confidentiality and adhering to ethical practices, the present study employs coding for both school names and individual participants. Adu (2019) advocates for the strategic use of codes as a methodological approach to protecting the anonymity of participants while facilitating the organisation and analysis of data. This coding system involves the assignment of unique identifiers to each school and participant, allowing for the presentation of research findings in a clear and organised manner without compromising the privacy of the individuals involved. The implementation of coding, as recommended by Adu (2019), serves as a robust methodological strategy that balances the need for transparency and confidentiality in the research process.

Table 1 Pseudonyms and coding used for the teachers and their schools.

School name	Name of a teacher	Code
Strawberry Primary	Tyra Ruth Anisha	A
Lingonberry Primary	Bathsheba Gabby	B
Cranberry Primary	Yesterday	C
Raspberry Primary	Jennisha	D

Table 1 provides a succinct overview of the participants in the study, organised by their respective schools. Notably, School A contribute three participants while School B contribute two participants, fostering a rich and diverse representation of teachers. Tyra, Ruth, and Anisha are the participants from Strawberry Primary, which is school A, and bring their unique perspectives to the study. Likewise, school B Lingonberry Primary is represented by Bathsheba and Gabby, highlighting the presence of two participants from this school. The table further includes individuals from Cranberry Primary (School C), and Raspberry Primary (School D), each contributing to the overall diversity of the participant pool. This emphasis on the distinct composition of Schools A and B underscores their significance in the study, suggesting potential variations in experiences within these specific educational environments.

The participating schools in this study are distributed across quantiles 2 to 3. The table below provides an overview of the profile of each school, encompassing the number of teachers, English First Additional Language teachers, and grade 4 classes. All schools reported issues of overcrowded classrooms, creating challenging learning environments for both teachers and learners.

In School B and School D, the situation was particularly pronounced, leading to the utilisation of school halls as grade 4 classrooms. Remarkably, in several other schools, overcrowding was managed by seating learners in groups of three at desks designed for two, highlighting the extent of the challenge faced in accommodating all learners.

The following table illustrates the human resources within each school, providing a snapshot of the existing conditions:

Table 2 Coding used to create school profile.

Code	A	B	C	D
Number of teaching staff	28	21	15	11
Number of EFAL teachers	15	10	9	10
Number of Grade 4 classes	4	2	2	1
Teacher/learner ratio	1:46	1:55	1:53	1:58
School enrolment	912	1092	623	376

• **Access to Resources in Research Site Schools for Teaching Listening Comprehension skills.**

The researcher diligently investigated the availability of essential resources such as electricity, audio (radio), audio-visual (television), and library facilities within the research site schools. The purpose was to ascertain whether these resources had been utilised by participants and contributed to the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills.

Electricity Accessibility: All schools in the research site were equipped with electricity. It is worth noting that, regrettably, in one school, the electricity was reported to be nonfunctional, potentially affecting the use of electronic teaching aids.

Audio Resources (Radio): Surprisingly, none of the research site schools were found to have radios, indicating a potential gap in the availability of this resource for supporting Listening Comprehension skills activities.

Audio-Visual Resources (Television): Only one research school possessed a television, and notably, it was shared among the entire school community. This singular television resource may have implications for its frequency and effectiveness in supporting teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

The following table provides a visual representation of the accessibility of these resources across the research site schools:

Table 3 Coding used to create the participant schools' resources.

Functioning of resources	A	B	C	D
Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Radio	No	No	No	No
Television	No	Yes	No	No
Library	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

This comprehensive investigation sets the foundation for a detailed analysis of participants' experiences and practices in using these resources while teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

4.6. 2. Participants' Profile

This section provides information about the participants in this study. The table below offers a comprehensive overview of the diverse cohort of participants, categorised by their respective schools. The participants, all female teachers, represent Schools A through D, each bringing unique attributes to the research. Their age distribution spans various brackets, from the experienced 45–50 age group to those over 50 years, contributing a wealth of perspectives to the study.

The participants' academic qualifications vary, with most holding a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), and some possessing advanced qualifications such as a Master of Education (M.Ed.). A notable aspect is the participants' specialisation in English, highlighting a distinction between those who teach English as a specialised subject and those who do not. Additionally, the participants' teaching experience ranges from 5 to 28 years, reflecting the richness of their professional backgrounds.

Their collective commitment to professional development is evident through unanimous participation in workshops, underscoring a shared dedication to ongoing growth and learning within the educational landscape. This table sets the stage for a nuanced

exploration of the intricate interplay between these diverse profiles and the study's focal areas.

Table 4 Coding for participants' profiles.

School	A	B	C	D
Gender	Females	Females	Female	Female
Age group	45 - 50 35 – 40 35-40	+50 45 - 50	25 - 30	45 -50
Qualification	B. Ed B. Ed M. Ed	PFED B. Ed	B. Ed	ACE
Specialised in English	No No Yes	Yes No	Yes	No
Teaching experience	15 years 8 years 10 years	28 years 12 years	5 years	20 years
Professional development	Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes	Yes	Yes

• Tyra (A)

Tyra teaches at Strawberry Primary and has 15 years of experience teaching Grade 4 English. The researcher observed Tyra's classroom which was overcrowded with 46 learners. The enrolment in Strawberry Primary was 912 and there were 28 teachers for the whole school. The school had limited resources for teaching. Tyra holds a B. Ed degree.

• Bathsheba (B)

Bathsheba has been a teacher at Lingonberry Primary teaching in the Intermediate Phase. Bathsheba teaches at the school hall with Grades 4A and B. The Grade 4A and 4B were seated back-to-back in a school hall. Even though learners were in the school hall, they were overcrowded. Learners were seated three at one desk while the desk was meant to sit two learners. The fact that learners use the hall as the classroom and squash themselves

in one desk shows insufficient resources. In Lingonberry Primary before the lesson began learners were given one textbook per desk, which means one book was used by three learners. During the classroom observation, the researcher was able to hear the teacher who was teaching in Grade 4B which distracted from listening attentively to the lesson in Grade 4A. When interviewed on her experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension in a hall with Grades 4A and 4B, she articulated like this:

...it is not easy to teach, most learners do not pay attention, and a lot of disruptions happen and are time-consuming.

The learners at Lingonberry Primary are 1092. The school has 21 teaching staff. The teacher/learner ratio is 1:55. The overcrowded classroom is difficult to teach. During the classroom observation lesson day, there was no teacher in Grade 4B, and the learners were making a noise. Bathsheba asked Grade 4B to keep quiet and wait for their teacher before she started the lesson which was time-consuming. Even when she began to teach, some learners in her class were not concentrating, she had to stop and ask learners to keep quiet or stop what they were doing.

Bathsheba has 28 years of experience teaching English to Grade 4 learners. She specialised in English in her higher education.

• **Yesterday (C)**

Yesterday a young teacher with 5 years of teaching experience at Cranberry Primary, which is also located in a rural area. Yesterday has B. Ed degree for Foundation Phase which she was automatically able to study English at a higher level of education as it is compulsory to do English as a language in her degree. The school enrolment was 623 with 15 teaching staff and the teacher/learner ratio was 1:53. The school has inadequate resources to the extent that there is no library at the school even the classroom has no space for the library or reading corner.

• **Jennisha (D)**

Jennisha teaches Grade 4 English at Raspberry Primary. She has 20 years of teaching experience in primary school and a Bachelor of Education degree. She did not specialise in English at her higher level of education. Raspberry Primary Grade 4 class is a school hall and overcrowded with 58 learners. The resources are scarce,

but Jennisha is very creative shown by her classroom, which was a very organised and learner-friendly environment. She made sections for each subject with pictures, charts, and learners' projects which she displayed on her classroom walls. Jennisha used different visual materials when teaching Listening Comprehension.

- **Anisha (A)**

Anisha, another notable teacher at Strawberry Primary, distinguishes herself with a Master of Education degree and an impressive decade of experience in English language instruction. These diverse profiles highlight the varying qualifications and experiences among teachers at Strawberry Primary.

- **Ruth (A)**

Ruth, Anisha, and Tyra work at Strawberry Primary School. Ruth, who holds a B. Ed. qualification, boasts eight years of experience teaching Grade 4 English. The researcher conducted observations in Ruth's classroom, which faced challenges of overcrowding with 46 learners and limited teaching resources.

- **Gabby (B)**

Gabby and Bathsheba both teach at Lingonberry Primary School. Gabby, who holds a B. Ed., brings 12 years of teaching experience to the classroom, with the last 8 years dedicated to teaching Grade 4 learners.

4.7 Data Generation Processes and Methods

According to Cooper, Hedges, and Valentine (2019), data is the information collected by researchers from which explanations and findings about a specific instance under investigation are drawn. A crucial component of research methods is the collection of data that is both trustworthy and valid, which can only be achieved by using adequately and purposefully structured instruments that significantly contribute to answering the research questions (Leavy, 2017; Esser & Vliegthart, 2017; Mik-Meyer, 2020).

In this study, classroom lesson observations, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The semi-structured interview was divided into two sections. The first section, in the form of a questionnaire, aimed to obtain teachers'

biographies, their experiences teaching Grade 4 EFAL, their EFAL specialisation, and their attendance at professional development workshops. This part of the interview was administered to ten participants, who were asked to answer the questions. The responses from this section assisted in selecting the sample of participants for the actual study and in developing the classroom lesson observation, document analysis, and the second section of the interview.

The classroom lesson observations were scheduled after the first section of the interview was administered. During these observations, the researcher was able to capture information as it happened, with the lessons being audio-recorded. These observations and recordings were used to investigate how EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills and the experiences they encounter in doing so.

One-on-one interviews were then conducted with each participant to gather more detailed information about their teaching methods and experiences with Listening Comprehension. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain descriptive data that would help the researcher understand how participants build understanding and maintain social integrity. The interviews also aimed to uncover the reasons behind the participants' teaching methods.

To address the various research questions, different data collection techniques were employed.

Table 5 Data collection plan

Research question	Participant	Method
What are EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners?	EFAL Grade 4 teachers	Classroom lesson observations Semi-structured interviews
How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners?	EFAL Grade 4 teachers	Classroom lesson observations Interviews Document analysis Audio recording of Listening Comprehension

Why do EFAL teachers use these strategies when teaching listening comprehension?	EFAL Grade 4 teachers	Classroom lesson observations Interviews Document analysis Audio recording of Listening Comprehension
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The following section explores the methods of collecting data. Classroom lesson observation, document analysis, and interviews were employed to respond to the research questions.

4.7.1 Classroom Lesson Observations

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define observation as the process of gathering unlimited, accurate information by watching people and the surroundings in the research area. Observation involves using an individual's sensory experiences and instincts to obtain information (Bell, Dobbelaer, Klette, & Visscher, 2019). The researcher was able to observe how teachers teach Listening Comprehension based on the introduction of the lesson, teaching resources and the interaction between the teacher and learners. The researcher, by observing the lesson, aimed to explore which instructional techniques EFAL teachers employed and how those pedagogies were used to teach Listening Comprehension. Lessons for Grade 4 EFAL Listening Comprehension were observed in four schools, with four teachers participating. In each school, multiple lessons were observed, and every observed lesson was audio-recorded.

O'Leary (2020) mentioned that one of the most crucial components of the observation is data documentation. Cohen et al. (2018) elucidates that the benefit of observation is that this technique allows the researcher to collect data as it happens in a research site. Hence, the researcher was able to observe the Grade 4 teachers as they taught Listening Comprehension skills. The researcher captured Listening Comprehension skills using an audio recorder while taking notes. This allowed the researcher to concentrate on observing the lessons and annotating without interruption. This reduced the possibility of eliciting critical data that could have occurred if the researcher had documented the information later. The purpose of the observation was to examine EFAL teachers' experiences when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The research aimed to

observe the experiences the participants encounter when teaching Listening Comprehension skills and how EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills to rationalise during interviews the instructional techniques they employ for this purpose. The distinctive feature of observation as a research method lies in providing the researcher with the opportunity to collect data from currently existing and occurring situations (Cohen et al., 2018). The researcher observed how EFAL teachers taught Listening Comprehension skills in the classroom.

During classroom lesson observations where teachers were teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the researcher encountered some questions. As a result, additional interview questions were incorporated, aligning with the insights gained from the classroom observations. Interviews were conducted because it was necessary to explain the various ways in which the EFAL Grade 4 teachers taught Listening Comprehension skills. It is always advantageous to combine observational data with interviews to verify the perspectives of the participants (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). The following discussion focuses on the usage of semi-structured interviews for data collection.

4.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

Creswell and Creswell (2018) point out that when researchers conduct a qualitative interview, they ask one or more participants familiar, unlimited questions who provide their answers. Interviews can be face-to-face, telephonic, and/or conducted via the Internet (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Interviews consist of structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews (Brinkmann, 2014). Structured interviews are extremely formal and are used to obtain precise details in quantitative research, whereas unstructured interviews could yield valuable data, yet those who employ them must be careful as this form of interview requires a great deal of competence (Quarta, 2022). Structured interviews were not suitable for this research study as they are rigid and may have limited the amount of information obtained. Hence, semi-structured interviews were the best method for this study.

This study employed one-on-one semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is an interview that aims to gather descriptions of the participant's daily life to elucidate the phenomenon's meaning (Silverman, 2013). Semi-structured interviews create a bond

between the researcher and participant and allow participants to contribute more to the study. Probing questions allowed for a richness of understanding and were applied to clarify participants' reactions. Semi-structured interviews allow for questioning and the clarification of responses during the process of the interview, being a live type of interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Tegan (2022) adds that live interviews produce satisfying answers. As a result, the researcher was able to request clarification if she did not understand the response from the participants.

The interviews in this study are perceived as collaborative efforts aimed at capturing records of experience, identification, and expertise (van der Hoorn, 2019). The formulation of interview questions was responsive to the events and dynamics observed during the Listening Comprehension lessons. During these interviews, EFAL teachers elaborated on their teaching methods and shared insights into the experiences they encountered while instructing Listening Comprehension lessons.

The process began with the recognition that interviews serve as a collective endeavour, fostering the creation of detailed records encapsulating the diverse experiences and expertise of the participants (Magaldi, & Berler, 2020). In alignment with this understanding, the development of interview questions was strategically shaped by the unfolding events within the Listening Comprehension skills lessons. The EFAL teachers actively contributed to these interviews, providing rich narratives that delved into the nuances of their teaching methods and the specific challenges and successes they encountered in the context of Listening Comprehension skills instruction. This approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the participants' perspectives, ensuring that the interview questions were not only relevant but also tailored to the specific context of the study.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews served as a valuable platform for the EFAL teachers to articulate and elucidate their unique approaches to teaching Listening Comprehension skills (Silverman, 2013; Magaldi & Berler, 2020, Tegan, 2022). Through their narratives, they not only provided insights into their pedagogical strategies but also shared reflections on the practical aspects of implementing these methods in the classroom. This collaborative exchange of information during the interviews contributed

to the generation of rich and contextually relevant data, offering a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted aspects of teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

The semi-structured interviews were not merely a data collection tool but a dynamic process where the participants actively shaped the narrative by sharing EFAL teachers' experiences, instructional techniques, and insights related to teaching Listening Comprehension skills (van der Hoorn, 2019; Tegan 2022). This approach ensured that the semi-structured interview questions were not isolated inquiries but rather evolved organically from the observed lessons, creating a cohesive and contextually embedded foundation for the qualitative exploration of EFAL teachers' practices and experiences.

The semi-structured method enabled the researcher to pursue intriguing leads that emerged during the interviews (Owen, 2014; Blandford, Furniss & Makri, 2016). It also provided the researcher and participants with adaptability because the participant might raise a concern that even the researcher had not previously considered (Brinkmann, 2014). Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of allowing a researcher to formulate additional questions to acquire extra comprehensive information if the participant does not initially provide enough detail (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Husband, 2020).

The interviews occurred after or during school hours when the participants had free time. It was contingent on the participants' availability and the most convenient place for them to guarantee their privacy (Husband, 2020). Furthermore, in the interview setting one must make sure that nobody is unfairly interrupted (Tegan, 2022). There was no disruption during the interviews. The participants were allowed to speak freely because the surroundings were not threatening. Karatsareas (2022) asserts that the needs mentioned above [speaking freely and non-threatening] should be considered before interviewing people. To deal with the matter of bias, a familiar schedule of interviews was created. This also evaded ambiguity and ensured that the main questions were structured in terms of consistency, continuation, and choice of words.

The semi-structured interview was divided into two sections, section A and section B. Section A was in the form of a questionnaire, as it contained a list of questions to which the participants were required to respond (Husband, 2020). The purpose of the section A interviews was to obtain biographical information about the teachers and about

professional development workshops they attended, as well as teacher and school profiles. Section A concentrated on the teachers' experiences (years of teaching), school enrolment, staff size, Grade 4 classes, resources, and teacher/learner ratio. The information assisted the researcher in selecting suitable participants because the study required EFAL-experienced teachers and an understanding of the research site.

Section B of the semi-structured interview questions were related to the research questions. The first sub-questions focused on the teachers' experiences when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The second sub-questions focused on how EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills, and the third sub-questions led to the rationalisation of choosing the instructional techniques they used when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. So, The EFAL Grade 4 teachers were asked the reasons for using the instructional techniques they employed during the classroom lesson observation.

Each semi-structured interview had a duration of thirty to forty-five minutes and occurred once or twice per week. The scheduling of each interview followed a classroom observation to address and clarify aspects that had arisen during the observed lessons. The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants because the researcher considered this to be the best method to capture the actual words from the interviewees. The recording of the interviews allowed the researcher to focus on the answers of the participants with no distraction by note-taking while also ensuring that all responses were recorded. Rosenthal (2016) explains that the audio recording of the interview provides substance for determining reliability. Farooq and De Villiers (2017) add that audio recording enables tape replay and transcription enhancement. Therefore, the audio recording of interviews freed the researcher from relying on notes taken and remembering information, both of which could have been inaccurate or incomplete.

Before the beginning of the semi-structured interviews, the participants were reminded about the purpose of the interview, the issue of voluntary withdrawal, and how their confidentiality and anonymity would be ensured. The researcher also assured the participants that the information would be erased once the specified storage time had elapsed. Following the interview process, the researcher transcribed the data. The

researcher become acquainted with the data whilst transcribing. Van der Hoorn (2019) suggests that as the researcher becomes more familiar with the data, they become more skilled in assigning labels to units of meaning. As a result, while transcription was taking place, the researcher immersed herself in the data. After the data was collected, the researcher went back to the participants to crosscheck its accuracy and ensured that their viewpoints were accurately captured. The participants made changes and added other information that was omitted during the interview (Candela, 2019; Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). This process is called member checking. After reviewing the edited transcripts for correctness, they seemed to be prepared for analysis.

4.7.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis was utilised as an additional method of data collection. According to Love (2013), the effectiveness and significance of documents as a data source stems from their pre-existing nature, which means they do not intrude on or alter the setting as the presence of an investigator might. Document analysis involves examining and interpreting data to derive meaning and understanding. Various documents can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and shape perceptions related to the research problem (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022). Some documents can even trace the history of how EFAL Listening Comprehension skills have been taught to Grade 4 learners.

Documents are particularly valuable because they provide useful cross-validation for other methods used to gather information. To ensure triangulation in the study, documents were analysed and compared with the participants' responses (Alam, 2021; Coleman, 2022). The researcher thoroughly reviewed different types of documents necessary for gaining a better understanding of the Listening Comprehension activities of Grade 4 learners.

Listening Comprehension skills are a fundamental component of language skills, and as such, they are taught, assessed, and supported similarly to other language skills or subjects (DBE, 2011). To investigate how participants approach and prepare for Listening Comprehension skills in comparison to other language skills, the researcher requested specific documents. These included the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), and lesson plans to examine their alignment with CAPS and assess how participants diversify activities from the CAPS

document. Additionally, the researcher reviewed Listening Comprehension tasks to understand how these skills are assessed. All assessment tasks were based on stories, and during classroom observations, the researcher noted that all participants used stories as an instructional technique specifically for Listening Comprehension skills. To explain the preference for using stories over other activities, Anisha mentioned: “It is easier to assess a story because learners are accustomed to reading comprehension. The difference in Listening is that learners listen to the story from the teacher.”

Continuous Assessment books (CASS) and Subject Improvement Plans (SIP) were also reviewed to identify programmes that support learners with barriers in Listening Comprehension skills. The researcher also examined Grade 4 learners' exercise books, particularly those used for oral and written assessments. In reviewing the CASS book, the researcher aimed to observe the consistency in learners' performance in Listening Comprehension skills, which contrasted with the classroom observations and what was seen in learners' exercise books.

Furthermore, schools provided access to the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS). SA-SAMS is a software application used in South African schools to manage learner information, attendance, assessments, and administrative tasks efficiently (Maremi, Herselman, & Botha, 2020; Dlamini, 2022). The system is instrumental in streamlining school operations and ensuring accurate record-keeping in the education system (Dlamini, 2022). South African government schools use SA-SAMS mark sheets to input learners' marks, which are required by district offices to monitor learners' performance each term. While the English Language SA-SAMS mark sheets encompass various language skills, the researcher focused specifically on the treatment of Listening Comprehension skills within this administrative system.

4.8 Data analysis

Lareau (2021) defines data analysis as the methodical procedure of grouping and bringing together field notes, records, and other material to come to an understanding of the data so that the researcher can proffer what s/he has found. Jackson, Bazeley and Bazeley (2019) add that the accurate assessment of a researcher in qualitative research is her data analysis, as it necessitates methodical craftsmanship and an ability to comprehend data in

writing. The researcher analysed and gathered data intending to give a planned information. The procedure of analysing data guaranteed that the researcher was able to generate dependable, real, and truthful results. Analysing data is the process of choosing, polishing, categorising, focusing, and discarding.

The data collected from semi-structured interviews, classroom lesson observations, and document analysis were analysed using thematic analysis, a systematic process crucial for extracting meaningful insights from qualitative data (Lochmiller, 2021). The rationale behind employing thematic analysis lies in its inherent capacity to uncover the essence of EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Listening Comprehension skills. By focusing on the subjective dimensions of data participants' experiences, viewpoints, and opinions; thematic analysis serves as a valuable tool for extracting nuanced insight pertinent to the study objectives. This study employed thematic analysis with an inductive approach (Herzog, Handke & Hitters, 2019). An inductive approach favours the identification of important themes inherent in raw data. Saldaña and Omasta, (2016) emphasise that data analysis is a continual and dynamic process within qualitative studies. Data analysis commenced after the first interview or any other data generation and continued as a continual process until all collected data were analysed. Consequently, the researcher was often engaged in a cyclical movement, oscillating between data collection and analysis.

The researcher followed the six steps of thematic analysis (Braun, 2006; Saldaña, 2020; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Braun, Clarke & Hayfield, 2022). The initial step involved immersing in the data to thoroughly understand its intricacies. Semi-structured interviews and classroom lesson observation recordings were transcribed for qualitative data analysis, requiring the researcher to read and re-read transcripts for familiarity and code identification (Kiger & Verpo, 2020). The next phase involved systematically searching for overarching themes by grouping related codes. This process allowed for the identification of patterns and recurrent concepts within the dataset. The subsequent analysis involved coding topics and generating labels for key concepts, organising them into broader themes. Language use and content were scrutinised, and codes were grouped into themes and sub-themes. Themes were then reviewed and refined through an iterative process, ensuring a comprehensive and accurate representation of the data. Reviewing themes ensured coherence and relevance to research objectives (Braun et al., 2022). Themes were then compared and merged, allowing for adjustments, testing sentiments,

and classification against subsequent data. Clear names and concise definitions were assigned to each theme (Braun, 2006; Lochmiller, 2021). In the final step, these themes were synthesised into a comprehensive report, contributing to a deeper understanding of the qualitative data under investigation (Braun, 2006; Herzog et al., 2019; Braun et al., 2022). The integration of these analytical steps allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the collected data, underscoring the iterative nature inherent in qualitative research. The researcher successfully articulated a comprehensive interpretation of the collected data, fostering an in-depth understanding.

The study ensured a rigorous and transparent approach to thematic analysis (Saldaña, 2020). The systematic progression through each phase facilitated a nuanced exploration of the data, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study's qualitative findings. This methodological alignment also contributes to the broader conversation within the field of qualitative research, as Saldaña's (2020) framework is recognised for its applicability and rigour in thematic analysis.

4.9 Ethical Issues

Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that ethics involves a principled sensitivity to the rights of others, emphasising that while truth is valuable, respecting human dignity is of even greater importance. This encompasses both the generation and analysis of data, as well as the protection of participants' rights throughout the entire process. Lincoln (2020) highlights the critical role ethics plays in research, particularly when it involves human participants. Given that this research involves human subjects, the researcher adhered strictly to ethical guidelines.

4.9.1 Gaining Access

Ethical considerations were necessary to obtain permission to access the research sites. After the proposal was approved, the researcher identified schools that would serve as research sites. Although only four schools were required for the study, the researcher decided to identify more than four to allow participants to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished. The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where she was registered as a PhD candidate. After the ethical clearance

was granted, the researcher sought permission from the Department of Education (DoE) in KwaZulu-Natal to conduct the study in the selected schools within the Ugu district. A formal application was submitted to the Provincial Department of Basic Education, including the letter and proposal for this study, addressed to the Head of Department (HOD) at the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education (KZNDBE), and permission was granted.

To gain access to the research sites, the researcher needed to secure a venue for the study. This often requires preparation, as researchers typically work through 'gatekeepers' who can assist in gaining access to a research site and to the participants involved in the study (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). Once the research sites were identified, the researcher began the negotiation process, keeping in mind that access to participants would significantly influence the rapport between the researcher and the participants, as well as their response to her (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016). The primary challenge was presenting the research idea effectively. Initially, the researcher identified the schools and then invited Grade 4 English First Additional Language teachers to participate in the study. The decision to approach participants before principals was informed by a prior experience at the first school. Initially, the researcher approached the principal, who agreed to participate. However, when the participants at that school were later approached, they were reluctant to be involved in the study. This prompted the researcher to adjust her strategy and approach the participants first, often meeting them at workshops. Once the participants agreed to take part, the researcher then sought access to the principals.

The researcher contacted the principals to schedule appointments and provided an outline of the topics to be discussed. After the appointments were arranged, the researcher honoured them and explained the research process in person. The principals of the case study schools warmly welcomed the researcher and were motivated, understanding the benefits of the research. They were very supportive and willing to assist the researcher as needed. Once the research sites were secured, the researcher followed official procedures and left letters for the principals explaining the nature of the study.

4.9.2 Informed Consent

The Grade 4 EFAL teachers and learners volunteered to participate in the study. The researcher provided them with informed consent letters which contained a consent form

for them to sign (see Appendix 1F). In addition, the researcher provided the learners with letters to seek permission from their parents or guardians because they are minor participants. The letters were written in both English and IsiZulu to explain the aim and objectives of the study to the parents and guardians (see Appendix 1G). Grade 4 learners were granted permission by their parents and guardians to participate in this study. Flick (2018) and Schoonenboom (2018) state that it is important to inform participants about the primary goal and anticipated results of a research study. This enables individuals to make informed decisions about their participation.

Leavy (2020) asserts that individuals should not be compelled to engage in the research study process. Additionally, he contends that those who desire to withdraw from the research should be able to do so freely and without any constraints (Leavy, 2020). The researcher explained to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that all the information would be treated with utmost confidentiality and used for research purposes only. The researcher made it clear to the participants that they were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. The nature and purpose of the study were explained to participants so that they were not misinformed. Moravcsik (2019) and Leavy (2020) point out the importance of participants having transparency in terms of what is anticipated from them.

4.9.3 Termination of the Data Process

The termination of the data collection procedure is entirely at the discretion of the researcher (Clark, Foster, Bryman & Sloan, 2021; Fischer & Guzel, 2023). Noticing duplication and the absence of new information, the researcher chose to conclude the data generation process, deeming it sufficient when addressing all research questions. Additionally, maintaining confidentiality is a pivotal ethical consideration (Luepker, 2022), with an emphasis on protecting data and participant identities. To ensure confidentiality, all research materials were securely stored, and electronic files were password protected. This commitment aligns with UKZN's ethics policy, and documents will be disposed of after five years according to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee guidelines (HSSREC).

The next section discusses the trustworthiness concerns.

4.10 Trustworthiness

For the results of the study to be acceptable, they must comply with the criteria for research validity and reliability. The reliability of data analysis, findings, and conclusions is determined by trustworthiness (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; CohenMiller, 2018; Aguilar-Solano, 2020). To judge qualitative research as meaningful, it must have the following qualities of trustworthiness: transferability, dependability, credibility, and confirmability.

Nassaji (2020) states that transferability is the level where the findings can be transferred out of the research context. This study was conducted in the Ugu district, but the findings can be transferred to other districts, even provinces. From the qualitative perspective, transferability is accountable for making generalisations. In this study, the researcher improved transferability by depicting the research setting and the assumptions at the centre of this research. The researcher can't identify or detect (all) sites that may desire to transfer her findings. However, she is responsible for providing dense descriptions, so that those who look to transfer the findings to their specific site can arbitrate transferability (Billups, 2019; Aguilar Solano, 2020).

Dependability is the assessment of the quality of data collected and its analysis and theory generation (Padgett, 2016; Leavy, 2020). To attain dependability, researchers make sure the research procedure is coherent, traceable, and recorded (Patton, 2015). This study was verified as dependable, as the research outcomes were the same when they were repeated. Due to the research procedure, readers were able to examine and judge the dependability of the research (Croswell & Croswell, 2018). The need for steadfastness underlies the requirement for the researcher to represent the consistently changing setting where research occurs. The research needs to depict the progressions that happen in the setting and how the progressions influenced the way the researcher moved toward the study.

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) emphasise that the credibility of a study is realistic when scholars or readers are faced with an experience that they can identify. The credibility criteria include building up the outcomes of qualitative research that are solid or authentic from the point of view of the participants (Stahl & King, 2020). Credibility focuses on participants' opinions and the scholar's depiction of them (Silverman, 2020). From this point of view, the purpose of qualitative research is to portray the phenomenon of concern from the participant's view. Noble and Smith (2015) advocate several methods to ensure

credibility such as extended rendezvous, collection of data triangulation, and investigator triangulation. The credibility of this study was assured through triangulation, as the study used various techniques to generate data. However, the participants are the ones who can judge the credibility of the outcomes. Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that peer check-up gives room for exterior scrutiny of the research procedure, which might, thus, enhance credibility as well as exploratory referential capability.

Confirmability involves ensuring that the researcher's clarifications and results are obtained from the data, necessitating the researcher to display how culmination and understanding have been achieved (Sileyew, 2019; Silverman, 2020). Confirmability alludes to how much the outcomes can be affirmed or validated by others. Various methodologies can be used, but in this study, confirmability was implemented through member checking (Leavy, 2020). The participants were able to verify that the interview was analysed correctly, and the data was reflected accurately. Confirmability begins when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all completed (CohenMiller, 2018; Ragab, 2018; Parkar, 2018). Leavy (2020) recommends that scholars should include markers such as the motives for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices during the course of the whole study so that other people can comprehend how and why the findings were created.

Most of the participants in this study had been in the teaching profession for over five years. In addition, almost all of them had been in their current school for not less than five years. Half of the participants taught multiple grades between 4 to 7. They also taught subjects other than English.

Even though the sample for this study appears small, each participant provided the researcher with in-depth information. Qualitative research is not like quantitative research. It does not look to generalise results through the entire population as quantitative research often does, but somewhat identifies the exclusivity of each participant's knowledge and tries to sufficiently explore and portray such understanding (Hall & Hall, 2020). This does not mean qualitative research is not reliable. Neale (2021) states that qualitative research aims at transferability as an amount of credibility, where the results from the study can be used to comprehend parallel circumstances with participants with analogous characteristics. Hence, the use of a small sample does not

make the research any less credible and it was determined that a sample of this size is enough to increase an understanding of the insights of teachers concerning teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the research methodology and data generation processes employed in this study. The discussion encompassed the qualitative approach, with a specific emphasis on utilising the case study as the chosen research design within the interpretive paradigm. Key components covered in this chapter included a detailed exploration of the research context, profiles of the participants, procedures for data generation, methods for data analysis, ethical considerations, and the critical issue of ensuring principles of trustworthiness. By comprehensively addressing these aspects, the chapter lays a robust foundation for the subsequent phases of the research, providing a clear framework for understanding the study's approach and methods.

The following chapter focuses on data analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study. This chapter intends to present the EFAL teachers' experiences teaching Grade 4 learners in the selected primary schools. The data is then presented using themes and categories generated both from the literature and data instruments with the participants. Verbatim quotations have been used to ensure that the voices of the participants are not lost in the data presentation. The emerging trends and patterns from the presented data are discussed.

The chapter provides a presentation of empirical data that was collected to answer three critical questions that guided this study:

- What are EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?
- How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?
- Why do EFAL teachers use these strategies when teaching Listening Comprehension skills?

This data was generated through three methods of data collection: observation, semi structured interviews, and document analysis.

5.2 Processes

The researcher visited four rural primary schools to peruse documents, observe, and interview Grade 4 EFAL teachers teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The goal was to gather insights through observations and interviews. To methodically organise the qualitative data collection, three instruments were utilised: Firstly, an observation of Listening Comprehension skills was carried out in each school, involving each participant observed four times and lasting approximately one hour per lesson. This observation covered pre-listening, during listening, and post-listening comprehension activities, with a focus on classroom practices. Secondly, an assessment of the documents employed by EFAL teachers for teaching Listening Comprehension was conducted. Finally, a semi-structured interview schedule was employed to garner insights from participants about EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, their approaches to assessment, and the support provided to learners

facing challenges in this area. Interview questions also probed the utilisation of CAPS and other documents aimed at enhancing Listening Comprehension skills. Some interview questions referenced observations made in the classroom during Listening Comprehension lessons. The interviews were either recorded or transcribed.

Interviews were conducted with Grade 4 EFAL teachers from the observed classrooms. The process of visiting schools to gather data was meticulously organised by contacting school principals and participants a week before the visits. The researcher allocated four days to each school, conducting interviews with participants after each classroom observation session. Before the initial classroom observations, participants underwent an interview to elucidate the purpose of the observation and interview processes. This pre-observation interview also aimed to identify participants with experience in teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives.

5.3 Themes emerging from data generation.

The themes were developed through the categorisation of the data from all data sources. Initially, the data was mined according to the research questions that guided the data collection process. This initial mining of the data revealed some interesting issues that influenced the data analysis process. These issues were then labelled as the initial categories for analysis. Having established the various categories, the categories were then grouped according to the research questions and named each grouping as the themes of the analysis. Hence four themes were developed, each informed by the research questions. The first theme focuses on rote teaching which is pre-listening comprehension. The second theme focuses on resources used by the participants when teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. The third theme focuses on the instructional techniques of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The fourth theme focuses on the challenges affecting the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills effectively to Grade 4 learners. Each of these themes will now be presented. The table below shows the themes and sub-themes emerged during the analysis.

Table 6 Themes that emerged during this study research.

Themes	Subthemes
Rote teaching	Recitation
	Pronunciation and spelling
	Pre knowledge activation
The uses of resources	Visual aids usage
	Teacher as a resource
Instructional techniques for teaching Listening Comprehension skills	Demonstration
	Discussion
	Real-life application and learner involvement
	Storytelling
	Question and answer
	Repetition
Challenges affecting the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills effectively	Overcrowding
	Poor understanding and concentration
	Limited vocabulary
	Non-Access to audio and audio-visual resources

5.3.1 Theme 1: Rote teaching

Rote teaching is the first theme that emerged from the findings of the study using classroom observations. This theme corresponds with the second research question which is How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners? An exploration of the understanding of rote teaching was guided by the interpretive paradigm perspectives which provided the study with three subthemes. The three subthemes are reciting; pronunciation and spelling; and pre-knowledge activation. These three subthemes emerged from the first main theme which is based on the observations and interviews on how the EFAL teachers introduce the Listening Comprehension lessons to Grade 4 learners.

The participants are instructed to begin the lesson with oral activities as part of the pre-listening skills, strategically designed to prepare the learners for the lesson (Chetty, 2019; Sujariati, 2020). These activities include poems, songs, keywords, and predictions (Setyarini et al., 2018; Duong & Chau, 2019). This deliberate sequence ensures that the lesson is introduced in a focused and systematic manner. Following this, the researcher actively observes the entire lesson from its commencement to its conclusion. This cohesive strategy implies a seamless flow, beginning with preparatory activities and seamlessly transitioning into the comprehensive observation of the entire lesson. The logical progression contributes to a well-organised and effective teaching and learning process.

Each participant was observed four times teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Every time the researcher observed the participants when teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the participants followed the instructions as stipulated in the CAPS document by starting with the activities that the researcher categorises under the theme of rote teaching. Quoting verbatim was used to ensure that the voices of the participants were not lost in the data presentation. The emerging trends and patterns from the presented data were discussed.

5.3.1.1 Subtheme 1: Recitation

Recitation is the practice of orally repeating or expressing language elements such as words, phrases, sentences, or poems (Duong & Chau, 2019; Bear, 2022). This activity [recitation] is frequently used as a language-learning strategy to improve English pronunciation, fluency, and memorisation. Learners may participate in recitation exercises in EFAL classrooms to improve their oral communication skills, reinforce vocabulary and grammar usage, and develop a more confident and proficient command of the English language. In EFAL learning, recitation is commonly used as a pedagogical tool to support language acquisition and comprehension.

The researcher observed Listening Comprehension lessons several times and found most of the participants used reciting when starting the lesson. The participants were teaching learners to recite poems, rhymes, and the alphabet. When the researcher asked the participants the reason for using the reciting, they responded like this:

Jennisha: Reciting makes learners practice correct pronunciation.

Ruth: ... helps learners to improve their memory.

Anisha: Reciting allows learners with different abilities to participate and know something.

Bathsheba: Some learners are very shy, and reciting helps build the confidence to speak English while also developing their skills. Additionally, reciting improves learners' listening skills, as they need to listen attentively to the poem they are going to recite.

Gabby: When learners recite poems or information, it strengthens what they have learned.

Similarly, Yesterday supported and commented that:

Yesterday: Reciting is an act of remembering and articulating knowledge that helps in strengthening the information in learners' memory.

The findings reveal that recitation helps learners practice pronunciation, improve their [learners] memory, and cater to all learners' abilities to participate and learn. The findings highlight the numerous advantages of incorporating recitation into the learning process. The practice not only aids learners in honing correct pronunciation skills, but it also aids in memory retention. Furthermore, the inclusive nature of recitation emerges as a key theme, allowing learners of varying abilities to actively participate and engage in the learning experience. This suggests that recitation can be used as a versatile and effective pedagogical tool to promote a holistic approach to English as LoLT that includes pronunciation refinement, memory enhancement, and inclusive educational practices.

5.3.1.2 Subtheme 2: Pronunciation and Spelling

Farhat and Dzakiria (2017) emphasise that Listening Comprehension relies heavily on the pronunciation of words. The act of pronouncing words contributes to the formation of sound that registers in the brain, ultimately constructing meaning. It is essential to note that mispronunciations can lead to the loss of meaning and message (Milliner, 2017; Mora-Plaza, 2023). In the context of the lesson, participants initiated with keywords, a practice that potentially resulted in excessive time spent on the pronunciation and spelling of these crucial terms before delving into the actual Listening Comprehension content. These keywords were directly linked to each Listening Comprehension skills activities. The subsequent quotes further elucidate the participants' tendency to invest significant time in the meticulous pronunciation and spelling of keywords, possibly impacting the overall teaching approach to Listening Comprehension skills.

Jennisha said that:

To address the prevailing confusion among Grade 4 learners, I prioritise mastering the pronunciation and spelling of words. Recognising the significant challenges posed by these aspects, I emphasise the importance of keywords in the learning process. I make concerted efforts to not only understand the meaning of these keywords but also to proficiently pronounce and spell them. I acknowledge that without adequate drilling of these essential terms, learners are likely to encounter difficulties when engaging in listening comprehension lessons.

Yesterday pointed out that:

We encounter a significant challenge with spelling as learners frequently write incorrect spellings. To address this issue, I prioritise spelling during teaching. Ensuring that learners are familiar with the majority of words when I read a story to them. The key to fostering understanding lies in drilling the pronunciation and spelling of words. It is important to emphasise that a story is composed of words, and without a grasp of these words, comprehension of the listened story becomes elusive.

The findings highlight a comprehensive approach to addressing language challenges, particularly focusing on the needs of Grade 4 learners. The emphasis is placed on mastering pronunciation and spelling as key elements in overcoming confusion and fostering language proficiency. The acknowledgment of the importance of keywords reveals a strategic understanding of language learning, with efforts directed not only toward understanding their meanings but also toward proficient pronunciation and spelling (Zhang, 2022).

The discussion recognises the potential difficulties learners may face in Listening Comprehension lessons if essential terms are not adequately drilled. This insight underscores the practical implications of the strategic focus on keyword mastery in supporting comprehension activities and contributing to overall language proficiency.

The data touches upon the significant challenge of spelling, with a commitment to prioritising spelling during instruction. The emphasis on ensuring learners' familiarity with the majority of words during story reading reflects a proactive approach to enhance understanding. The discussion consistently underscores the fundamental role that pronunciation and spelling play in language skills development, emphasising their critical contributions to learners' overall comprehension and language proficiency (Farhat & Dzakiria, 2017; Jyoti, 2020; Pennington, 2021).

Ruth asserted that:

In professional development workshops, our subject advisors emphasise that the process of teaching listening comprehension begins with pronunciation and spelling to ensure learners' understanding.

Anisha added that:

Pronunciation and spelling contribute to vocabulary, playing a crucial role in the effective teaching of listening comprehension.

Likewise, Tyra mentioned that:

Pronunciation and spelling are integral components that contribute to the development of vocabulary, playing a vital role in the effective teaching of listening comprehension. A strong vocabulary foundation enhances learners' ability to grasp and comprehend English, reinforcing their overall language skills.

The data emphasise the crucial role of pronunciation and spelling in the effective teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. Tyra elucidates the important role of developing vocabulary, which, in turn, enhances learners' ability to comprehend English. This insight highlights the interconnectedness of pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary as foundational elements for successful Listening Comprehension skills. It also points to the broader impact on language skills, emphasising the importance of these components in language development.

On the day of classroom lesson observation at Strawberry Primary, the teacher spent too much time on spelling. Learners encountered challenges in constructing sentences from the provided keywords. Tyra made an example first and learners made examples on the teacher's pattern. For example, the teacher's pattern was: "My child is missing" and the learners were able to change only nouns in the sentence for example: 'My dog is missing'. The teacher narrated the story but did not engage learners when she read the story to monitor if learners understood or were still listening. During the assessment time which the teacher did orally, learners were able to answer only the title of the story as she drilled that part and learners were involved. After the first question, learners were struggling to answer the questions that followed. This suggests that when the teacher conducted the oral exercise, learners were successful in responding only to the title of the story. This success can be attributed to the teacher's focused drilling on that specific part, actively engaging learners. However, a noticeable challenge emerged when subsequent questions were posed. The fact that learners struggled to answer these questions

indicates that there might be a gap in their understanding or retention beyond the initially emphasised title. This observation raises considerations about the effectiveness of the teaching strategy used and the need for further reinforcement or varied instructional approaches to enhance comprehension.

Data also bring attention to the emphasis placed on pronunciation and spelling in professional development workshops. The subject advisors stress the initiation of teaching Listening Comprehension with pronunciation and spelling, ensuring a strong foundation for learners' understanding. This approach aligns with Tyra's comment, reinforcing the significance of pronunciation and spelling as fundamental aspects of the teaching process.

The findings critically outline the role of pronunciation and spelling in the multifaceted task of teaching Listening Comprehension, acknowledging their impact not only on vocabulary development but also on broader language proficiency.

5.3.1.3 Subtheme 3: Pre-knowledge activation

Gathering information from learners before a lesson, known as activating prior knowledge, involves teachers posing questions to assess learners' understanding of a specific topic. This approach reflects Piaget's philosophy, emphasising that learners already possess pre-existing knowledge, in contrast to Locke's view that children are blank slates (Piaget, 2013; Locke, 2014; Lensing et al., 2018). Participants stressed the following quotes to articulate their grasp of pre-existing knowledge, contributing to the clarification of the debates between Piaget and Locke.

Jennisha said that:

In my teaching approach, I acknowledge that learners possess some understanding of word meanings. By providing them with opportunities to express their knowledge, I gain insight into areas where they may need assistance in the learning process. I intervene when necessary, recognising the limitations in their vocabulary, particularly since English is not their home language. This proactive engagement allows me to offer targeted support when teaching listening comprehension, understanding that it is unrealistic to expect them to know all the meanings given their language background and limited exposure to English.

Yesterday asserted that:

Pre-knowledge holds significant importance as it prevents unnecessary focus on information already familiar to learners, ultimately saving valuable time that would otherwise be spent on repetition. This awareness allows for a more efficient and targeted approach to teaching listening comprehension, ensuring that instructional time is maximised for introducing new concepts and building upon existing knowledge.

Bathsheba added that:

I consistently operate on the belief that learners typically possess prior knowledge. My teaching approach avoids introducing unfamiliar concepts, focusing instead on activating their existing background knowledge. The goal is to reassure learners that they already possess some understanding and to build upon this foundation, fostering a sense of confidence and connection with listening comprehension.

Similarly, Ruth supported and commented that:

Generally, learners have pre-existing knowledge as they learn from the previous phase. In my teaching method, I refrain from introducing unfamiliar concepts and instead concentrate on eliciting their already-established background knowledge.

The findings from the participants' comments emphasise a learner-centred teaching approach that values and leverages the pre-existing knowledge of learners when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The teacher recognises that learners often have some understanding of word meanings, and by providing opportunities for expression, gains valuable insights into areas where support may be needed. The acknowledgment of the limitations in vocabulary, particularly for learners for whom English is not their home language, underscores a proactive engagement strategy (Darti & Asmawati, 2017). This involves intervening when necessary and offering targeted support to bridge gaps in understanding.

The findings further highlight the significance of pre-knowledge in teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The acknowledgment that learners already know certain information is seen as a crucial aspect of efficient and targeted teaching. This awareness prevents unnecessary repetition of familiar content, optimising instructional time for the introduction of new concepts and the development of existing knowledge.

The teaching philosophy of building upon learners' existing background knowledge was emphasised. The approach focuses on activating prior knowledge to instil confidence and create a connection with the Listening Comprehension skills. By avoiding the introduction of

unfamiliar concepts, the teacher aims to foster a positive and supportive learning environment. The findings underscore the importance of understanding and working with the learners' pre-knowledge to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching process.

5.3.2 Theme 2: The uses of resources

Teaching Listening Comprehension skills effectively necessitates the availability of resources. During classroom lesson observation days, all participants utilised resources for teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Some participants relied on resources provided by the Department of Education, while others improvised their own. These resources included stories from books, collages, pictures, and even the teachers themselves as tools to teach EFAL Listening Comprehension.

5.3.2.1 Subtheme 1: Visual aids usage

In the observed classroom lessons, participants exclusively employed stories as the primary method for teaching Listening Comprehension skills, deviating from the alternative methods outlined in the CAPS designated for this purpose [Listening Comprehension]. The predominant approach involved either reading the stories aloud or narrating them to the learners. To enhance the effectiveness of this teaching strategy, participants supplemented their stories with visual aids such as pictures or objects. This additional layer aimed to facilitate a more immersive and comprehensive learning experience for the learners, fostering a connection between the auditory narrative and visual representations to deepen their understanding of the content.

Gabby stated that:

I employ a teaching strategy where I utilise stories from the CAPS-approved textbook to facilitate listening comprehension. These stories, integrated into the curriculum, are readily accessible to all learners, as each learner possesses a copy of the textbook. While I read the story from the teacher's guide, learners' textbooks are enriched with keywords, pictures, and questions directly related to the story.

Jennisha asserted that:

In my teaching approach, I cater to learners with diverse abilities, aiming to accommodate all levels of understanding within the lesson. My primary goal is to ensure that every learner gains something from the lesson, regardless of the extent of their grasp on the listening comprehension. Recognising that learners often grasp concepts better through visual aids, I integrate visual elements into the lesson. This not

only enhances their understanding but also provides a helpful connection to the listening comprehension aspect, allowing them to relate to the material even as they listen without directly looking at it.

Bathsheba added that:

I find it more effective to discuss topics that learners can visually grasp, as they tend to comprehend information more readily when presented visually. Utilising pictures or objects in my teaching enables learners to construct a foundational understanding of the story, as they engage with the material through a visual context.

Ruth said that:

Whether I choose to narrate or read a story, I consistently supplement the narrative with pictures. This deliberate approach aims to help learners establish connections between visual elements and the listening story, fostering a deeper and more comprehensive understanding. The inclusion of pictures serves as a complementary tool, enhancing clarity and coherence in the learners' comprehension of the narrative.

The findings collectively emphasise a holistic and learner-centred approach to teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The use of CAPS-approved textbooks, integrated into the EFAL curriculum, stands out as a central strategy. This ensures accessibility for all learners and provides a comprehensive learning experience. Notably, the alignment between the teacher's narration and enriched learner textbooks, including keywords, pictures, and questions, enhances engagement and comprehension.

Furthermore, the focus on catering to diverse learner abilities underscores an inclusive teaching philosophy. The incorporation of visual elements emerges as a recurring and effective strategy, recognising that learners often comprehend concepts better when presented visually. The intentional use of visuals not only aids understanding but also establishes a meaningful connection to the Listening Comprehension aspect, promoting engagement even when learners are not directly looking at the material.

The recognition of the effectiveness of discussing visually graspable topics echoes the importance of presenting information in a manner that aligns with learners' preferred learning styles. The deliberate supplementation of narratives with pictures serves as a complementary tool, fostering a deeper and more comprehensive understanding.

The findings reveal a thoughtful and flexible teaching approach that leverages CAPS approved materials, considers diverse learner abilities, and consistently integrates visual elements to enhance engagement, comprehension, and overall learning effectiveness.

Yesterday pointed out that:

In my preparation for teaching listening comprehension, I transform a story into a collage or storyboard. This visual representation, adorned with vibrant coloured pictures, serves as a compelling tool to capture learners' attention. The use of bright coloured- pictures not only engages learners effectively but also facilitates coverage of all cognitive levels during the subsequent question-and-answer session. Recognising that learners have a fondness for bright colours, which is rooted in their experiences from the foundation phase, where colour-coded learning was prevalent, I aim to create a seamless connection between their earlier education and their current intermediate phase.

The data underscores a strategic and thoughtful approach to teaching Listening Comprehension through visual aids. The preparation involves transforming a story into a collage or storyboard, with a deliberate emphasis on vibrant colours to captivate learners' attention. This visual representation is recognised as a powerful tool, engaging learners effectively and catering to various cognitive levels during subsequent question-and-answer sessions.

A key insight in this discussion is the acknowledgment of learners' fondness for bright colours, stemming from their experiences in the foundation phase. Leveraging this familiarity with colour-coded learning, the teacher aims to establish a seamless connection between the learners' earlier education and their current intermediate phase. This not only enhances engagement but also facilitates a smooth transition between different educational phases.

The strategic use of visual aids, specifically bright colours in this instance, is positioned as a bridge that not only captures attention but also connects the past and present educational experiences of the learners, contributing to a more cohesive and effective teaching approach in the context of Listening Comprehension.

Anisha said that:

The involvement of pictures activates learners' background knowledge and aids them in comprehending the story during listening activities.

Tyra added that:

Incorporating pictures and objects not only enhances learners' understanding of the story but also allows them to be hands-on and actively engaged in the listening comprehension process.

To support their [participants] teaching of Listening Comprehension the importance of visual aids was highlighted, particularly pictures and objects, in facilitating the learning process during listening activities. The supportive role of pictures in helping learners comprehend the story, emphasises the visual element in reinforcing understanding of the listening story.

The usage of objects as visual aids goes beyond comprehension to stress the active engagement of learners, allowing them [learners] to be hands-on during the Listening Comprehension process. This suggests a more interactive and multisensory approach to learning, where visual and tactile elements contribute to a richer educational experience. These findings convey the significance of incorporating visual and hands-on elements for effective listening comprehension.

5.3.2.2 Subtheme 2: Human as a teaching resource (Teachers and learners)

Teachers cater to various types of learners, including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and verbal learners (Wulandari, Harahap, & Hati, 2019). When instructing Listening Comprehension, teachers must be mindful of these different learning styles. Preparation is key to accommodating all learners effectively. Some teachers achieved this by incorporating themselves or fellow learners into the teaching process to align with the diverse learning preferences of their students.

Jennisha from Raspberry Primary School was reading a story to the learners to teach Listening Comprehension. She used her body gestures instead of codeswitching to learners' home language to give some explanation. She was able to use the different voices that fit in the character's voice. The researcher noticed that the teacher's dramatisation draws learners to pay attention to the lesson. During the interview, Jennisha explains her uses of body gestures like this:

When I'm telling a story with characters, I try to imitate their voices and use body gestures to illustrate certain elements in the story. Doing so captures the learners' attention and enhances their engagement with the narrative.

Similar to this, Gabby said:

Using facial expressions draws learners' attention.

Ruth mentioned that:

Learners can imagine the story.

Utilising voice imitation during storytelling emerges as a dynamic pedagogical strategy aimed at enriching the learning experience. By adopting different voices for characters, the teacher not only captures the learners' attention but also elevates their engagement with the narrative. This performative approach introduces an interactive element, making the storytelling experience more memorable and enjoyable for learners. Beyond its entertainment value, voice imitation serves as an auditory aid, helping learners distinguish between characters and potentially deepening their comprehension of the storyline (Khamsuk & Whanchit, 2021). This technique, fostering creativity and cultural exposure, contributes to a vibrant and participatory classroom environment where the act of storytelling becomes a catalyst for enhanced learning, comprehension, and retention of the material.

Anisha asserted that:

Involving learners in the lesson not only makes it enjoyable but also accommodates kinesthetic learners, creating a more engaging and interactive learning experience.

Tyra said that:

Learners understand better when are involved in a lesson.

Similar to this, Bathsheba asserted that:

Using learners in the lesson helps them feel like they are part of the lesson.

The incorporation of learners into the lesson is a pedagogical approach that not only amplifies the enjoyment of learning but also caters to the diverse needs of kinesthetic learners. This practice transforms the classroom into a dynamic and interactive space, where learners actively participate in the learning process. The emphasis on enjoyment suggests a recognition of the positive impact that engaging and enjoyable lessons can have on learner motivation and overall enthusiasm for learning. Furthermore, the deliberate accommodation of kinesthetics learners acknowledges the importance of addressing varied learning styles. By integrating physical activities and hands-on experiences, teachers not only make the learning experience more

inclusive but also tap into a mode of learning that is particularly beneficial for those who thrive on movement and tactile experiences. Incorporating learners into the lesson stands as a multifaceted strategy that enhances engagement, accommodates diverse learning styles, and contributes to a more vibrant and effective learning environment.

5.3.3 Theme 3: Instructional techniques of teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

According to the South African education system, the EFAL curriculum comprises four language skills outlined in Chapter 2, specifically in Section 2.5.1. Each of these skills has sub-skills, and Listening Comprehension is categorised under the broader skill of Listening and Speaking. It is essential to note that all these skills, along with their respective sub-skills, are mandated to be taught and assessed. The teaching of the Listening Comprehension skill is on par with the other language skills.

The participants employed various instructional techniques when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. These techniques included demonstration, real-life application and learner involvement, storytelling, question and answer, and repetition.

5.3.3.1 Subtheme 1: Demonstration as instructional techniques of teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

After each observation, an interview was conducted to explore the understanding of instructional techniques used by EFAL teachers teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners. The aim was to gain clarity and understand the rationale for choosing these techniques. During the classroom lesson observations, participants demonstrated the use of flashcards containing keywords and pictures related to the story, which significantly aided in teaching Listening Comprehension.

Gabby stated that:

I demonstrate flashcards with written words during listening comprehension. These flashcards provide a visual aid, supporting learners' memory and reinforcing the connection between hearing and written words.

The finding underscores the intentional use of flashcards with written words as a key instructional strategy during Listening Comprehension skills activities. By employing a multisensory approach, the teacher aims to enhance memory, strengthen the connection between auditory and written language skills, and make the learning material more accessible.

The demonstration of visual aids provided by the flashcards not only supports memory retention but also contributes to heightened comprehension, engaging learners in an interactive learning process. This approach reflects a thoughtful consideration of diverse learning modalities and seeks to bridge the gap between hearing and understanding written words, fostering a holistic language learning experience for students.

Ruth asserted that:

Demonstrations enhance understanding, particularly for young learners who may not comprehend English well. This is achieved by activating the background knowledge of learners, preparing them for what they are about to encounter in the listening comprehension lesson.

Jennisha stated that:

Demonstrating keywords is beneficial as it helps imprint them in memory, making it easier for learners to recall when they listen to the story.

Tyra said that:

Showing keywords is helpful because it assists in firmly establishing them in memory, making it more convenient for learners to remember when they listen to the story.

These findings collectively underscore the crucial role of demonstrations in enhancing understanding and memory retention among young learners, particularly those who may have challenges comprehending English. The first finding emphasises how demonstrations serve as a preparatory tool by activating the background knowledge of learners, ensuring they are better equipped to engage with the upcoming Listening Comprehension lesson. This proactive approach aligns with pedagogical principles aimed at creating a supportive learning environment for learners with varying language proficiencies. The second finding further reinforces the value of demonstrations, highlighting their role in imprinting keywords in learner's memory. By visually reinforcing key elements, demonstrations not only aid in immediate comprehension but also contribute to a lasting recall when learners subsequently encounter the story. These findings collectively emphasise the efficacy of demonstrative techniques in facilitating EFAL for young learners with diverse language capabilities.

Yesterday said that:

Demonstrating pictures captures learners' attention and focuses them on the upcoming lesson they are about to listen to.

Anisha asserted that:

Learners comprehend better when they see something; thus, the demonstration of flashcards and words aims to prepare their minds. Since the story will be read aloud by the teacher, and learners won't be able to see it, the introduction needs to be visible. I follow the principle of teaching from the known to the unknown.

These findings reveal the significance of visual demonstrations, particularly the use of pictures, in fostering learner engagement and comprehension. The first finding highlights how demonstrating pictures not only captures learners' attention but also directs their focus towards the imminent Listening Comprehension lesson. This suggests that visual stimuli play a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment. The second finding expands on this by emphasising that learners comprehend better when they can see something. The use of flashcards and words as visual aids serves the purpose of mentally preparing learners for the auditory component of the lesson, where the story will be read aloud. The rationale of making the introduction visible aligns with the pedagogical principle of teaching from the known to the unknown, ensuring that learners have a visual context before transitioning to the unseen elements of the Listening Comprehension activity. Together, these findings highlight the strategic use of visual demonstrations as a preparatory and attention-focusing tool on language instruction.

Bathsheba asserted that:

I use gestures to demonstrate expressions and body language to enhance understanding during listening comprehension, especially since Grade 4 learners have limited understanding of English. Demonstrations provide visual clarity, making it easier for learners to comprehend complex concepts or instructions, particularly when verbal communication might be challenging.

This finding underscores the deliberate use of gestures in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners, acknowledging their limited understanding of English. By employing gestures to demonstrate expressions and body language, the teacher aims to enhance understanding, particularly in the face of linguistic challenges. The emphasis on visual clarity through demonstrations becomes pivotal in simplifying complex concepts or instructions,

recognising that verbal communication alone might pose difficulties for learners at this proficiency level. This pedagogical approach aligns with the principles of inclusive teaching, leveraging non-verbal cues to facilitate comprehension and ensuring that learners, despite their language limitations, can actively engage with the content. The use of gestures emerges as a strategic tool to bridge communication gaps and make the learning experience more accessible for Grade 4 learners grappling with English language comprehension.

The findings collectively highlight the strategic use of demonstration techniques in teaching English as a First Additional Language Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners. Demonstrations, including the use of flashcards, pictures, keywords, and gestures, serve as essential tools to enhance understanding, engage learners, and address language barriers. The deliberate use of visual aids, such as flashcards and pictures, is emphasised for its impact on memory retention, attention capture, and comprehension improvement. Additionally, gestures are employed to provide visual clarity, especially considering the learners' limited understanding of English. The overall approach is characterised by a multisensory and inclusive teaching strategy, aiming to make the learning experience accessible and engaging for Grade 4 learners in EFAL, recognising their diverse learning styles and language proficiency levels.

5.3.3.2 Subtheme 2: Discussion as instructional techniques of teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

Most participants employed discussion as an instructional technique for teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The researcher observed learners engaging in discussions about Listening Comprehension skills, even though, at times, they expressed themselves in their home language (isiZulu), demonstrating their understanding.

Bathsheba asserted that:

As learners and I discuss pictures, the aim is to activate learners' background knowledge. In the process of these discussions, the key highlights of what the listening comprehension will cover become apparent.

Anisha said that:

When I discuss the vocabulary of the day's listening comprehension with learners, the ensuing discussion effectively engages them in the lesson.

Tyra stated that:

Engaging in discussions about the story fosters the development of critical thinking skills. This interactive process motivates learners, focusing their attention on listening comprehension, leading to the thoughtful analysis of information and responsive participation in discussions and questions.

Jennisha mentioned that:

Engaging in discussions about the story encourages the growth of critical thinking skills.

Yesterday said that:

Discussion encourages the exchange of ideas.

In the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, the findings suggest that discussions play a central role in engaging learners and enhancing their understanding. When learners and the teacher engage in discussions about pictures, the primary goal is to activate the background knowledge of the learners. These discussions unveil the key highlights of the upcoming Listening Comprehension, providing a framework for the lesson. When the teacher uses discussion as an instructional technique to teach Listening Comprehension, learners draw upon their existing mental schemas related to the discussed topics, facilitating comprehension and retention (Jung et al., 2022). Similarly, discussing the vocabulary for the day's Listening Comprehension not only aids in language acquisition but also actively involves learners in the lesson. Learners are integrating this new vocabulary into their existing mental structures, aligning with the schema theory's idea of assimilation (Bingham, & Kahl, 2013). Moreover, engaging in discussions about the story serves as a catalyst for the development of critical thinking skills. This interactive process not only motivates learners but also directs their focus toward Listening Comprehension, fostering thoughtful analysis of information and encouraging responsive participation in subsequent discussions and questions. Discussions emerge as a dynamic instructional tool that not only deepens comprehension but also nurtures critical thinking and active engagement among learners.

5.3.3.3 Subtheme 3: Real-life application and learner involvement as instructional techniques of teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

In the classroom lesson observations, several participants employed a valuable instructional strategy by integrating real-life applications into their teaching of Listening Comprehension. This approach involves connecting the lesson content to the lived experiences of learners, making the material more relatable and relevant. By incorporating real-life situations, participants provide learners with a practical context in which to apply their listening skills. This not only enhances comprehension but also encourages active engagement and critical thinking. Moreover, using real-life applications aligns with the broader goal of preparing learners to understand and respond effectively in genuine, everyday situations where English is utilised. The integration of real-life applications serves as an effective pedagogical tool to bridge the gap between classroom learning and the practical application of language skills. Ruth asserted that:

Listening comprehension occurs in real-life situations, especially given its integral role in teaching and learning. As a result, it must be applied within authentic contexts.

This finding underscores the importance of situating Listening Comprehension within real-life contexts, recognising its fundamental role in the process of teaching and learning. The finding suggests that Listening Comprehension is not merely an isolated skill but an integral component that reflects the authentic use of language in everyday life. By emphasising its application within genuine situations, the finding advocates for a teaching approach that goes beyond artificial or contrived exercises.

The real-life application could delve into the implications for pedagogy and curriculum development. Teachers might consider incorporating real-life scenarios into their lesson plans to better prepare learners for practical language use. Furthermore, teachers may discuss the challenges and benefits of implementing authentic Listening Comprehension tasks, exploring how this approach aligns with broader educational goals and contributes to the development of learners' English proficiency as a foreign language. The finding also invites a reflection on how technology and diverse resources can be utilised to create authentic listening experiences in the classroom. Real-life approach encourages a more holistic and applicable understanding of Listening Comprehension, enhancing its utility in real-world communication scenarios (Lui, 2020).

Jennisha asserted that:

Engaging learners in teaching listening comprehension involves connecting the lesson to their lives, ensuring relevance and understanding of the content they are listening to. By instructing learners to perform tasks in English and observing their ability to follow instructions, it becomes evident that the learners comprehend the material they are listening to.

Anisha stated that:

Listening comprehension is essential for understanding and is a skill extensively utilised in real-life situations. Therefore, it is crucial to make it a reality in the classroom and actively involve learners in the teaching process.

The findings show the significance of actively engaging learners in the teaching of Listening Comprehension by connecting lessons to their lives and ensuring the material is relevant and understandable. The data suggests that relevance is a key factor in fostering comprehension. When learners are instructed to perform tasks in English related to their daily experiences, their ability to follow instructions becomes a tangible indicator of their comprehension. The finding further emphasises the essential nature of Listening Comprehension, recognising it as a skill crucial for understanding and widely applicable in real-life situations. These findings might centre on the practical strategies employed by teachers to integrate real-life contexts into Listening Comprehension lessons. Teachers could explore how tasks and instructions are crafted to align with learners' experiences, making the material more relatable. The findings also delve into the challenges and opportunities in making Listening Comprehension a reality in the classroom, considering varying learner proficiency levels and the need for dynamic teaching approaches. Findings highlight the importance of making Listening Comprehension both relevant and practical for effective language learning.

The researcher found it interesting at Lingonberry Primary when the teacher blended her lesson with real life by asking learners to look outside and identify the weather of the day. The teacher also inquired about the recent floods that occurred in the KwaZulu-Natal province, where this study was conducted, and learners were familiar with it. The teacher initiated the lesson from what learners knew, interrelating it with real life. Bathsheba used pictures to interact with the learners and provide them with an idea of what she was going to read. The teacher did not give learners the title of the story but provided instructions, stating, “...listen so that at the end of

this story, you are going to tell us the relevant title.” This method of not telling learners the title also prompted them to pay attention to the story to construct their own. Learners were able to create stimulating titles. The learners' background knowledge, linked to their recent experience of a flood, made it easy for them to generate titles related to the story. In her application of teaching Listening Comprehension through real-life application, she supported her approach by stating that:

Learners learn more effectively when actively engaged and connected to their daily experiences. For instance, in a listening comprehension lesson centred around floods, I asked them to observe the weather. The tangible nature of weather, something real and visible, enables learners to not only understand but also recall recent floods in our province, particularly in Kwazulu-Natal. The floods, being a significant and impactful event, resonate with the learners as they were personally affected, making the lesson more meaningful and relevant.

The finding emphasises the effectiveness of active engagement and connecting lessons to learners' daily experiences. By integrating a Listening Comprehension lesson around a locally relevant topic, in this case, floods in KwaZulu-Natal, the teacher leverages the tangible nature of weather as a real and visible element. The engagement strategy goes beyond theoretical comprehension, prompting learners to observe the weather, which serves as a bridge to their personal experiences with recent floods. The lesson becomes more than an academic exercise; it becomes a meaningful and relevant exploration of a significant event in the learners' lives. This approach not only enhances understanding but also taps into the emotional resonance of the topic, making the learning experience more impactful and memorable for the learners.

The findings collectively emphasise the importance of making Listening Comprehension lessons relevant, engaging, and applicable to learners' lives. Actively connecting lessons to real-life experiences enhances comprehension and ensures that learners grasp the material in a meaningful context (Lui, 2020). Strategies such as involving learners in tasks and instructions in English provide tangible indicators of comprehension. Furthermore, the findings stress that Listening Comprehension is a vital skill with extensive real-life applications, necessitating its integration into authentic classroom contexts. The data encourage teachers to consider practical approaches, challenges, and opportunities in incorporating real-life scenarios into lessons, fostering a more dynamic and applicable learning experience for learners. The focus is on

creating a holistic and impactful teaching environment that aligns with learners' experiences and prepares them for effective language use in real-world situations.

5.3.3.4 Subtheme 4: Story/storytelling as instructional techniques of teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

One of the instruments used by the researcher to generate data was document analysis, specifically examining the CAPS document. This analysis revealed that participants' compliance with CAPS guidelines was stringent. While the CAPS document provides a variety of approaches for teaching Listening Comprehension skills, such as role-play, giving instructions, debates, interviews, and stories, all the participants, during classroom observations, exclusively utilised stories as a method for teaching Listening Comprehension skills (DBE, 2011). This involved either reading the story to the learners or narrating it to them. When asked about their preference for stories over other methods, they responded as follows:

Jennisha stated that:

Stories are familiar and accessible to learners, serving as a comfortable medium for language learning. Learners are more likely to engage with content that they find relatable and understandable. As the teacher reading the listening comprehension story, I integrate lower-order, middle-order, and higher-order questions to accommodate the needs of all learners in the lesson, a flexibility that might not be as easily achieved with other methods.

This finding suggests that using stories as a medium for language learning has several advantages. Stories are deemed familiar and accessible to learners, providing a comfortable learning experience. The familiarity and relatability of stories make them more engaging for learners, fostering better understanding. The teacher, who reads the Listening Comprehension story, takes advantage of this familiarity by incorporating a range of questions—lower-order, middle-order, and higher-order—to cater to the diverse needs of all learners in the lesson (Aghaei & Rad, 2018). This approach reflects a flexibility in teaching that may not be as easily achievable with alternative methods. The teacher's choice to integrate various question types demonstrates a strategic adaptation to different learning levels, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the language learning experience through storytelling.

Gabby mentioned that:

Even the textbooks provided by the Department of Education primarily contain stories, rather than employing other methods.

The data suggests that the instructional materials provided by the Department of Education, specifically the textbooks, heavily emphasise the use of stories as a teaching method for language learning. Instead of employing a variety of instructional techniques, the predominant focus is on incorporating narrative elements. This could imply a deliberate choice by the educational authorities to emphasise the benefits of storytelling in language acquisition. It also suggests a standardised approach, indicating that stories are considered a fundamental and perhaps preferred method for delivering content in the educational curriculum.

Ruth asserted that:

This is Grade 4 learners, who have limited vocabulary. Reading or narrating the story to teach Listening Comprehension not only helps build vocabulary but also aligns with their real-life experiences and backgrounds, thereby improving their understanding of language use.

This points out the specific context of Grade 4 learners, emphasising their limited vocabulary at this stage of their education. The use of storytelling, either through reading or narration, is highlighted as a valuable instructional strategy to teach Listening Comprehension. The interpretation suggests that by incorporating stories into the learning process, there is a dual benefit. First, it aids in the development of the learners' vocabulary. Second, and equally important, it aligns the content of the stories with the real-life experiences and backgrounds of the Grade 4 learners. This alignment is seen as a means of enhancing the learners' Listening Comprehension and application of English language, connecting their educational experiences to their everyday lives.

Yesterday said that:

It is easier to assess listening comprehension through stories as it is more straightforward and aligned with traditional assessment methods. It is also easy to evaluate learners' understanding based on their responses to story-related questions.

This data shows that assessing Listening Comprehension through stories is considered advantageous for several reasons. First, the statement implies that the process is more straightforward compared to other methods. The use of stories aligns well with traditional assessment methods, indicating compatibility with established evaluation practices.

Additionally, the finding suggests that evaluating learners' understanding becomes more accessible when story-related questions are employed. In summary, using stories for assessing Listening Comprehension is perceived as a practical and aligned approach, contributing to the effectiveness and ease of the evaluation process.

Bathsheba expressed that:

Stories allow learners to engage and inherently demand listening skills as they follow the narrative. This helps develop not only comprehension but also other essential language skills, such as vocabulary acquisition, understanding context, and interpreting tone and mood. I enhance this by using my body to express the feelings of the story and employing different voices to fit the characters.

This data emphasises the multifaceted benefits of using stories as an instructional tool for teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Firstly, stories facilitate learner engagement by inherently demanding active listening skills as learners follow the narrative. Beyond fostering comprehension, this approach contributes to the development of essential language skills, including vocabulary acquisition, understanding context, and interpreting tone and mood. The additional insight provided by the participant indicates a dynamic teaching approach, where the use of body language and varied voices further enhances the learning experience (Mpiti et al, 202; Matiso & Makena, 2022; Ramaoka et al., 2022). This interpretation suggests that stories serve as a holistic tool for language development, encompassing various linguistic and expressive elements.

Tyra stated that:

Stories are simple to implement and can be adapted to various proficiency levels, accommodating diverse learners when teaching Listening Comprehension. They also provide a versatile platform for addressing different language aspects, including comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar, thoroughly.

This finding highlights the versatility and accessibility of using stories as an instructional method. The simplicity of implementing stories makes them adaptable to a wide range of proficiency levels, thereby accommodating the diversity of learners in the educational context. Moreover, stories offer a versatile platform that allows teachers to address various language aspects, including comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar, in a comprehensive and integrated manner. This interpretation suggests that using stories to teach Listening

Comprehension serves as an inclusive and flexible tool, promoting a holistic approach to language learning that caters to the diverse needs of learners.

Anisha said that:

Stories are accessible to teach Listening Comprehension because the learners' books contain questions and pictures. Unlike other methods, where you have to find resources yourself, this can be time-consuming, especially in the teaching environment of primary school.

The data reveals the accessibility of using stories to teach Listening Comprehension as a teaching method, particularly in the context of primary school education. The accessibility is attributed to the presence of questions and pictures within the learners' books, providing built-in resources. In contrast to other methods that may require teachers to independently locate resources, the integration of questions and visuals in the learners' books is seen as a time-saving feature. This interpretation suggests that stories, with their embedded content, streamline the teaching process in a primary school environment, making them a practical and efficient choice for teachers.

5.3.3.5 Subtheme 4: Question and answer as instructional techniques of teaching

Listening Comprehension Skills

The question-and-answer instructional technique emerged as the predominant method throughout the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. This assertion is based on the consistent involvement of the question-and-answer approach in every stage of the teaching process, including pre-listening, during listening, and post-listening. Notably, this method worked synergistically with other instructional techniques and resources, highlighting its central role in facilitating the comprehensive teaching of Listening Comprehension.

Gabby asserted that:

I ask questions at various levels to monitor learners' understanding. This approach not only assesses comprehension but also creates opportunities for learners to share and articulate their understanding of Listening Comprehension.

Ruth stated that:

I ask questions to ensure ongoing engagement and comprehension during the story. The active participation of learners in question-and-answer sessions demonstrates

their willingness to share thoughts and responses. This not only boosts learner participation but also fosters a sense of comfort and engagement with the lesson.

The findings underscore the multifaceted role of questioning in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. The teacher employs a strategy of asking questions at various levels, not solely to assess comprehension but also to create opportunities for learners to actively share and articulate their understanding. The questioning approach serves a dual purpose of ensuring ongoing engagement and comprehension throughout the story. The active participation of learners in these question-and-answer sessions is identified as a key indicator of their willingness to share thoughts and responses, fostering a sense of comfort and engagement with the lesson (Choi & Kim, 2015). Importantly, teachers perceive this question-and-answer strategy as interactive and engaging, emphasising its positive impact on their teaching experience. This interpretation suggests that questioning is not just an evaluative tool but a dynamic instructional method that enhances participation, comfort, and engagement in the Listening Comprehension process.

Yesterday stated that:

Asking questions serves the purpose of developing learners' proficiency to comprehend and respond in English, even in real-life situations.

Tyra asserted that:

The question-and-answer method actively involves learners in the listening comprehension lesson, providing a means for me to monitor whether they are still engaged and understanding the story.

The findings collectively highlight the crucial role of questioning in the teaching of Listening Comprehension, emphasising its multifaceted impact on learner engagement, comprehension, and language proficiency development. Asking questions at various levels not only serves as an evaluative tool but also creates opportunities for learners to actively articulate their understanding, fostering a deeper engagement with the material (Gul et al, 2020). The question-and-answer format emerges as a dynamic and interactive strategy that actively involves learners in the learning process. Importantly, it provides the teacher with a valuable means to monitor ongoing engagement and comprehension, ensuring that learners are actively participating and understanding the material throughout the lesson.

Furthermore, the findings underscore the practical application of questioning in language learning, with a focus on developing learners' proficiency to comprehend and respond in English, even in real-life situations. This approach aligns with the broader goal of language education, which is to equip learners with the skills necessary for effective communication in authentic contexts.

These findings emphasise the importance of strategic and interactive use of questioning in teaching Listening Comprehension. This approach not only enhances language proficiency but also creates a dynamic and engaging learning environment, where learners actively participate and feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and responses. It aligns with the broader educational goals of fostering language skills that are not only evaluative but also applicable in real-life scenarios, contributing to a more holistic language learning experience.

5.3.3.6 Subtheme 6: Repetition as instructional techniques of teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

All participants employed the use of narratives as a primary method for teaching Listening Comprehension. Each participant reiterated the practice of reading or narrating the story three times or more. This repetition not only applied to the stories themselves but also extended to the spelling of words within the narratives. The widespread adoption of this approach suggests its perceived efficacy in enhancing Listening Comprehension skills. The emphasis on repeated exposure to both narrative content and word spelling underscores the importance placed on reinforcement and consolidation in the learning process.

Jennisha stated that:

Repeating the reading of the story when teaching listening comprehension not only trains learners' minds but also provides them with additional opportunities to grasp any missed information during the second and third readings.

The findings reveal the pedagogical value of repetitive exposure to a story in the context of teaching Listening Comprehension. Listening to the story multiple times is a strategic approach that aligns with cognitive theories of learning, particularly emphasising the importance of repetition for reinforcement and retention.

By providing learners with the opportunity to hear the story several times, the teacher is creating an environment conducive to reinforcing comprehension. Repetition aids in the consolidation of information, allowing learners to become more familiar with the language

patterns, vocabulary, and overall content of the story. This increased familiarity contributes to improved comprehension and retention.

Furthermore, the findings recognise the auditory nature of the learning process in Listening Comprehension skills. Repetitive listening serves to enhance auditory discrimination skills, enabling learners to pick up on subtle nuances in pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. This is crucial for developing not only comprehension but also effective communication skills in the target language (EFAL).

The findings support the idea that effective language learning involves more than a single exposure to new material. It advocates for a deliberate and systematic approach that integrates repetition as a fundamental element in the teaching of Listening Comprehension, aligning with best practices in language education.

Yesterday asserted that:

I adhere to the curriculum guidelines, which recommend reading the story three times to learners to ensure they capture a thorough understanding.

The data shows the importance of aligning teaching practices with curriculum guidelines, specifically in the context of reading a story three times to enhance learners' understanding. By adhering to these guidelines, the teacher is not only following a prescribed approach but also recognising the pedagogical value of repetition in the learning process. Reading the story multiple times aligns with established educational principles that emphasise the benefits of repeated exposure for effective learning and retention.

From a pedagogical standpoint, this approach caters to diverse learning styles and ensures that learners have ample opportunities to grasp the nuances of the story. Repetition serves as a reinforcement tool, aiding in the consolidation of information and facilitating a more in-depth comprehension of the content. Moreover, it acknowledges the role of listening learning, especially in the absence of visual aids, highlighting the importance of multiple exposures to enhance Listening Comprehension.

The finding speaks to the teacher's commitment to evidence-based teaching strategies and the recognition of curriculum guidelines as valuable tools for effective instruction. It reflects a thoughtful approach to pedagogy that prioritises comprehensive understanding and aligns instructional methods with established educational frameworks.

Anisha asserted that:

Listening to the story several times provides learners with the opportunity to reinforce their understanding of the content, making it easier for them to comprehend and retain information.

Tyra stated that:

Keep in mind that as I read the story, learners don't have the text in front of them; they rely solely on listening. Repetition, therefore, becomes essential to help learners grasp the message and fill in any gaps in their understanding.

The findings reveal the significance of repetition in teaching Listening Comprehension, particularly when learners are solely relying on auditory cues without the aid of a written text. Listening to the story multiple times serves a dual purpose. Repetition allows learners to reinforce their understanding of the content, making it more accessible for comprehension and retention. This aligns with educational theories emphasising the value of repeated exposure for language learning. The absence of a visual reference underscores the crucial role of repetition in helping learners fill in gaps in their understanding. In a purely auditory learning environment, the repetition of the story becomes a strategic tool to ensure that learners not only capture the main message but also have the opportunity to enhance their comprehension by revisiting and reinforcing the auditory input. This finding reflects a pedagogical approach that recognises the unique challenges of teaching listening skills and strategically employs repetition to address them.

The data emphasise the pivotal role of repetition in teaching Listening Comprehension to English First Additional Language Grade 4 learners. Teachers consistently implement a practice of reading or narrating stories multiple times, aligning with curriculum guidelines that recommend three repetitions. Repetition serves various educational purposes, including reinforcing learners' understanding of content and making it more accessible for comprehension and retention. This approach is particularly crucial as learners solely rely on auditory cues without visual aids during the listening process. Repetition not only facilitates a deeper understanding of the story but also provides learners with additional opportunities to grasp any missed information, filling in gaps in their comprehension. The findings highlight repetition as a strategic tool for reinforcing language patterns, enhancing auditory

discrimination skills, and addressing the unique challenges of teaching Listening Comprehension in an auditory learning environment.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Challenges affecting the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills effectively.

The findings from this theme responded to research question 1 which is: What are EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners? Data generated during observations and interviews were able to answer this research question. Besides, the findings of this theme produced three subthemes which are: overcrowding; Poor understanding and concentration; Limited vocabulary; Non-access to audio and audio-visual resources.

5.3.4.1 Subtheme1: Overcrowded classroom

Creating a learner-friendly environment is essential for effective Listening Comprehension, particularly for Grade 4 learners, who are exposed to English as the language of teaching and learning for the first time. This entails maintaining a normal class size and ensuring an undisturbed learning atmosphere. During classroom lesson observations, the researcher was astonished by the challenging conditions under which teachers were expected to deliver effective Listening Comprehension instruction. Many schools were overcrowded, posing difficulties in imparting EFAL listening comprehension effectively.

Ruth asserted that:

Overcrowded classrooms pose a challenge for me because they make it difficult to provide timely feedback to individuals. The large number of learners in the class hinders my ability to offer quick and individualised responses.

Jennisha said that:

In an overcrowded setting, providing individual attention to each learner becomes challenging. This, in turn, hinders my ability to accurately assess individual listening comprehension levels and offer targeted support to learners facing difficulties.

The findings highlight a multifaceted challenge faced by teachers in overcrowded classrooms, specifically in terms of providing timely feedback and individualised attention to learners. The large class size emerges as a major impediment, hindering the teacher's capacity to offer quick and personalised responses. This obstacle has a cascading effect on various aspects of teaching,

including the ability to assess individual Listening Comprehension levels accurately. The difficulty in providing targeted support to learners facing difficulties adds another layer to the challenge, potentially impacting the overall learning outcomes. This situation prompts a discussion on the impact of class size on the quality of education, potential strategies to enhance individualised feedback within crowded settings, and the importance of considering alternative approaches, such as peer-assisted learning or technology integration, to address the limitations posed by large class sizes. Moreover, it opens avenues for exploring systemic changes, such as advocating for reduced class sizes, to create a more conducive learning environment that facilitates effective teacher-learner interactions and supports the diverse needs of learners. The findings underscore the need for proactive measures to navigate the complexities posed by overcrowded classrooms and ensure that each learner receives the attention and support required for their academic success.

Gabby stated that:

My problem is the large number of learners in the classroom. If I can teach listening comprehension with a small number of learners, I think there will be a big difference compared with these crowded learners. Distractions are more likely to occur.

Anisha said that:

The noise created by learners often requires me to interrupt the class and request quiet, resulting in time-consuming disruptions, and also the limited classroom space restricts my ability to move freely.

The findings reveal two significant challenges faced by teachers: disruptive noise in the classroom and constraints posed by limited physical space. The noise disturbance created by learners necessitates frequent interruptions to restore order, leading to disruptions that consume valuable instructional time. This issue not only affects the flow of lessons but also potentially impacts the overall learning environment. Moreover, the mention of limited classroom space highlights another obstacle, as it restricts the teacher's ability to move freely within the room. This limitation can hinder effective classroom management and the implementation of dynamic teaching strategies. The dual challenges of noise and spatial constraints prompt a discussion on strategies to minimise disruptions, foster a conducive learning atmosphere, and optimise the use of available space. Possible solutions might involve implementing classroom management

techniques, exploring alternative arrangements for the physical space, or engaging learners in discussions about respectful behaviour to create a more conducive learning environment.

Bathsheba pointed out that:

In the overcrowded classroom, getting to know all Grade 4 learners, including their names and abilities, takes considerable time, especially since they transitioned from the foundation phase.

In the context of an overcrowded classroom, the task of familiarising oneself with Grade 4 learners proves to be a time-consuming endeavour, particularly considering their recent transition from the foundation phase. The sheer volume of learners in the crowded setting hinders the teacher's ability to dedicate ample time and attention to each individual, impacting the crucial process of learning names and understanding the unique abilities of each learner. This challenge becomes even more pronounced as learners navigate the significant shift from the foundational stage. The findings suggest implications for teaching strategies, emphasising the need for flexibility and inclusivity in addressing diverse learning needs. It also opens the door to discussions on potential solutions, such as advocating for smaller class sizes, implementing efficient learner identification methods, and fostering collaboration among teachers to navigate the complexities of managing overcrowded classrooms.

During a classroom lesson observation at School B, the researcher identified an overcrowded setting where learners from Grade 4A and 4B were being taught in a hall, seated back-to-back. When the EFAL teacher conducted a Listening Comprehension lesson for Grade 4A, disruptive noise emerged from Grade 4B in the absence of their teacher. Notably, even when both teachers were instructing simultaneously, learners seemed confused, laughing at jokes from the other class. Additionally, in Grade 4A, learners seated at the back were observed engaging in drawing and playing activities while the teacher was teaching Listening Comprehension. This behaviour impeded meaningful interaction between the teacher and the majority of learners, with only those seated in the front able to effectively engage with the instructional content.

The findings from the classroom observation at School B illuminate the multifaceted challenges inherent in an overcrowded learning environment. The setup, where learners from Grade 4A and 4B share a hall, seated back-to-back, has created a disruptive atmosphere.

Notably, during a Listening Comprehension lesson for Grade 4A, disruptive noise emanated from Grade 4B in the absence of their teacher, showcasing the difficulty of maintaining a

focused learning environment. The simultaneous teaching of both classes led to confusion among learners, evidenced by their laughter at the other class's jokes. Additionally, the observation of Grade 4A learners seated at the back engaging in drawing and playing activities during instruction highlights the struggle to foster meaningful interactions in the crowded space, with only those in the front able to fully engage with the instructional content. These challenges underscore the need for strategic interventions to enhance classroom management, minimise disruptions, and promote effective teaching and learning in overcrowded settings.

5.3.4.2 Subtheme 2: Poor understanding and concentration.

During the classroom lesson observations, the researcher noticed that most learners had a poor understanding of EFAL Listening Comprehension, indicating that they were not actively engaged in the lesson.

Gabby mentioned that:

Most learners don't understand English, so they decide not to listen.

Similarly, Anisha supported and commented that:

Most learners do not engage in listening lessons due to a lack of comprehension in English.

Ruth said that:

Learners struggle to comprehend listening exercises as they are taught in English, a language that is not their mother tongue.

Yesterday asserted that:

Many learners disengage during listening comprehension lessons as the instruction is conducted in English, a language they struggle to understand.

The findings suggest a significant challenge in the context of teaching Listening Comprehension to learners for whom English is not their mother tongue. The observation that learners struggle to comprehend listening exercises due to the language barrier underscores the impact of instructional language on learning outcomes. This language barrier not only hinders understanding but also leads to disengagement among many learners during Listening Comprehension lessons. The dual emphasis on the struggle to comprehend and subsequent disengagement emphasises the need for strategic interventions to make these lessons more

accessible and engaging for learners with diverse language backgrounds. Potential solutions may involve implementing bilingual teaching methods, incorporating visual aids or real-life contexts to enhance understanding, and providing additional language support to bridge the gap. The findings call attention to the importance of considering linguistic diversity in the classroom and adopting inclusive instructional strategies to ensure that all learners can actively participate and comprehend the material effectively.

5.3.4.3 Subtheme 3: Limited vocabulary

It is normal for most EFAL teachers to teach learners with limited vocabulary. This limitation poses a particular challenge when teaching Listening Comprehension, especially for Grade 4 learners who have previously been taught in their home language.

Gabby stated that:

Grade 4 learners face a significant challenge with limited vocabulary, particularly in the context of listening comprehension. As a teacher, I find myself dedicating extra time to focus on the key terms essential for understanding the material.

Jennisha asserted that:

Teaching listening comprehension becomes challenging due to the learners' limited vocabulary.

The discussion revolves around the challenge of teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners who have a limited vocabulary, particularly in English, possibly influenced by their prior education in their home language. The teacher acknowledges the difficulty in imparting effective instruction in EFAL Listening Comprehension due to the constraints of a restricted vocabulary.

The teacher emphasises the importance of dedicating extra time to focus on key terms essential for understanding the lesson. This indicates a proactive approach to address the issue by investing additional effort in building the learners' vocabulary in order to enhance their comprehension skills.

The data highlights the teacher's awareness of the vocabulary limitations in Grade 4 learners, the challenges posed in teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension, and the effort invested in addressing these challenges through targeted vocabulary instruction.

During classroom observations at Cranberry Primary, learners were very active to answer the questions based on identifying the names of animals in the chart they confused the wild animals with domestic animals. Learners also responded to some questions in their home language instead of English and their answers were correct. This shows that learners understood the story but due to the limited vocabulary they were unable to respond in English. Sometimes the teacher had to codeswitch when she saw that learners were not understanding. To elaborate the challenges of learners' limited vocabulary when teaching Listening Comprehension, Yesterday said that:

It is evident that Grade 4 learners have a limited English vocabulary, likely influenced by their prior education in their home language. Teaching EFAL (English First Additional Language) listening comprehension poses a challenge as effective instruction depends on a more extensive vocabulary. My struggle lies in imparting this skill accurately when faced with such limitations.

The data from Cranberry Primary reveals an active participation of learners in answering questions, particularly those related to identifying the names of animals in a chart. However, a challenge arises as learners tend to confuse wild animals with domestic ones. This indicates a potential gap in their understanding of the distinctions between these categories.

Another noteworthy observation is that learners, despite the language barrier, respond to some questions in their home language, demonstrating a clear comprehension of the lesson. The limitation here lies in their vocabulary, preventing them from responding in English. This suggests a need for vocabulary development to bridge the gap between comprehension and expression in EFAL.

The teacher's use of code-switching, incorporating learners' home language when needed, signifies an adaptive teaching strategy. It reflects the teacher's awareness of learners' comprehension levels and the importance of ensuring understanding, even if it requires temporary shifts in language. Overall, the analysis highlights both the engagement and comprehension of learners, as well as the challenges associated with language proficiency.

5.3.4.4 Subtheme 4: Non-access to audio and audio-visual resources

The shortage of teaching and learning resources in schools, especially in EFAL schools, is a longstanding issue. Numerous scholars, such as Kepe and Linake (2019), Khumalo (2021), and

Mzimela (2022), have observed that the insufficiency of resources adversely affects the successful teaching of listening comprehension to Grade 4 learners. Teachers face significant challenges when teaching English as a First Additional Language Listening Comprehension without access to audio and audio-visual resources. Listening skills are critical in language acquisition, and a lack of these resources can stymie their development. The results obtained from the participants affirm that the lack of access to audio learning materials remains a significant challenge for EFAL schools striving to enhance listening comprehension. When the researcher asked the participants about how the unavailability of audio and audio-visual resources affected their teaching of Listening Comprehension, their responses were as follows:

Bathsheba stated that:

... learners get bored to always listen to my voice ...

The finding suggests that there is an issue with learner engagement during Listening Comprehension activities. Specifically, the learners' express boredom, indicating a potential challenge in sustaining their interest when the teacher is the sole source of auditory input. This finding underscores the importance of incorporating diverse and engaging audio resources to enhance the learning experience and maintain student interest in Listening Comprehension lessons.

Jennisha asserted that:

... I feel like I limit my learners.

The finding implies that the participant perceives a self-imposed limitation on their learners when audio resources are not utilised during the teaching of Listening Comprehension. This suggests a belief that the absence of diverse audio materials hinders the learning experience and restricts the learners' ability to fully engage and comprehend the language. The participant expresses concern about the potential constraints imposed on learners' understanding and suggests a desire for more varied instructional tools to overcome these limitations and provide a more enriching learning environment for Listening Comprehension activities.

Tyra mentioned that:

Without audio and audio-visual resources, learners miss out on exposure to correct pronunciation and intonation. This affects learners' abilities to understand English in real-life situations.

The finding underscores the crucial role of audio and audio-visual resources in language learning, particularly in improving pronunciation and intonation. The absence of these resources is believed to impede learners' exposure to authentic language use, potentially hindering their ability to understand English in real-life situations. This highlights the importance of incorporating diverse auditory and visual materials to enhance language comprehension and prepare learners for practical language use beyond the classroom.

Anisha expressed that:

I find it challenging to monitor learners accurately because I'm often required to read the text simultaneously (due to the lack of audio resources). When I'm focused on reading, it becomes difficult to observe the learners closely and provide real-time feedback. This dual task creates a hurdle in maintaining a thorough awareness of their [learners] understanding and engagement with the material.

The finding highlights a significant challenge for the participant in monitoring learners effectively due to the absence of audio resources. The need to read text simultaneously makes it difficult to observe learners closely and provide real-time feedback. This dual task creates a hurdle, impacting the participant's ability to maintain a thorough awareness of learners' understanding and engagement with the material. It underscores the importance of incorporating audio resources to facilitate more effective monitoring and enhance the overall learning experience.

Gabby stated that:

My teaching strategies are limited without the ability to use audio and audiovisual resources, preventing me from using creative approaches that could improve the learning process.

The finding indicates that the participant's teaching strategies are constrained by the absence of audio and audiovisual resources. This limitation prevents the implementation of creative approaches that could enhance the learning process. The participant expresses a need for diverse multimedia tools to expand instructional methods and improve the overall effectiveness of teaching strategies. It highlights the importance of incorporating audio and audiovisual resources for a more dynamic and engaging learning experience.

The participants consistently highlight the limitations imposed by the lack of audio and audio-visual resources in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners. The absence of

audio resources not only restricts both teachers and learners but also limits the exposure of EFAL learners to various speeds and tones beyond their teachers' voices. This limitation may pose challenges when learners transition to higher institutions. Consequently, the hindered teaching process prolongs the time required for learners to grasp English, impacting their academic performance as it is the language of teaching and learning.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents and reports on the findings derived from Grade 4 EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension. Four main themes emerged from the study: Rote teaching, the use of resources, instructional techniques for teaching Listening Comprehension, and challenges affecting the effective teaching of Listening Comprehension. The results of the study reveal how Grade 4 EFAL teachers, through observations, document analysis, and interviews provided rich and detailed information on the researched issue.

Building upon the three themes that surfaced in the study's findings, particularly theme 1, which focuses on *Rote teaching* as discussed in section 5.3.1 of this chapter, these findings align with Juniyati's (2021) argument. Juniyati (2021) suggests that when learners engage in listening to poems, rhymes, and songs, and subsequently recite them, it enhances their memory and caters to various learning abilities. Moving on to theme 2, which explores *The uses of resources* as detailed in section 5.3.2 of this chapter, the study asserts that employing diverse resources for teaching Listening Comprehension captures learners' attention and encourages active participation in lessons (Huda, 2017; Leah, 2018). Furthermore, exploring theme 3, *Instructional techniques for teaching Listening Comprehension*, as detailed in section 5.3.3 of this chapter, the findings unveil a range of instructional techniques that assist teachers in engaging and tapping into learners' background knowledge. Theme number 4 is *Challenges affecting the teaching of Listening Comprehension effectively*, discussed in section 5.3.4 of this chapter, the study delves into the obstacles that impede EFAL teachers in effectively teaching Listening Comprehension. Addressing these challenges could enhance the effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension, ultimately leading to improved academic performance among EFAL learners.

The next chapter presents the discussion and of findings based on the research questions and four emerging themes from the findings of the study. Further, the chapter will summarise how the findings are contextualised within the existing body of knowledge.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, the findings were introduced and explained. Direct quotations and transcriptions were employed to substantiate the data presented, ensuring alignment with the primary objective of the study—to investigate the experiences of EFAL teachers in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. This chapter has discussed and combined the study's findings to address the research questions and the four identified themes. It has elucidated, outlined, and contextualised these findings by incorporating the perspectives and assumptions of the schema used to frame the study. The study's results have been correlated with pertinent literature to establish a connection with the extensive body of knowledge regarding EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension. Moreover, the discussion and synthesis of the findings incorporate direct quotations from Grade 4 EFAL teachers, ensuring that their voices remain integral to this discourse and synthesis of the study's findings.

6.2 Discussion and findings

This section provides an analysis and integration of findings based on four primary themes that surfaced during the study: *Rote teaching*; *The uses of resources*; *Instructional techniques for teaching Listening Comprehension*; and *Challenges affecting the teaching of Listening Comprehension effectively*. The subsequent sections extend the discussion and synthesis of these themes by incorporating insights from the findings of the study, schema theory, and pertinent literature.

6.2.1 Rote teaching

Utilising insights gained from observations and interviews; the study addressed the second and third research questions: *How do Grade 4 EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners* and *Why do EFAL teachers use these strategies to teach Listening Comprehension?* The responses from participants illuminated diverse approaches to initiating Listening Comprehension skills lessons, detailed in theme one of Chapter Five (5.3.1). These approaches highlighted the significance of the first theme and its three subthemes in preparing learners before the lesson commences. The researcher employed classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis as data collection methods.

These avenues allowed EFAL teachers to delve into and share their knowledge and perspectives on teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. While the experiences of the EFAL teachers in this study may not universally represent perceptions across all EFAL schools in KwaZulu-Natal province, their insights, experiences, and understanding are comprehensively considered and explained within the national and intentional context, as detailed in Chapter Five (5.3.1).

According to the literature rote teaching involves teachers presenting pre-activities or pre-listening exercises as the introduction in the form of icebreaking preparing learners for teaching Listening Comprehension skills (Setyarini et al., 2018; Barjesteh, & Ghaseminia, 2023). These activities are repeatedly practiced reinforcing the information (Barjesteh & Ghaseminia, 2023). In rote teaching, teachers take the lead by guiding the activity, and learners demonstrate their understanding by listening to the teacher and responding with actions or statements that mirror what was presented, showcasing their comprehension through active engagement. Rote teaching enables learners to recite, perform, and pronounce words during pre-activation. These activities may include poems, alphabets, rhymes, keywords, or songs.

Teachers employ rote teaching with the belief that it helps engrain English in the learners' minds and promotes learning through listening (Juniyati, 2021). The majority of teachers were convinced that rote teaching aids in the construction of basic information and allows for a learner-centred approach. This is evident when learners, engaged in recitation, become more actively involved than the teacher.

6.2.1.1 Recitation

In the dynamic landscape of English First Additional Language education, the pedagogical approach employed by teachers plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' language acquisition and comprehension skills. A notable strategy that has garnered attention in the EFAL context is the practice of recitation. This finding, derived from the experiences and reflections of EFAL teachers, sheds light on the multifaceted benefits that recitation brings to Grade 4 learners (Muhibbuddin et al., 2021; Namin et al., 2021; Holmes et al., 2023).

The data suggest that recitation enhances learners' memory which is important in teaching Listening Comprehension. Recitation emerges as a powerful cognitive tool, enhancing learners' memory and holding particular significance in the domain of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The findings suggest that through the act of recitation, learners engage

actively with the material, contributing to the reinforcement and retention of information. This aligns seamlessly with the experiences and insights of EFAL teachers who recognise the multifaceted benefits of recitation in their classrooms (Lubis, 2020; Meimei & Jiaqi, 2023).

The participants mentioned that:

Recitation helps learners to improve their memory. (Ruth)

Reciting is an act of remembering and articulating knowledge that helps in strengthening the information in learners' memory. (Yesterday)

Clark and Mayer (2016) affirm that recitation involves learners in retrieving and articulating information, contributing to memory reinforcement. This aligns with cognitive strategies that emphasise the role of active recall in solidifying knowledge (Sankalaite et al., 2023; Wenas et al., 2023). The participants collectively underscore recitation as a mnemonic device fortifying learners' retention of language elements (Lu, et al., 2022).

Recitation, as highlighted by Meimei and Jiaqi (2023), caters to diverse learners with different learning styles, including those facing barriers to learning. The motivational aspect of recitation is emphasised, inspiring learners to actively participate despite challenges like language difficulties. Participants corroborate this by stating that:

Reciting allows learners with different abilities to participate and know something. (Anisha)

Some learners are very shy, and reciting helps build the confidence to speak English while also developing their skills. Additionally, reciting improves learners' listening skills, as they need to listen attentively to the poem they are going to recite. (Bathsheba)

The data underscores the inclusive nature of recitation, providing a participatory avenue for learners with diverse abilities (Wenas et al., 2023). For shy learners, recitation becomes a transformative tool in building confidence as they engage in the expressive act, conquering linguistic challenges and bolstering self-assurance in using EFAL (Lu, et al., 2022). Recitation's impact extends beyond speaking proficiency to contribute significantly to listening skills, with learners attentively listening as they prepare for recitation (Doğanay, 2020). This dual emphasis on listening and speaking aligns with holistic language development principles.

Recitation emerges as an active learning strategy that consolidates knowledge (Sankalaite et al., 2023), engaging learners in a cognitive process that reinforces understanding. Recitation

resonates with schema theory, emphasising the importance of active participation in the learning process (Piaget, 2013). Through recitation, learners actively participate in the learning process, aligning with the principles of schema theory that emphasise the importance of active engagement in knowledge construction (Piaget, 2013). This holistic approach to language learning, grounded in the experiences of both teachers and learners, highlights the enduring impact of recitation in the realm of Listening Comprehension teaching.

The findings underscore the richness of recitation as a pedagogical tool in EFAL classrooms. The multifaceted benefits identified by teachers illuminate the transformative impact of this practice on various facets of language acquisition. From linguistic precision to cognitive reinforcement, confidence-building to inclusivity promotion, recitation stands as a versatile strategy that goes beyond the surface of language learning (Duong & Chau, 2019; Namin et al., 2021). As EFAL teachers continue to navigate the intricacies of language instruction, the integration of recitation emerges as a valuable and holistic approach, enhancing the efficacy of language teaching and fostering a supportive learning environment (Namin et al., 2021; Sankalaite et al., 2023).

Moreover, the enhancement of pronunciation skills through recitation holds particular significance in the context of teaching Listening Comprehension. EFAL teachers, drawing from their experiences, emphasise the crucial role of clear and accurate pronunciation in learners' ability to comprehend spoken language (Duong & Chau, 2019; Doğanay, 2020). As learners actively engage in recitation, practicing the enunciation of words and phrases, they contribute to the refinement of their pronunciation skills. One participant highlighted that:

Reciting makes learners practice correct pronunciation. (Jennisha)

This aligns with the broader insight from teachers that effective pronunciation serves as a foundational element for successful Listening Comprehension, highlighting the intrinsic connection between pronunciation and the broader language acquisition process. Recitation, as a platform for learners to practice correct pronunciation, aligns with foundational language acquisition principles and not only refines the enunciation of words but also fosters familiarity with the rhythm and cadence of the English language (Duong & Chau, 2019; Doğanay, 2020; Lu, et al., 2022), paving the way for further exploration of the next finding—pronunciation and spelling.

6.2.1.2 Pronunciation and spelling

In the examination of the subtheme concerning pronunciation and spelling in the context of EFAL teaching, the findings offer insights into the intricate relationship between these linguistic elements and their crucial role in the development of Listening Comprehension skills. Based on the experiences of EFAL teachers, the emphasis on clear and accurate pronunciation emerges as fundamental for learners to effectively comprehend spoken language. This subtheme delves into the nuanced connection between pronunciation and spelling, exploring how the practice of recitation actively engages learners in refining their pronunciation skills. The transformative impact of recitation extends beyond linguistic precision to include cognitive reinforcement, confidence-building, and inclusivity promotion, as highlighted in previous findings (Duong & Chau, 2019; Namin et al., 2021). The examination of this subtheme contributes to a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between pronunciation and spelling, offering valuable implications for EFAL instructional strategies and curriculum development.

Effective pronunciation stands as a foundational pillar in the realm of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to EFAL learners. The literature highlights the challenges faced by teachers when learners struggle with the correct pronunciation of words, a difficulty that further extends to spelling due to homophones or words that sound similar (Daffern & Mackenzie, 2020; Tambunsaribu & Simatupang, 2021). This pronounced challenge resonates with the experiences of the participants who explicitly recognise the issues surrounding pronunciation and spelling. In addressing these challenges, the participants emphasise the significance of drilling, a teaching technique aimed at reinforcing learners' understanding of Listening Comprehension skills. Participants mentioned that:

To address the prevailing confusion among Grade 4 learners, I prioritise mastering the pronunciation and spelling of words. Recognising the significant challenges posed by these aspects, I emphasise the importance of keywords in the learning process. I make efforts to not only understand the meaning of these keywords but also to proficiently pronounce and spell them. I acknowledge that without adequate drilling of these essential terms, learners are likely to encounter difficulties when engaging in listening comprehension lessons. (Jennisha)

We [EFAL teachers] encounter a significant challenge with spelling as learners frequently write incorrect spellings. To address this issue, I prioritise spelling during

teaching. Ensuring that learners are familiar with the majority of words when I read a story to them. The key to fostering understanding lies in drilling the pronunciation and spelling of words. It is important to emphasise that a story is composed of words, and without a grasp of these words, comprehension of the listened story becomes elusive. (Yesterday)

The findings of the participants relate to researchers as shed light on the proactive measures taken by EFAL teachers to address specific challenges faced by Grade 4 learners. The emphasis on mastering pronunciation and spelling becomes paramount in creating a solid foundation for effective Listening Comprehension it plays a pivotal role in shaping learners' capacity to comprehend spoken language (Jyoti, 2020; Jahara & Abdelrady, 2021; Pennington, 2021; Yenkimaleki, van Heuven, & Moradimokhles, 2023). Teachers, recognising the intricacies involved in language acquisition, strategically focus on keyword mastery. This involves not only understanding the meanings of keywords but also proficiently pronouncing and spelling them. The rationale behind this strategic emphasis is rooted in the understanding that without a firm grasp of these essential terms, learners may encounter difficulties during Listening Comprehension lessons (Saito, 2021; Derwing & Munro, 2022). The findings emphasise the importance of drilling pronunciation and spelling as foundational skills, essential for fostering comprehension, language proficiency, and overall linguistic development. Moreover, the teachers' commitment to prioritising spelling during instruction further highlights the recognition of its pivotal role in ensuring learners' familiarity with words, contributing significantly to their ability to comprehend EFAL within the context of a story. This strategic approach aligns with the broader goal of enhancing learners' language skills and teaching a more effective engagement with Listening Comprehension skills activities. The participants mentioned that:

Pronunciation and spelling contribute to vocabulary, playing a crucial role in the effective teaching of listening comprehension. (Anisha)

The participant's disclosure highlights the crucial relationship between pronunciation and spelling, specifically in enhancing vocabulary within the realm of Listening Comprehension skills. This finding aligns seamlessly with Manten et al. (2020) and Rautenbach and Botha. (2021), who emphasise the pivotal role of pronunciation and spelling in enriching learners' vocabulary. Farhat and Dzakiria (2017) and Tran (2020) further support the importance of accurate pronunciation in the teaching of Listening Comprehension, emphasising the

significance of assimilation in this instructional aspect. The interconnectedness of pronunciation practices, assimilation, and effective Listening Comprehension teaching becomes evident, especially in the context of vocabulary drills. This interconnected approach highlights the integral role of pronunciation and spelling in the overall effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. In the broader landscape of comprehension, vocabulary serves as a cornerstone, empowering learners to interpret listening language (English). Pronunciation's key role lies in enabling learners to articulate words accurately, facilitating their recognition and comprehension of the vocabulary presented in Listening Comprehension lessons. Proficiency in pronunciation becomes a valuable asset, allowing learners to engage effectively with the phonetic nuances of words and thereby achieve a more accurate understanding of English vocabulary.

Similarly, spelling reinforces vocabulary acquisition by providing a visual representation of words. When learners are capable spellers, they can connect the auditory information from Listening Comprehension exercises to the written form of words. This connection between pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary enhances the overall language-learning experience. It allows learners to build a robust foundation of words, facilitating their ability to grasp the meaning, context, and nuances of spoken language during Listening Comprehension skills activities.

In the effective teaching of Listening Comprehension, the cohesive integration of pronunciation and spelling activities becomes paramount. By addressing these components together, teachers can nurture a comprehensive understanding of vocabulary, ensuring that learners not only hear and recognise words but also can reproduce them accurately in both spoken and written forms. This interconnected approach contributes to language proficiency, supporting learners in navigating the intricacies of Listening Comprehension with a well-developed vocabulary base.

6.2.1.3 Pre-knowledge and activation

The opening of the findings section highlights a fundamental aspect of the learning process—learners possess pre-existing knowledge before embarking on a new lesson. This recognition is influenced by the diverse educational philosophies, particularly evident in the historical debate between Locke and Piaget. Locke, representing the belief in *tabula rasa*, argued that children are born as blank slates, while Piaget contended that learners are endowed with inherent knowledge (Duschinsky, 2012; Piaget, 2013; Locke, 2014; Schnegg, 2014; Doğanay,

2020; Lensing et al., 2018). The discourse sets the stage for understanding how EFAL teachers navigate this terrain by employing various strategies to activate learners' pre-knowledge.

Informed by these theoretical underpinnings, teachers adopt nuanced approaches to elicit and leverage pre-existing knowledge. Strategies such as incorporating keywords, utilising visuals like pictures, and employing instructional tools like flashcards have emerged as instrumental techniques in this endeavour (Prastiyowati, 2019; Cao & Lin, 2020). These strategies are not mere pedagogical tactics; rather, they serve as intentional bridges, connecting learners' existing knowledge with the upcoming challenges posed by Listening Comprehension skills. As we delve into the findings, the multifaceted nature of these strategies and their impact on the active construction of knowledge will unfold, shedding light on the intricate interplay between theory and classroom practice.

The participants started the lesson by asking questions to learners to get some prior knowledge. The pedagogical methods employed by EFAL teachers align seamlessly with Piaget's fundamental philosophy, which posits that children are not born as blank slates but rather with inherent knowledge (Piaget, 2013). During the pre-listening comprehension phase, interactive activities such as discussions and question-and-answer sessions act as a crucial platform (Schnegg, 2014). Learners actively show their existing understanding before the formal lesson unfolds. This instructional approach harmonises with Piaget's belief that learners play an active role in constructing knowledge based on their prior experiences and cognitive structures. Therefore, to support Piaget's belief based on pre-knowledge activation, the participants mentioned that:

Bathsheba: "... learners know something..."

Yesterday: "... it helps to not dwell on something they already know, ... save time..."

Jennisha: "... gives me an idea where to help them [learners] in the learning process ..."

Encouraging learners to share what they already know becomes a cornerstone in the constructivist paradigm, echoing Piaget's emphasis on the active construction of knowledge from pre-existing cognitive structures (Piaget, 2013). By tapping into learners' pre-knowledge through interactive engagement, teachers lay the groundwork for the upcoming lesson. This not only fosters an environment where learners feel actively involved but also aligns with Piaget's schema principles (Lensing et al., 2018). It underscores the significance of

acknowledging and leveraging learners' pre-knowledge as a strategic element in enhancing the overall effectiveness of teaching strategies.

6.2.2 The uses of resources

In the realm of EFAL teaching, the effective utilisation of resources plays a pivotal role in enhancing the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. As teachers navigate the complexities of language teaching, the strategic incorporation of a diverse range of resources becomes vital. These resources encompass a range of materials, including visual aids usage and human as a teaching resource. Leveraging these resources allows EFAL teachers to create a dynamic and immersive learning environment, fostering a deeper understanding of Listening Comprehension skills among learners.

6.2.2.1 Visual aids usage

Related literature showed that visual aids are very important when teaching Listening Comprehension skills, especially for Grade 4 learners (Bagila et al., 2019). Visual aids can help learners imagine concepts when teaching Listening Comprehension skills, which can result in a deeper understanding of what the learners are about to listen to (Carambas & Espique, 2023). Visual aids usage can be modified from unknowingly into known, concrete forms, which helps to reinforce and remember the information. When teaching Listening Comprehension skills, visual aids like pictures, charts, objects, and educational posters can be utilised (Bagila et al., 2019). These teaching aids can be used to activate learners' background knowledge and create visuals that convey information for illustrative learning. They can also draw learners' attention and be hands-on which makes the lesson more effective (ShanduOmukunyi, 2023).

The EFAL teachers' responses regarding the importance of using visuals to teach Listening Comprehension skills align with the schema theory discussed in Chapter 3 (3.5.1). In Chapter 5 (5.3.2.1), the teachers emphasised the effectiveness of visuals as a powerful tool to activate learners' prior knowledge (Aziz, 2021; Carambas & Espique, 2023; Sotirov et al., 2023). Teachers incorporated visual aids in their lessons, learners were able to apply their background knowledge to better understand the Listening Comprehension material. The participants' insights align with the existing literature on effective teaching strategies for Listening Comprehension, emphasising the crucial role of visual aids in enhancing the teaching experiences. The theoretical framework of this study draws on the principles of schema theory and existing literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants' comments.

Schema theory posits that individuals bring existing knowledge and experiences to the interpretation of new information, and this pre-existing knowledge, or schema, significantly influences comprehension (Cao & Lin, 2020). In the context of teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the incorporation of visual aids serves as a mechanism to activate and connect learners' background knowledge, aligning with schema theory principles. One EFAL teacher highlighted this point, stating:

The involvement of pictures activates learners' background knowledge and aids them in comprehending the story during listening activities. (Anisha)

The finding emphasises the importance of using visuals, particularly pictures, aligns with the theoretical framework of schema theory discussed in Chapter 3 (3.5.1). Schema theory posits that individuals bring their existing knowledge and experiences to the learning process, influencing how they interpret and comprehend new information. In the context of Listening Comprehension, activating learners' background knowledge is crucial for connecting the auditory input with their existing mental frameworks.

The teachers' responses align with scholars such as Aziz (2021), Carambas and Espique (2023), and Sotirov et al. (2023), who emphasise the significance of visuals in facilitating learning. These scholars highlight those visuals, including pictures, objects, and diagrams, play a vital role in engaging learners and activating their prior knowledge. The findings of this study echo their perspectives, illustrating that the involvement of pictures serves as a powerful tool for tapping into learners' background knowledge during Listening Comprehension activities.

This understanding of how visual aids cater to diverse learners is a fundamental aspect of teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Pratiwi and Ayu (2020); Sari and Aminatun (2021) shed light on the symbiotic relationship between visuals and auditory input, underscoring their pivotal role in the cognitive processes essential for the development of Listening Comprehension skills. This acknowledgment emphasises the importance of seamlessly integrating visual aids, encompassing elements like pictures, videos, and diagrams, into the teaching methodology. Jennisha validates this by stating that:

In my teaching approach, I cater to learners with diverse abilities, aiming to accommodate all levels of understanding within the lesson. My primary goal is to ensure that every learner gains something from the lesson, regardless of the extent of

their grasp on listening comprehension. Recognising that learners often grasp concepts better through visual aids, I integrate visual elements into the lesson.

Visual aids, such as pictures, diagrams, and videos, provide a multi-sensory approach to learning, allowing learners with diverse abilities and preferences to engage with the material in ways that resonate with their learning styles (Schoonover, 2021). This acknowledgement aligns with the principles of differentiated instruction, recognising that learners possess unique cognitive strengths and preferences. The deliberate integration of visual elements caters to these differences, ensuring that instructional methods are versatile and accessible to all learners (Tomlinson, 2023).

Moreover, the emphasis on diverse learning styles is crucial in creating an inclusive educational environment. Learners process information in various ways, and visual aids offer an avenue for those who are visual learners to excel and comprehend the content more effectively (Silverman, 2022). By recognising and accommodating diverse learning styles, teachers foster an atmosphere that celebrates individual differences and supports each learner's academic journey.

In teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, where understanding auditory input is paramount, visual aids provide additional layers of comprehension. They act as supportive tools, helping learners connect auditory information with visual representations, and reinforcing their understanding and memory retention (Pratiwi & Ayu, 2020; Sari & Aminatun, 2021). Therefore, the emphasis on diverse learners in the integration of visuals not only enhances the overall learning experience but also contributes to an inclusive educational practice that values and respects the individuality of each learner.

The utilisation of visual aids in teaching Listening Comprehension skills emerges as a pivotal strategy that bridges the connection between learners' prior background knowledge and the diverse range of learning styles within the EFAL classroom. Drawing from the schema theory, which emphasises the importance of activating prior knowledge for effective learning, visuals play a crucial role in tapping into learners' existing cognitive frameworks. By incorporating pictures, diagrams, and videos, educators create a bridge between what learners already know and the new content being introduced. Additionally, the multifaceted nature of visual aids caters to diverse learning styles, providing an inclusive approach that accommodates varied cognitive preferences. This not only enhances the overall understanding of the material but also fosters

an environment where all learners can actively engage with Listening Comprehension lessons, contributing to a more comprehensive and effective educational experience.

6.2.2.2 Human as a resource (Teachers and learners)

The integration of human resources as teaching aids, exemplified by techniques like imitating voices and incorporating body gestures when narrating stories, has demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of captivating learners' attention and enhancing their engagement with the content. The existing literature underscores the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers, revealing that certain teachers opt for non-verbal communication methods, including the use of body language and facial expressions. This intentional choice is made with the specific objectives of teaching English without code-switching and sustaining learners' focus during instructional sessions. As highlighted by Mpiti et al. (2021); Matiso and Makena (2022); Ramaoka et al, 2022), these non-verbal communication techniques serve as alternative means to convey linguistic content without resorting to switching between languages, contributing to a consistent language learning environment. Simultaneously, the use of body language and facial expressions is strategically employed to capture and maintain learners' attention, enhancing the overall effectiveness of teaching practices, particularly in the context of Listening Comprehension teaching. To support that, Jennisha said:

When I'm telling a story with characters, I try to imitate their voices and use body gestures to illustrate certain elements in the story. Doing so captures the learners' attention and enhances their engagement with the narrative.

Drawing from Vijayalakshmi et al. (2021), teachers' utilisation of voice modulation, facial expressions, and gestures emphasis is recognised as an interpersonal skill that effectively draws learners into the learning experience, fostering an imaginative connection to the story. By employing voice imitation and gestures, teachers can establish a dynamic and immersive classroom atmosphere that not only captures learners' interest but also renders the educational content more memorable. These strategies serve the dual purpose of maintaining linguistic consistency and engaging learners, contributing to a more effective teaching approach in the context of Listening Comprehension teaching.

The subtheme underscores the multifaceted approach employed by teachers in utilising learners as a valuable resource for teaching Listening Comprehension skills. This strategic incorporation caters specifically to kinesthetic learners, who benefit from physical movement

and tactile experiences in their learning. The necessity for learners to pay attention during these activities aligns with the instructional requirement of Listening Comprehension, emphasising the importance of active listening and following instructions. Despite the predominant use of storytelling as the primary method for teaching Listening Comprehension skills, the adoption of instructional strategies, as prescribed in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement highlights the flexibility and adaptability of teaching approaches (DBE, 2011).

Anisha asserted that:

Involving learners in the lesson not only makes it enjoyable but also accommodates kinesthetic learners, creating a more engaging and interactive learning experience.

Moreover, the introduction of activities involving learners as teaching resources contributes to a more enjoyable and interactive learning experience. Using learners as a resource to teach Listening Comprehension aligns with Chalak, and Biria (2019) and Karimi and Chalak (2021), the idea as they emphasised that learning should be engaging and fun. By accommodating different learning styles, this approach not only caters to the diverse needs of learners but also ensures a deeper understanding of the subject matter, fostering a positive and engaging classroom atmosphere. Ultimately, the findings suggest that the incorporation of human elements into teaching practices can be a highly effective strategy for enhancing learner engagement and active participation in the learning process.

The exploration of human resources as a teaching aid for Listening Comprehension skills in EFAL contexts reveals a nuanced and versatile approach employed by teachers. The findings highlight the significance of incorporating learners into lessons, utilising voice imitation, body gestures, and other non-verbal communication techniques. These strategies not only capture learners' attention but also cater to different learning styles, creating a more engaging and interactive learning experience. Teachers' experiences underscore the importance of creating an immersive environment that stimulates learners' interest, fosters imagination, and contributes to a positive and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Despite challenges such as limited resources in some EFAL schools, the adaptability and creativity demonstrated by teachers in utilising human resources offer valuable insights into effective pedagogical practices for enhancing Listening Comprehension skills. This discussion underscores the potential impact of human-centric teaching approaches on learner engagement and comprehension in EFAL classrooms.

6.2.3 Instructional techniques for teaching Listening Comprehension skills

The third theme explore the instructional techniques employed by participants to teach Listening Comprehension skills. These techniques encompass a range of approaches, including demonstration, discussion, real-life application, storytelling, question-and-answer, and repetition. This section presents the instructional techniques, shedding light on how they contribute to the development of effective teaching of Listening Comprehension skills.

6.2.3.1 Demonstration

In teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners using English as LoLT, one of the effective techniques is the use of flashcards with written words as visual aids during listening exercises. This method serves to support learners' memory and reinforce the connection between spoken and written words. As demonstrated by the participants, this visual aid proves beneficial for young learners who may struggle to comprehend English fully. The flashcards not only activate learners' background knowledge but also prepare them for the upcoming Listening Comprehension lesson.

Moreover, the participants emphasise the importance of demonstrating keywords through flashcards, as this helps imprint these crucial terms in the memory of learners. The visual representation makes it easier for learners to recall and understand the story as they listen. The use of pictures in these demonstrations captures learners' attention, creating focus and anticipation for the lesson ahead. These pedagogical methods align with Piaget's philosophy that children are born with inherent knowledge rather than blank slates (Piaget, 2013; Locke, 2014; Schnegg, 2014; Lensing et al., 2018; Doğanay, 2020). In the pre-listening comprehension phase, the discussion and question-and-answer activities serve as a platform for learners to demonstrate their existing understanding before the formal lesson commences. This approach resonates with Piaget's notion that learners actively construct knowledge based on their prior experiences and cognitive structures (Piaget, 2013). By encouraging learners to share what they know, teachers tap into their pre-existing knowledge, creating a foundation for the upcoming lesson and fostering an interactive learning environment that aligns with Piaget's constructivist principles. The textbooks used are CAPS-approved and align with all language skills, including Listening Comprehension skills (Ramatlapana & Makonye, 2012; Chirwa & Naidoo, 2014). Specifically designed for Listening Comprehension, these textbooks feature keywords, pictures, and pre-listening questions that learners review before listening to the teacher.

Recognising that learners comprehend better when they have a visual reference, the teachers employ the strategy of demonstrating flashcards and words to prepare learners' minds for the upcoming story. This aligns with the pedagogical principle of teaching from the known to the unknown, ensuring that learners have a clear introduction to the content they are about to encounter.

Additionally, the participants highlight the use of gestures, expressions, and body language as crucial elements in their demonstrations. This becomes particularly relevant as Grade 4 learners may have limited understanding of English. Demonstrations serve as a visual clarity tool, aiding learners in comprehending complex concepts or instructions, especially when faced with potential challenges in verbal communication.

6.2.3.2 Discussion

The discussion instructional technique, as highlighted by various scholars, emerged as a pivotal pedagogical tool in teaching Listening Comprehension (Howard, 2015; Hoover et al., 2015; Duong et al., 2019; Garrett, 2020). Most of the observed participants in the researcher's study employed the discussion technique, emphasising its indispensability in the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills. The participants stressed that keywords and pictures were essential elements that compelled them to engage in discussions with learners, aligning with the notion of activating background knowledge according to schema theory (Piaget, 1973; Prastiyowati, 2019; Zhang & Zhang, 2022). The participants mentioned that:

As learners and I discuss pictures, the aim is to activate learners' background knowledge. In the process of these discussions, the key highlights of what the listening comprehension will cover become apparent. (Bathsheba)

When I discuss the vocabulary of the day's listening comprehension with learners, the ensuing discussion effectively engages them in the lesson. (Anisha)

The discussions facilitated interaction between teachers and learners, as observed during the classroom observation. Participants used the discussion technique to supplement the story, discussing pictures and prompting critical thinking among learners. This aligns with O'Connor et al. (2017) assertion that listening carefully to learners' contributions demonstrates respect and encourages critical thinking. The benefits of the discussion method were further emphasised by Yesterday, who highlighted its role in enhancing learning and driving learners to actively participate in the lesson by mentioning that:

Discussion encourages the exchange of ideas.

The introduction of keywords, as advocated by Maja (2019), served as a crucial element in facilitating the logical progression of ideas during discussions. The participants aimed to enhance learners' understanding of Listening Comprehension concepts by incorporating keywords and fostering a platform for discussion. However, Spauull and Pretorius (2019) cautioned about wisely using the time allocated for classroom discussions, noting that participants tended to spend excessive time on keywords and pictures discussions during the observed lessons.

Participants' rationale for spending time on keyword discussions, aiming to simplify the story and build relationships, aligns with the purpose of discussions outlined by Howard (2015) — to assess learners' understanding, make connections, and maintain the flow of the discussion. In the context of teaching EFAL to Grade 4 learners, discussions proved to be valuable for activating background knowledge, engaging learners, and fostering critical thinking.

The teachers' experiences revealed that discussions extended beyond information exchange, serving as a catalyst for developing critical thinking skills. The interactive and participatory nature of discussions motivated learners to analyse information thoughtfully, respond actively to questions, and engage deeply in the learning process. Teachers' insights suggest that discussions play a pivotal role in creating a dynamic and participative learning experience, contributing significantly to language development in the context of EFAL instruction for Grade 4 learners.

6.2.3.3 Real-life applications

Teaching Listening Comprehension with a real-life application emerges as a crucial aspect, and insights from EFAL teachers' experiences highlight the significance of this approach. The assimilation and accommodation dynamic in learning, as discussed by Vidal (2019), Tran (2020), and Nigro (2022), create a rich and engaging learning environment. EFAL teachers, recognising the need for equilibrium, design activities that challenge learners not only to assimilate new linguistic elements but also to accommodate diverse language contexts. This aligns with Sivira-Gonzalez's (2023) suggestion that incorporating various accents, idioms, or cultural references in Listening Comprehension skills lessons broadens learners' linguistic perspectives.

One key aspect emphasised by teachers is the importance of connecting Listening Comprehension lessons to learners' lives, ensuring that the content remains relevant and understandable. The results suggest that actively involving learners in tasks performed in English enables teachers to gauge their comprehension of the material. Accommodation comes into play when learners encounter language nuances, cultural references, or novel concepts that may not align seamlessly with their existing linguistic schema (Faizah et al., 2022). This aligns with the notion that engaging learners in real-life applications fosters a deeper understanding of the content and enhances their ability to follow instructions.

Moreover, the experiences of EFAL teachers underscore that Listening Comprehension is not just an isolated skill but a crucial tool extensively utilised in real-life situations. The findings suggest that making Listening Comprehension a reality in the classroom involves actively connecting learners to the teaching process, creating an environment where they can learn more effectively. One of the participants said that:

Engaging learners in teaching listening comprehension involves connecting the lesson to their lives, ensuring relevance and understanding of the content they are listening to. By instructing learners to perform tasks in English and observing their ability to follow instructions, it becomes evident that the learners comprehend the material they are listening to. (Jennisha)

The participant's insight aligns with the literature emphasising the importance of engaging learners in teaching Listening Comprehension by connecting lessons to their lives. Ahmadi (2016) perspective on Listening Comprehension as an active engagement to figure out meaning resonates with the participant's approach of ensuring relevance and understanding through real-life application. The example of incorporating a lesson on floods echoes the idea of making content tangible and personally relevant, as discussed in the literature. Observing learners' ability to follow instructions in English, as mentioned by the participant, reflects the active processing involved in Listening Comprehension (Ahmadi, 2016, Goethe, 2019). Therefore, the participant's approach substantiates the literature, emphasising the significance of real-life application in enhancing the meaningfulness and impact of teaching Listening Comprehension. Bathsheba mentioned that:

Learners learn more effectively when actively engaged and connected to their daily experiences.

The insights gained from the experiences of EFAL teachers underscore the transformative impact of applying Listening Comprehension skills within authentic contexts and connecting them to learners' lives. This approach not only aligns with the CAPS objectives but transcends the conventional classroom setting, becoming a dynamic tool for fostering profound understanding and meaningful engagement with the content. By actively involving learners in real-life contexts, teachers bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, offering a more holistic and relevant learning experience. As the experiences of EFAL teachers illuminate, the real-life application of Listening Comprehension skills serves as a catalyst for enhanced comprehension, making the educational journey more impactful and resonant for learners.

6.2.3.4 Story/Storytelling

The findings regarding the use of stories as a technique for teaching Listening Comprehension not only highlight its practicality and effectiveness, as experienced by EFAL teachers but also reveal its alignment with cognitive processes such as assimilation, accommodation, and schema activation. Supported by literature, including Mojapelo (2020) and Nemaadziwa et al. (2023), storytelling is recognised for its accessibility in under-resourced schools. The familiarity and relatability of stories cater to learners' preferences, emphasising both bottom-up (language skills development) and top-down (contextual understanding) processing. Jakob (2018) support further reinforces the role of storytelling in enhancing both Listening Comprehension and learner interest, aligning with schema activation and cognitive assimilation. The adaptability and versatility of stories, as emphasised by EFAL teachers' experiences, resonate with accommodating diverse learners through both assimilation of new linguistic elements and accommodation to different language contexts. To support the above statement one of the participants said:

Stories are simple to implement and can be adapted to various proficiency levels, accommodating diverse learners when teaching Listening Comprehension. They also provide a versatile platform for addressing different language aspects, including comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar, thoroughly. (Tyra)

The incorporation of stories as a pedagogical tool for teaching Listening Comprehension skills seamlessly aligns with the principles of schema theory, a widely recognised cognitive theory that highlights the role of pre-existing mental frameworks in learning (Onetere, 2019; Shehata, 2021). EFAL teachers adeptly leverage stories, recognising their inherent simplicity and

adaptability, attributes that render them well-suited for addressing the diverse proficiency levels present in their classrooms.

Drawing from the works of Onetere (2019) and Shehata (2021), it is evident that EFAL teachers intentionally harness the power of stories to tap into learners' existing cognitive schemas. These narratives serve as conduits for facilitating the assimilation of new information, a process that is crucial for enhancing Listening Comprehension skills. Engagement with narratives not only hones learners' comprehension skills but also functions as a means to fortify vocabulary and grammar (Tran, 2020; Sator, 2021; Nigro, 2022). This aligns with schema theory's emphasis on building upon existing mental structures to optimise learning outcomes. The stories, therefore, emerge as dynamic tools within EFAL classrooms, establishing a meaningful connection with learners' schema and enriching their experiences in the realm of Listening Comprehension skills.

Despite challenges, such as resource constraints, stories persist as a practical and preferred method for teaching Listening Comprehension skills within EFAL contexts. This persistence highlights a coherent integration of cognitive processes and instructional techniques, affirming the viability of stories as valuable assets in the EFAL teacher's toolkit.

6.2.3.5 Question-and-answer

Related literature suggests that the question-and-answer instructional technique is a cornerstone in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, blending theoretical insights with practical experiences of EFAL teachers (Wangru, 2016; Koksai & Ulum, 2018; Cherry & Lumley, 2019). This method activates learners' background knowledge and fosters critical thinking in teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The incorporation of schema theory illuminates positive learner perceptions, as they actively assimilate information into existing cognitive structures, aligning with the interactive and engaging nature of the question-and-answer approach (Cherry & Lumley, 2019; Vidal, 2019; Jung et al., 2022; Nigro, 2022).

The findings indicate that the question-and-answer instructional technique is the most effective method for teaching Listening Comprehension skills, aligning with Ntombela et al. (2020) study emphasising interaction between teachers and learners. Effectiveness in teaching Listening Comprehension involves learners understanding listening language, measuring proficiency, and using instructional techniques like the question-and-answer method (De Jager

et al., 2020; Ntombela et al., 2020). This effectiveness reflects learners' active participation, comprehension, and the creation of an interactive learning environment.

The question-and-answer technique is a dynamic tool that engages learners actively, fostering an interactive and engaging learning environment (Koksal & Ulum, 2018). Teachers use various questions to encourage active participation, prompting critical thinking and thoughtful responses. The interactive nature of this approach goes beyond passive reception, turning learners into active participants in the learning process, enhancing overall comprehension and retention. To support this, the participants said that:

The question-and-answer method actively involves learners in the listening comprehension lesson, providing a means for me to monitor whether they are still engaged and understanding the story. (Tyra)

I ask questions to ensure ongoing engagement and comprehension during the story. The active participation of learners in question-and-answer sessions demonstrates their willingness to share thoughts and responses. This not only boosts learner participation but also fosters a sense of comfort and engagement with the lesson. (Ruth)

The data suggests that the question-and-answer method allows teachers to engage learners in the lesson and assess their understanding of Listening Comprehension skills. This involves asking learners with different levels of questions that align with Bloom's taxonomy. Applying Bloom's taxonomy in framing questions aligns with the dual purpose of assessing comprehension and encouraging effective articulation of understanding (Koksal & Ulum, 2018). Teachers engage learners at each level of Bloom's taxonomy, inspiring them to draw conclusions, correlations, and applications from what they learn. This approach mirrors the interactive nature of the question-and-answer method, emphasizing the importance of teacher-learner engagement. One of the participants mentioned that:

I ask questions at various levels to monitor learners' understanding. This approach not only assesses comprehension but also creates opportunities for learners to share and articulate their understanding of Listening Comprehension. (Gabby)

Posing questions at different levels, ranging from low to high-order questions related to Bloom's taxonomy, caters to the diverse abilities of all learners. Bloom's taxonomy questioning levels ensure that learners actively engage in the learning process during question-and-answer sessions, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of Listening Comprehension

skills (Koksal & Ulum, 2018; Gul et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2023). This active participation not only assesses their understanding but also fosters opportunities for learners to express and articulate their grasp of the subject matter.

The integration of schema theory provides a theoretical foundation that enhances the positive impact of the question-and-answer technique on Grade 4 learners' Listening Comprehension skills. Question-and-answer technique as a dynamic tool, it allows teachers to activate prior knowledge, foster critical thinking, and create an interactive and engaging learning environment. The findings from teachers' experiences align seamlessly with these theoretical underpinnings, offering a comprehensive and theoretically grounded exploration of the question-and-answer technique in the context of teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

6.2.3.6 Repetition

The repetition approach in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, as advocated by Smelter and Calvillo (2020), proves to be a fundamental strategy with multifaceted benefits. Grounded in its capacity to enhance understanding, repetition allows learners to discern nuances and details that might be overlooked in initial encounters with the material. Additionally, Bartsch and Shepherdson (2022) affirm its role in memory retention, increasing the likelihood of information storage in long-term memory. This strategy, when applied in EFAL contexts, not only aligns with curriculum guidelines but also significantly influences teachers' experiences.

Examining the role of repetition in teaching Listening Comprehension skills unveils a rich body of literature emphasising its cognitive benefits and pedagogical significance. Scholars such as Smelter and Calvillo (2020) advocate for a repetitive approach, highlighting its capacity to enhance understanding and enable learners to capture nuanced details often missed during initial exposures. Additionally, Bartsch and Shepherdson (2022) highlight its role in memory retention, increasing the likelihood of information storage in long-term memory. This foundation in literature paves the way for a deeper exploration of how EFAL teachers incorporate and experience repetition in their instructional practices. Repeating the listening process multiple times offers learners the chance to reinforce their understanding of the content, contributing to easier comprehension and retention of information. This finding underscores the crucial role of repetition in enhancing the learning process, particularly when learners rely solely on listening without the text in front of them.

The repetition technique emerges as a critical element in teaching Listening Comprehension, offering cognitive training opportunities for learners and reinforcing their understanding of the content. The systematic integration of repetition aligns with curriculum guidelines and provides learners with multiple exposures to the material, fostering a more comprehensive comprehension of the content. This finding highlights the significance of repetition in bridging gaps in understanding and enhancing the overall learning experience in EFAL contexts.

Moving beyond memory enhancement, repetition yields benefit in increasing familiarity, aiding learners in grappling with challenging language elements (Smelter & Calvillo, 2020). The iterative process also enables learners to refine comprehension strategies, build confidence, and actively participate through discussions (Darasawang & Reinders, 2021; Sua, 2021; Zhussupova & Shadiev, 2023). Active engagement, as emphasised by Özçakmak (2019) and Al-Ghazo (2023), fosters an interactive learning experience.

Moreover, repetition serves as a facilitator for integrating various language skills, providing a holistic language learning approach (Tsuboi, Francis & Jameson, 2021; Amin, 2022). This inclusive approach, accommodating different learning paces, ensures that playing or reading resources three times caters to individual needs, contributing to a more effective and inclusive language learning process. The literature supporting the integration of repetition aligns with EFAL teachers' experiences, emphasising its role not only in memory enhancement but also in fostering active engagement and a comprehensive language learning experience. The application of schema theory further illuminates how repetition contributes to schema development, aiding learners in organizing and interpreting information effectively.

6.2.4 Challenges affecting the teaching of Listening Comprehension effectively

The central focus of this study was to delve into the experiences of English First Additional Language (EFAL) teachers in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners. The exploration sought to uncover the nuanced connections between the nature of the research context and various interrelated aspects of teaching. Chapter Four highlighted the study's commitment to interpretive paradigms, specifically guiding both the researcher and participants in addressing the challenges faced by EFAL teachers when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. These challenges, such as overcrowded classrooms, limited vocabulary resources, and restricted access to educational materials, were pivotal aspects shaping the interpretive lens through which the study examined the teachers' experiences.

6.2.4.1 Overcrowded classrooms

The existing literature and findings illuminate the formidable challenges associated with teaching Listening Comprehension skills in overcrowded classrooms, a prevalent issue across Grade 4 classes in the participating schools. Attempting to impart Listening Comprehension skills in an overcrowded environment, particularly when it is not the learners' home language, poses a substantial hindrance. The repercussions of overcrowded classrooms extend beyond learners, significantly impacting the quality of teaching and learning (Abrar, 2016; Makielski, 2018).

The data suggest that the primary challenge faced in overcrowded classrooms impedes providing timely and individualised feedback to learners. Cappy (2016) advocates that in overcrowded classes, the lack of individual attention due to the large number of learners and time constraints exacerbates their difficulties. The sheer number of learners in the class creates a barrier to offering quick and personalised responses, hindering the teacher's ability to address individual needs effectively. The findings also indicate that the overcrowded setting makes it challenging to provide individual attention to each learner, leading to difficulties in accurately assessing individual listening comprehension levels. This, in turn, limits the teacher's capacity to offer targeted support to learners facing difficulties.

The data suggest a critical challenge in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, indicating that the crowded classroom environment contributes to difficulties in maintaining the necessary quiet atmosphere for effective teaching. The data aligns with the broader literature, where Matshipi, Maluadzi, and Mashau (2017) mentioned that the large number of learners in overcrowded classrooms significantly contributes to disruptions in the learning environment. Du Plessis and Letshwene (2020) describe these disruptions as unbearable and traumatic experiences by teachers in the context of teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. The literature further emphasises that teachers teaching in overcrowded classrooms are exposed to arguments, chaos, and disruptive behaviours that hinder the teaching and learning process (Muthusamy, 2015; May, 2018; Zenda, 2020). One of the participants mentioned that:

The noise created by learners often requires me to interrupt the class and request quiet, resulting in time-consuming disruptions, and also the limited classroom space restricts my ability to move freely. (Anisha)

Osaï et al. (2021); Ampadu and Commey-Mintah (2021) highlight the crowded classrooms and disruptions, aligning with challenges expressed by teachers who often find it frustrating to teach effectively in such environments. Overcrowded classrooms hinder the effectiveness of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. As overcrowded classrooms emphasising the negative impact on the teaching process. The challenges reported by teachers, as described by Osaï et al., (2021) contribute to the growing body of evidence illustrating the negative consequences of overcrowded classrooms on the effectiveness of teaching, with disruptions being a significant aspect of these challenges. The noise generated by learners, requiring interruptions to restore quiet, and indicating that the constraints of overcrowded classrooms lead to time-consuming disruptions. Moreover, the limitation of classroom space, as identified in the data, impedes the teacher's ability to move freely and engage with learners effectively, reinforcing the challenges outlined by Putra (2020). Overall, these findings underscore the detrimental impact of overcrowded classrooms on both teacher effectiveness and individual learner performance, particularly in the context of EFAL Listening Comprehension skills. Addressing these challenges becomes imperative for creating a conducive and productive learning environment.

The data suggest that the large number of learners contributes to an increased likelihood of distractions in the classroom. Matshipi et al. (2017) state that teachers who are teaching EFAL Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners in an overcrowded classroom describe this as an unbearable and traumatic experience. Teachers teaching in overcrowded classroom are exposed to argument, chaos and behaviours of learners which disturb the process of teaching and learning (Du Plessis & Letshwene, 2020). This suggests a pattern where crowded classrooms are associated with disruptions, possibly impacting the overall learning environment as they are not manageable (Marais & Meier, 2010; Muthusamy, 2015; May, 2018; Zenda, 2020). The noise generated by learners, requiring interruptions to restore quiet, points to a correlation between overcrowded classrooms and time-consuming disruptions. Additionally, the limited classroom space is identified as a restricting factor, impeding the teacher's ability to move freely and engage with learners effectively. This finding aligns with Osaï et al. (2021) when they mentioned that teachers get frustrated as they do not teach effectively. Putra (2020) states that the challenges posed by overcrowded classrooms significantly impact both teacher effectiveness and individual learner performance in EFAL Listening Comprehension skills.

The findings highlight the negative impact of overcrowded classrooms on various aspects of teaching and learning, such as personalised feedback, individual attention, and overall classroom management. Addressing these challenges may involve exploring solutions to reduce class sizes and create a more conducive learning environment for both teachers and learners.

6.2.4.2 Poor understanding and concentration

The prevalent issue of poor understanding and concentration among Grade 4 learners during Listening Comprehension lessons is a considerable challenge faced by EFAL teachers. This challenge is reflected in the learners' disengagement and incorrect responses, indicating a need for targeted strategies to address language barriers and enhance comprehension. Various researchers, including Andrade (2006) and Hellekjaer (2010), have identified factors contributing to poor understanding, such as the inability to take notes, difficulty understanding accents, and a lack of vocabulary.

The classroom observation revealed that many learners struggled to comprehend and concentrate during Listening Comprehension activities, often providing incorrect answers. Teachers resorted to innovative strategies like sit-down and stand-up games to revive learners' attention. Yesterday's use of a picture story, although initially engaging, did not effectively capture learners' attention or ensure understanding during assessment.

The findings highlight the urgent need for EFAL teachers to address language barriers thoroughly. Language proficiency plays a pivotal role in learners' engagement, and strategies to enhance comprehension must be tailored to individual language proficiency levels. This includes implementing contextualised content, providing additional language support, and fostering a supportive learning environment.

The participant's acknowledgement of the importance of supporting struggling learners aligns with existing literature emphasising the significance of targeted assistance in Listening Comprehension skills (Mzobe, 2015; Merga, Roni & Malpique, 2021). This support is not only vital for improving comprehension but also contributes to overall academic performance, particularly given that English serves as the LoLT.

The study sheds light on the challenges of poor understanding and concentration in EFAL Listening Comprehension lessons. The identified factors contribute to learners' disengagement and incorrect responses, emphasizing the need for proactive measures to address language

barriers and enhance the learning experience in EFAL contexts. The findings advocate for a nuanced and tailored approach to teaching Listening Comprehension skills, considering the diverse language backgrounds and proficiency levels of Grade 4 learners.

6.2.4.3 Limited vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is a pivotal aspect of language learning and comprehension, aligning with the schema theory, which posits that individuals use their existing knowledge frameworks to comprehend and interpret new information (Dakhi & Fitria, 2019; Tran, 2020). Schema theory becomes particularly relevant as it emphasises the importance of prior knowledge in constructing meaning during Listening Comprehension skills activities (Karimi et al., 2019; Firman et al., 2023).

The limited exposure of EFAL learners to English, primarily within the school environment, contributes to a restricted vocabulary, especially for those in rural and township areas (Akbari, 2015). This lack of diverse linguistic experiences may hinder learners' ability to activate relevant schema during Listening Comprehension, affecting their overall understanding. The participants in the study expressed concerns about their learners' insufficient vocabulary, reflecting a gap in the learners' schema, or mental framework, for processing English language content. To support the above statement, Yesterday mentioned that:

... limited vocabulary is a barrier.

The participant emphasises how vocabulary limitations can impede the activation of appropriate schema, hindering the teaching of Listening Comprehension. The identified challenge of limited vocabulary among Grade 4 learners highlights the pivotal role of vocabulary development in effective Listening Comprehension, aligning with the schema theory's emphasis on the role of prior knowledge in information processing (Prastiyowati, 2019; Cao & Lin, 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2022). EFAL teachers, as observed in their experiences, invest additional time and effort to address this challenge, emphasising key terms essential for understanding Listening Comprehension material. This effort is crucial for enriching learners' existing schemas and facilitating more effective comprehension.

Based on the findings, it becomes evident that schema activation, rooted in learners' vocabulary knowledge, is a critical factor in successful Listening Comprehension. The struggles faced by teachers in imparting Listening Comprehension skills within the constraints of limited

vocabulary reflect broader challenges encountered in EFAL contexts, where building robust linguistic schemas becomes essential for overcoming comprehension barriers.

The participants' insights into Grade 4 learners having a limited English vocabulary, potentially influenced by their prior education in their home language, highlight the importance of considering learners' linguistic backgrounds within the schema theory framework. This understanding prompts the need to tailor instructional approaches to activate and expand learners' existing schemas, thereby enhancing their ability to comprehend English content.

Integrating schema theory into EFAL instruction involves recognising the role of learners' prior knowledge, particularly their vocabulary, in shaping comprehension. Addressing limited vocabulary becomes not only a vocabulary-building initiative but also a schema-enriching strategy, fostering more effective Listening Comprehension in Grade 4 learners.

6.2.4.4 Non-access to audio and audio-visual resources

Audio and audio-visual resources serve as crucial tools for learners to explore communicative contexts and overcome language barriers (Pham, 2021). Unfortunately, none of the participating schools in the study had access to such resources in their classrooms. While one participant mentioned the presence of a television in her school, its shared use among all grades limited its availability for teaching purposes (Wallace, 2022). The absence of audio and audio-visual resources in EFAL schools poses a challenge, as learners are primarily exposed to their teachers' voices, lacking diversity in speeds and tones, potentially affecting their language development, especially when transitioning to higher education.

Amin et al. (2018) highlight the influential role of audio and audio-visual resources for EFAL learners, emphasising their absence as a limiting factor in the participants' teaching experiences. The participants expressed dissatisfaction with being the sole providers of Listening Comprehension skills content, recognising the potential monotony for learners listening solely to their voices. This raises the need for varied instructional approaches to sustain learner engagement. The participants mentioned that:

learners get bored to always listen to my voice. (Bathsheba)

... I feel like I limit my learners, (Jennisha)

The data revealed the challenges associated with exclusive reliance on the teachers' voice. This sentiment aligns with the literature, suggesting that exposing learners to supplemental

resources, such as native language recordings, could enhance the learning experience and provide proper pronunciation models (Amin et al., 2018; Pham, 2021; Wallace, 2022).

In schools lacking audio and audio-visual resources, teachers like Yesterday from School C go the extra mile by using personal resources, such as laptops and projectors, to expose learners to different forms of media. This effort aligns with the idea that teachers, despite resource constraints, can still provide meaningful listening resources to encourage learner participation in Listening Comprehension skills (Namaziandost et al., 2019).

The challenges associated with non-access to audio and audio-visual resources highlight multifaceted impediments faced by EFAL teachers. These limitations emphasise the need for concerted efforts to address resource disparities, ensuring that teachers have the necessary tools to facilitate comprehensive language instruction. Advocacy for increased resource allocation, exploration of alternative solutions, and integration of technology-based approaches may be essential to mitigate the challenges associated with the absence of such resources in EFAL classrooms.

6.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the study to respond to the research questions which are:

- What are EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners?
- How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners?
- Why do EFAL teachers use these strategies when teaching listening comprehension?

The chapter seamlessly integrated findings by employing schema theory as the study's framework. Aligning with relevant literature, the study's results connect with the broader knowledge of EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Direct quotes from participants were incorporated into the discussion to prioritise their voices. The synthesis focused on four main themes drawn from the study's findings: *Rote teaching*; *The uses of resources*; *Instructional techniques for teaching Listening Comprehension*; and *Challenges affecting the teaching of Listening Comprehension effectively*. The outcomes, informed by participants' active involvement through observations, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews, offer substantial insights into the researched issue.

The findings indicated that the majority of teachers primarily utilised stories for teaching Listening Comprehension skills, deviating from other strategies outlined in CAPS. EFAL

teachers employ various resources in conjunction with instructional techniques when instructing Listening Comprehension.

The exploration of EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners revealed several challenges. These difficulties encompass overcrowded classrooms, limited vocabulary, issues related to learners' poor understanding and concentration, and a lack of access to audio resources (Namaziandost et al., 2019; Putra, 2020, Tran, 2020). To address these challenges effectively, teachers can implement targeted strategies such as creating a more conducive learning environment by managing class sizes, incorporating diverse vocabulary-building activities, employing engagement techniques to enhance concentration, and seeking alternative methods for audio resource access. By addressing these difficulties thoroughly, EFAL teachers can create a more supportive and enriching learning experience for their Grade 4 learners.

The following chapter concludes the study by discussing the recommendations and limitations.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The study aimed to explore the teaching of EFAL Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners. In the previous chapter, the themes that emerged from the findings were discussed. This chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of the study. The research began by exploring teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills in English as a first additional language. Participants were selected from primary schools within the Ugu district, with seven teachers being observed, audio-recorded, and interviewed.

The study examined the experiences of EFAL teachers in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners, as well as the instructional techniques they used. To address the research questions, three research instruments were utilised.

The first instrument was classroom observations, which were used to explore the challenges teachers faced while teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The second instrument was document analysis. The final instrument involved semi-structured interviews with the participants. These interviews were divided into two parts. The first part involved a questionnaire that collected data focusing on each teacher's biographical information. The second part consisted of a semi-structured interview with each participant, guiding the inquiry with a series of questions. These interviews helped to elicit teachers' perspectives on why they employed particular instructional techniques when teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The researcher analysed all teachers' responses to understand the reasons behind their use of specific instructional techniques. This line of questioning was necessary since different techniques were observed during classroom lessons, prompting the researcher to investigate further. When asked about their instructional methods, the teachers explained that they used them to engage learners in the lesson and monitor their understanding of the material.

A qualitative methodology was employed to collect data for this research. Each interview provided a detailed explanation of the reasons behind the teachers' choices of instructional techniques for teaching Listening Comprehension skills. The qualitative data was generated through verbatim transcriptions and audio recordings. To analyse the data, a thematic coding classification was created, and the emerging themes from the coded transcripts were examined.

7.2 Researcher's Perspectives

EFAL Listening Comprehension is regarded as the most complex skill compared to other language skills (Ahmadi, 2016). Even though Listening Comprehension is perceived as difficult, learners must be taught until they understand it. Failure to master EFAL Listening Comprehension contributes to poor academic performance because English is used as the Language of Learning and Teaching. Additionally, EFAL Listening Comprehension is relevant to real-world situations, such as understanding family meetings or speeches by the current president in South Africa. Learners can practice Listening Comprehension skills through everyday experiences like listening to music or watching movies. However, even if teachers use activities relevant to the real world, difficulties may still arise if learners are unfamiliar with English. Therefore, it was necessary to explore how Listening Comprehension skills are taught in Grade 4, the first grade to use English as the LoLT. This was accomplished by investigating EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners.

During classroom lesson observations, each participant employed different instructional techniques. When teachers used these techniques during Listening Comprehension lessons, learners showed interest. Some learners understood the material, while others struggled, but it was surprising that the entire class seemed more challenged during assessments when asked questions individually, either in writing or orally. Participants noted that while learners appeared to understand the material during lessons, issues arose when they were assessed individually. The teachers were unsure of what caused the decline in performance when learners were required to work independently. Nonetheless, during classroom observations, learners actively participated in the lessons.

This study explored the experiences of teachers in each participating school, revealing several challenges that hindered instructional techniques. For example, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers used pictures as teaching resources, unaware that the learners seated at the back could not see them. Additionally, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers struggled to learn the names of their learners, which posed another challenge.

The most commonly used instructional technique by all the participants in this study was the question-and-answer method. This technique makes the lesson active as learners participate by answering questions. Teachers also used the question-and-answer method to guide learners to the correct answers by paraphrasing the questions. These insights were based on classroom

lesson observations, and participants also shared their experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills and how they approach this task, which is discussed in the following section.

7.3 Summary of Key Findings

This section addresses the research questions of this study. The findings were categorised based on the realities of Listening Comprehension skills classes. Within the scope of this study, conclusions regarding the research questions were made.

7.3.1 Challenges Affecting the Effective Teaching of Listening Comprehension Skills

The first research question aimed to identify the experiences EFAL teachers encountered while teaching Listening Comprehension skills. This study revealed the various challenges teachers faced during lessons, which negatively impacted the teaching of learners, especially those in Grade 4 who were using English as the LoLT for the first time.

During classroom lesson observations, overcrowding emerged as a major challenge in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to learners who had a limited understanding of English. Participants found it difficult to teach in such an environment because overcrowded classrooms negatively affect both teaching and learning. Overcrowded classrooms reduce opportunities for learners to collaborate, as there is insufficient space for group seating. This environment negatively impacts teaching learners who do not speak or understand the language of instruction well. The findings of this study revealed that overcrowded classrooms were time-consuming, as participants had to frequently pause to address disruptions caused by other learners. Teachers also found it challenging to monitor large classrooms while teaching Listening Comprehension skills (Kodal, 2019). Additionally, participants struggled with learning their students' names, which hindered their ability to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses. It seemed that some participants focused more on learners who understood the lessons, as they were more active, while those with learning barriers were left behind. One participant mentioned that it was impossible to assess all learners in an overcrowded classroom on the same day, and expressed concern that this practice was unfair to learners assessed the day after the lesson was conducted. The findings suggest that overcrowded classrooms diminish the quality of teaching and learning.

When learners do not understand the lesson or the language, it is difficult for them to concentrate. The study found that learners who did not understand the lesson often occupied themselves with other activities, such as talking or drawing. Even those attempting to pay attention often gave incorrect answers when questioned, indicating a misunderstanding of the Listening Comprehension skills exercise. Some learners appeared bored during lessons, except in rote teaching activities. Participants explained that poor understanding and concentration were partly due to the learners' difficulties with reading, which is why they spent considerable time on vocabulary, pronunciation, and word definitions. The findings showed that while participants were aware of the challenges in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, they were limited in what they could do due to other issues faced by EFAL schools, such as a lack of audio and audiovisual resources.

During classroom observations, none of the participating schools utilised radio or television. Instead, all participants relied on their voices to read or summarise Listening Comprehension exercises. The evident shortage of teaching resources in EFAL schools underscores persistent challenges, particularly when compared to ex-Model C schools that claim to emphasise equality (Spaull, 2013). This observation suggests that, despite democratic changes, disparities in educational resources persist, reflecting an ongoing inequality that extends beyond the historical apartheid period. Spaull (2013) supports and substantiates this claim, aligning with the broader discourse on educational inequities in South Africa.

The scarcity of resources in EFAL schools remains a significant barrier to enhancing the overall quality of education. Addressing this inadequacy is crucial for achieving genuine educational equality (Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013; Dreyer et al., 2020; Spokazi, Luggya, & Tanga, 2021). Despite resource shortages in the participating schools, teachers demonstrated adaptability by improvising to ensure effective lessons. Chapters five and six of this study delve into the details of these improvisations by the teachers.

Participants used their skills to create teaching resources. For instance, one participant, Yesterday, created a picture story chart using photocopied images and coloured crayons to add vibrancy. She had to make her teaching resources because the school could not afford to provide them. This study revealed that teachers often go the extra mile to create essential teaching resources (Birinci & Saricoban, 2021).

7.3.2 Instructional Techniques for Teaching Listening Comprehension Skills

EFAL teachers impart Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners by adhering to the guidelines outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. These teachers employ a systematic approach that integrates comprehensive strategies across the pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening phases to ensure a holistic learning experience. Beyond conventional methods, EFAL teachers strategically incorporate narrative elements, leveraging the power of stories as an enriching pedagogical tool to enhance learners' Listening Comprehension skills.

Teachers often begin lessons with rote teaching, a pre-listening comprehension method that prepares learners through recitation, pronunciation, spelling, and activation of prior knowledge. Visual aids are employed throughout the entire process, from pre-listening to post-listening activities. In teaching Listening Comprehension skills, EFAL teachers use a variety of instructional techniques, including demonstration, discussion, real-life application, question-and-answer, and repetition.

7.3.3 Rote Teaching and the Use of Resources

When asked why they use specific instructional techniques in teaching Listening Comprehension skills, participants provided insights into the perceived effectiveness of these strategies. They mentioned that they begin with rote teaching because CAPS instructs them to follow a systematic approach that includes pre-listening, during-listening, and post-listening activities. Pre-listening activities, such as recitation, cater to diverse learners, improve pronunciation, and support language acquisition. Pronunciation and spelling establish a strong foundation for effectively teaching Listening Comprehension skills. Participants also noted that pronunciation helps learners understand English, serving as a cornerstone for vocabulary development and comprehension. Activating prior knowledge helps learners engage with the lesson, and teachers can interact with learners through rote teaching.

Participants also noted that the use of resources helps learners visualise what they are about to hear (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021; Sotivor et al., 2023). Visual aids, which are modified from the unknown to the known, reinforce information and cater to diverse learners, aiding memory retention. Visuals are powerful tools for activating learners' background knowledge when teaching Listening Comprehension skills.

Participants used human resources, such as facial expressions, voice imitation, and gestures, to maintain learner attention and eliminate code-switching (Mpiti et al., 2019; Ramaoke, 2022; Matiso & Makena, 2022). They mentioned that using human resources contributes to effective teaching and makes lessons more enjoyable (Chalak, 2021).

Participants identified demonstration, discussion, real-life application, storytelling, question-and-answer, and repetition as valuable tools, emphasising their ability to meet instructional objectives while accommodating diverse learner levels (O'Connor et al., 2017; Tran, 2020; Zhang, 2022). Demonstrations, such as using keywords and flashcards, help imprint vocabulary in learners' memories. Discussion promotes critical thinking and encourages participation. Real-life applications engage learners in their environments and foster deeper understanding. Storytelling is an accessible method, even in under-resourced schools, and caters to both bottom-up and top-down processing. The question-and-answer technique was highlighted for its effectiveness in activating learners' prior knowledge and engaging them in interactive learning. Repetition was noted for enhancing understanding and long-term memory retention.

7.4 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant implications for the field of English First Additional Language education, particularly concerning the Listening Comprehension skills of Grade 4 learners. By examining the experiences of EFAL teachers in selected schools, this research contributes vital knowledge that can shape and enhance educational practices. One of the key contributions lies in informing the development of teaching strategies and curriculum adjustments. The challenges identified, along with the instructional techniques employed, provide practical insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers, enabling them to tailor EFAL teaching to better meet the needs of Grade 4 learners.

Furthermore, the study advocates for ongoing professional development for EFAL teachers. Recognising the importance of continuous training and support, the research recommends targeted programmes that equip teachers with a diverse set of instructional techniques and strategies. This emphasis on professional growth aims to elevate the overall proficiency of EFAL teachers, ultimately benefiting the quality of education delivered to Grade 4 learners.

Resource allocation is another critical aspect addressed by the study. The identification of challenges related to resource availability in under-resourced schools highlights the need for

equitable provision of teaching resources, particularly audio and audiovisual tools. Policymakers can leverage these insights to address resource disparities and ensure that EFAL teachers have the necessary tools for effective teaching.

The study also emphasises the importance of creating inclusive learning environments. Advocating for strategies that cater to diverse learner needs, encourages educational practices that consider the varied backgrounds and abilities of Grade 4 learners. This recommendation seeks to foster a more inclusive and supportive educational setting, promoting equal opportunities for all learners.

In addition, the study highlights the significance of research-informed practices and peer collaboration. This approach encourages teachers to stay updated on best practices and engage in collaborative efforts, contributing to continuous improvement in EFAL education. The research advocates for policy changes that recognise and address the unique challenges in EFAL settings. By shedding light on the disparities and challenges faced by EFAL teachers, the study contributes to the discourse on policy development, aiming to create supportive and effective teaching practices within the broader educational landscape.

The significance of this study extends beyond its immediate context, offering valuable insights that can positively impact EFAL education for Grade 4 learners and influence various facets of the educational system.

7.5 Recommendations and Limitations

The findings of this study offer several recommendations to optimise the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills in EFAL settings for Grade 4 learners. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations that may impact the generalisability of these findings.

Sample Size: The study was conducted with a small sample size of 7 participants from four schools. This limited sample size may not be fully representative of the broader population, thus impacting the generalisability of the results. To address this limitation, future research should consider increasing the sample size and including a more diverse range of schools to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the teaching practices and challenges in EFAL settings.

Curriculum Alignment: It is crucial to ensure curriculum alignment, making sure that instructional practices closely adhere to the procedures outlined in the CAPS. This alignment

helps in standardising teaching methods across different schools and enhances the effectiveness of instructional practices.

Professional Development: To equip EFAL teachers with diverse instructional techniques and strategies, professional development opportunities should be prioritised. Continuous training and workshops can help teachers stay updated with the latest methodologies and improve their teaching practices.

Teaching Resources: Adequate provision of teaching resources, especially in under-resourced schools, is essential to facilitate varied and enriched instructional methods. Ensuring that all schools have access to the necessary materials can help in implementing effective teaching strategies.

Inclusive Strategies: Embracing inclusive strategies that cater to diverse learner needs is paramount to promoting an equitable learning environment. Teachers should be trained to identify and address the different learning styles and needs of their learners to ensure that all learners are engaged and supported.

Research-Informed Practices: Encouraging research-informed practices and fostering peer collaboration can contribute to a culture of continuous improvement among English language teachers. By staying informed about the latest research and sharing best practices, teachers can enhance their instructional methods.

Policy Advocacy: Advocacy for policies that recognise and address the unique challenges in EFAL settings is imperative for creating supportive and effective teaching practices. Policymakers should be informed about the specific needs and challenges faced by EFAL teachers and learners to develop targeted interventions.

COVID-19: The qualitative data collection process of this study was significantly limited by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study was conducted during a time when COVID-19 regulations were strictly enforced, and participants were increasingly frustrated due to the rising number of cases. This situation introduced a level of scepticism between the researcher and participants, as the risk of infection from either party was a constant concern. Consequently, some appointments were cancelled, and in certain instances, participants were

hospitalised and unable to respond to phone calls, leading to further delays. Despite these challenges, the researcher remained patient and sought alternative participants when necessary.

Additionally, the pandemic led to a revision of the school curriculum, which restricted the availability of participants during the long holidays. Frequent changes in teaching plans required repeated rescheduling of interviews, further delaying the data collection process. According to the staggered school resumption plan drawn up by the Ministry of Education, Grade 4 was the last grade to return to school. This led to some Grade 4 teachers being reassigned to teach Grade 7, which required them to prepare for new subjects, ultimately resulting in their withdrawal from the study.

Floods: Moreover, the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic coincided with flood disasters in KwaZulu-Natal. Some participating schools were damaged, and essential infrastructure, such as bridges, was washed away. The researcher had to allow time for these repairs before resuming school visits and classroom observations, further extending the duration of the study.

This study was also limited by the relatively small number of participants and its focus on the Ugu district in KwaZulu-Natal. As a result, the findings cannot be generalised beyond this district. However, the outcomes are still considered transferable to other contexts with similar characteristics, despite the limited scope and number of participants.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter began with the researcher's perspectives based on the findings of the study. A summary of the study was provided, and the themes were explored. The significance and contributions of the study were highlighted.

The focus of this study was to explore EFAL teachers' experiences in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners. According to the findings, examining teachers' experiences is beneficial for both teachers and learners, particularly regarding instructional techniques. During the teaching of Listening Comprehension skills, teachers used a variety of instructional techniques to aid learners' understanding and keep them engaged in the lesson.

The chapter concludes with recommendations, suggestions for future research, and limitations.

8. References

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1 A

Turnitin Originality Report					
Processed on: 30-Mar-2023 11:45 AM CAT ID: 2050880086 Word Count: 73777 Submitted: 1					
EXPLORING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST-ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF GRADE 4 TEACHERS IN THE UGU DISTRICT IN KWAZULU-NATAL By Musa Mzobe					
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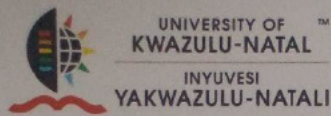
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EXPLORING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE: A CASE STUDY OF GRADE 4 TEACHERS IN THE UGU DISTRICT IN KWAZULU-NATAL By CLEOPATRA MUSA MZOBÉ Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ENGLISH) In the Discipline of Languages and Media Studies (Edgewood Campus) School of Education UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL Supervisor: Dr Nicholas Nyika 2023 1 Declaration of originality I declare that "Exploring teachers' experiences of teaching listening comprehension in English as a first additional language: A case study of grade 4 teachers in the Ugu district in Kwazulu- Natal" is my own work and that all sources consulted and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. Signed Cleopatra Musa Mzobe Statement by Supervisor This dissertation is submitted with my approval. Signed..... Dr N. Nyika Dedication To God Almighty who gave me strength, persistence, and hope. To my late mother Thombi and sister Bukeka. Acknowledgements I acknowledge the people who made this journey possible: I want to thank The Trinity of heaven: God almighty, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, Who despite all the hardships I have been through, enabled me to complete my dissertation. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to everyone who assisted, guided, and encouraged me in the preparation and submission of this dissertation. Many thanks to the following individuals: Dr. Nicholas Nyika, my supervisor, for sharing your knowledge and guidance throughout my studies. You have been patient and tireless in honing my skills, and I am grateful for your unwavering wisdom. My family Lungile, Nicola, Kwezi, and Khethokuhle for your support during this study and to be there for me in a time of need. I wish to express my gratefulness and appreciation to Dr. Martha Khosa, Ps Khosi Nyawo and Nokuphiwa Mkhabela for your support, motivation, and guidance. To the University of KwaZulu-Natal for providing financial support for my study. Last but not least, my gratitude goes to the Department of Education officials, school principals, and educators who participated in this research study. This research project would not have been possible without their participation. May God richly bless you. Table of Contents Declaration of originality2 Dedication3 Acknowledgement4 List of figures11 List of tables12 List of abbreviations and acronyms13 Abstract14 Chapter 1: Introduction 1.1 The Overview of Chapter One18 1.2 Introduction and Background of the Study18 1.3 The Focus and Purpose of the Study20 1.4 The Rationale of the Study20 1.4.1 Bridging the Gap of Teaching Listening Comprehension20 1.4.2 Contribution of the Study towards English21 1.5 Exploring English in Particular22 1.6 Teaching and Learning Listening Comprehension22 1.7 Explanation of the key concepts24 1.7.1 English first additional language24 1.7.2 Teaching24 1.7.3 Listening comprehension24 1.8 Objectives of the study24 1.9 Presenting Research Questions24 1.10 Hypothesis25 1.11 Scope of the Study25 1.12 Research Approach25 1.13 Ethical Issues26 1.14 Outline of the Study's Chapters27 1.15 Conclusion28 Chapter 2: Literature Review 2.1 Preamble29 2.2 The Definition of the Concept29 2.2.1 Listening29 2.2.2 Comprehension30 2.2.3 Listening Comprehension31 2.3 Listening comprehension problems

Appendix 1B



14 August 2023

Cleopatra Musa Mzobe (214581959)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear CM Mzobe,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001679/2020

Project title: Exploring ESL teaching of listening comprehension to grade 4 primary school learners.

Amended title: Exploring teachers experiences of teaching listening comprehension in English as a first additional language: A case study of grade 4 teachers in the Ugu district in KwaZulu-Natal.

Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 05 August 2023 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

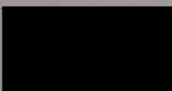
Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587

Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:

Edgewood

Howard College

Medical School

Pietermaritzburg

Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 1 C



education

Department:
Education

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma
ef.:2/4/8/1911

Tel: 033 392 1063R

Miss CM Mzobe



Dear Miss Mzobe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“EXPLORING ESL TEACHING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION TO GRADE 4 PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 26 August 2019 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UGu District



Dr. EV Nzama

Head of Department: Education Date: 29

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzneducation.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE....Twitter: @DBE_KZN....Instagram: kzn_education....Youtube:kzndoe

Appendix 1 D

LETTER TO THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Cleopatra Musa Mzobe

[REDACTED]

Email: musacm1@gmail.com

The Superintendent General
KZN Department of Education
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3201
KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Sir

Application for permission to conduct research on the title: *'Exploring ESL teaching of listening comprehension in grade 4 primary school learners.'*

I am a primary school teacher who is currently enrolled at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for a PhD. I am conducting a research study as a fulfillment for this degree. The study aims to understand the perspectives of teachers teaching listening comprehension to grade 4 learners in a rural primary school. This study makes an important point that it is critically important to engage with and listen to the voices of grade 4 teachers teaching English Second Language listening comprehension to understand their experiences better. I hereby request permission to conduct research in Ugu District, Gamalakhe Circuit and Margate Circuit in four primary schools.

I will be conducting observational research, which means I will become involved in and share lived experiences of the school so I will spend extended periods in this school. The research will take the form of semi-structured interviews, observations as well as document reviews. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the English teachers teaching grade 4 learners. These interviews will take about 45 minutes each. Before the interview, I will arrange a time and place for the interview that is convenient for my participants. During the interview, I will ask questions and make some notes on responses. With the participants' permission, I would tape the interview to help me remember what was said and these tapes will be erased once the specified storage time has elapsed. After writing up the data I would discuss it with the participants to check that it accurately reflects their viewpoint. The interview data will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only. The schools and teachers will not be named. I will do observations of lessons practice. Document review will include English CASS and Subject Improvement Plan. I will use reflective journal to do regular informal writings documenting interactions with teachers.

Permission to work at the school will be sought from the principal. Letters of informed consent will be given to all participants.

You have my assurance that the research will not infringe on your normal school programme or have any financial implications for your school.

I thank you for your time and hope that my request meets with your approval.

Yours faithfully

Cleopatra Musa Mzobe

Appendix 1 E

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Musa Mzobe



Email: musacm1@gmail.com

The Principal
Sample Primary School
Ugu District
Port Shepstone

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Musa Mzobe. I am currently enrolled at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood campus) for a PhD. I am conducting a research study as a fulfilment for this degree. The title of the study is **‘Exploring English Second Language teaching of listening comprehension to grade 4 primary school learners.**

The purpose of this study is to explore teaching of ESL listening comprehension to grade 4 primary school learners. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding on how ESL teachers teach listening comprehension to grade 4 learners. The study also aims at understanding what challenges of teaching listening comprehension to grade 4 learners and how teachers deal with them.

I hereby request your approval to use the school documents and premises to interview English Second Language grade 4 teachers as participants in my research study. I will be using various data collecting tools such as semi-structured interviews and document analysis. All the interviews will be conducted outside of the normal school time or during free periods. The participants will be notified in advance of the exact date and time for the scheduled interviews. The data for both interviews will be audio- recorded using a digital device (if participants agree) and then transferred to typed transcriptions for analysis purposes.

The study is dependent on your willingness to allow the teachers at your school to participate in this research study. Their participation is voluntary, and they are free to withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason. Refusal to answer questions and withdrawal from this research project will in no way result in any form of discrimination or disadvantage. All the information that will be collected will be used for my thesis. Permission is also requested from you for the publication of the findings in the form of research reports, conferences presentations and publication in research journals.

Your anonymity in terms of your responses, evidence and documentation used in the research will be guaranteed. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity if the need arises to disclose names or places. The research participants will be given an opportunity to comment or change the transcribed data to ensure trustworthiness of the data. The data collected during the research process will be securely stored in a safe place for a period of five years and will be disposed of (by incineration) after this period.

There are no direct benefits to participants for participating in this study. However, I believe that participants will benefit a lot in terms of gaining more knowledge and understanding about the role and responsibilities of primary teacher, thus gaining more capacity to effectively facilitate a conducive learning environment for the learners.

My supervisor is Dr. Nicholus Nyika, please feel free to contact him on the number below if you have any queries regarding this research study.

Thank You.

Yours in Education

Musa Mzobe (Miss)

██████████

Email: musacm1@gmail.com

Supervisor	: Dr. Nicholus Nyika
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UKZN

School of Education

Main Tutorial Building

Edgewood campus

Contact details: 031 260 3693

nyikan@ukzn.ac.za
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RESEARCH OFFICE (ETHICS) CONTACT DETAILS

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

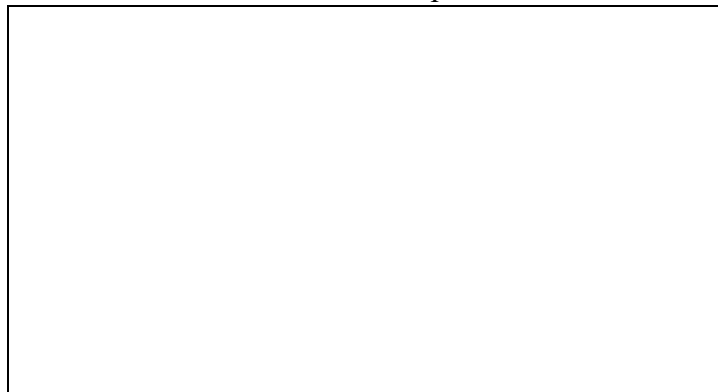
PERMISSION

I _____ Principal of _____
hereby grant the researcher permission to conduct research as outlined in the request to conduct
permission document.

Signature

Date

School Stamp



Appendix 1 F

LETTER TO THE EDUCATOR

Musa Mzobe

[REDACTED]

Email: musacm1@gmail.com

Greetings

My name is Musa Mzobe the University of KwaZulu- Natal (Edgewood), Department of Languages and Media Studies.

The title of this research: Exploring teacher's experience of teaching listening comprehension as first additional language. A case study of Grade 4 teachers in Ugu district in KwaZulu-Natal.

You have been identified as a valuable source of information for this study. I humbly request your participation in this study in your capacity as an educator in the school. You have my assurance that the data will be used for research purposes only, your name and the school will not be named. The findings of this research will certainly be of value your school. It will assist policymakers to make meaningful policy and other intervention programmes that are aimed at enhancing to teach English First Additional Language (EFAL) to Grade 4 learners in primary schools. The purpose of this study is to explore teaching of EFAL listening comprehension to grade 4 primary school learners. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding on how EFAL teachers teach listening comprehension, also to understand what challenges of teaching listening comprehension to Grade 4 learners and how teachers deal with them. This study involves interview and classroom observation. Interviews will be conducted and divided into two and these interviews will take about 45 minutes to one hour each. Before the interview, I will arrange a time and place for the interview that is convenient to you. During the interview, I will ask questions and make some notes on your responses. With your permission I would like to tape the interview to help me remember what was said and I assure you that these tapes will be erased once the specified storage time has elapsed. After writing up the data I would

like to discuss it with you to check that it accurately reflects your viewpoints. The interview observation data will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only and neither you nor the school will be named.

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research but if it happens, I as a researcher I will pay for medical treatment only. There are no direct benefits to participants for participating in this study. However, I believe that participants will benefit a lot in terms of gaining more knowledge and understanding about the role and responsibilities of English primary school teacher, thus gaining more capacity to effectively facilitate learning in the conducive environment for learners. The research will involve you sacrificing your time for not more than 1 to 2 hours after normal school time on specifically set dates, for which you will be notified in advance. I will be using various data collecting tools such as an individual semi-structured interview and document analysis to collect data. I will also request academic performance documentation (CASS Ex. Book/file) and Subject Improvement Plan (SIP) for grades 4 over the last two years. The data for interviews will be audio- recorded using a digital device (if you as a research participant agree) and then transferred to typed transcriptions for analysis purposes.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number; HSSREC/00001679/2020).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 0727782386 and the email is musacm1@gmail.com or my supervisor Dr. Nicholus Nyika, who is a senior lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus. He can be contacted telephonically on 031 260 3693 and the email address is nyikan@ukzn.ac.za. or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan

Mbeki Building

PrivateBagX54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

The study is dependent on your willingness to participate in this research study. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, your data will only be used with your permission. Refusal to answer questions and withdrawal from this research project will in no way result in any form of discrimination or disadvantage. The researcher may terminate the participant from the study if the participant is not following the study procedures or deliberately providing false information in order to maintain the integrity of the data.

There are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

Your anonymity in terms of your responses, evidence and documentation used in the research will be guaranteed. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity if the need arises to disclose names or places. The research participants will be given an opportunity to comment or change the transcribed data to ensure trustworthiness of the data. The data collected during the research process will be securely stored in a safe place for a period of five years in the University and will be disposed of (by incineration) after this period.

Thank You.

Yours in Education

Musa Mzobe (Miss)

CONSENT

I _____ (Full Names) have been informed about the study entitled: Exploring English First Additional Language teaching of listening comprehension to Grade 4 primary school learners conducted by Miss Musa Mzobe.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] or Email: musacml@gmail.com

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus Govan

Mbeki Building

PrivateBagX54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hereby provide consent to (please tick):

Data collection activities	Yes	No
Interview and observation		
Audio recording		
Audio recording on conversation based on key documents selected		
Video recording		
Photos		

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

(Where applicable)

Signature of Translator

Date

(Where applicable)

Appendix 1 G

INCWADI YOKUCELA ABAFUNDI KUBAZALI

[REDACTED]

Email: musacm1@gmail.com

Mzali

Igama lami ngingu Musa Mzobe owenza izifundo zobuDokotela eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal. Ukuze ngihlanganise iziqu zalezi zifundo engizenzayo kumele ngenze ucwaningo lapho ngibheka khona okuhlangabezana nothisha ekufundiseni ukulalela ngokuqondisisa ngolimi lokuqala lwesiNgisi lebanga lesine. Isikole somntwana wakho siqokiwe ukuba sibe yinxenye yalolu cwaningo. Ngokuzithoba okukhulu, uyacelwa ukuba uvume umntwana wakho abambe iqhaza kulolu cwaningo.

Uyaziswa ukuthi abukho ubungozi umntwana wakho angangena ngenxa yalolu cwaningo nokuthi ayikho imikomelo eyonikezwa abantwana abazobamba iqhaza. Ukubamba iqhaza akuphoqiwe futhi ungamhoxisa umntwana wakho noma ngesiphi isikhathi kulolucwaningo.

Ngiyabonga kakhulu uma lesi sicelo siphumelele. Uma uvuma ngicela ubhale igama lakho bese usayina isivumelwano.

Mayelana neminingwane eminingi engabhalwanga ngaphezulu ungathintana nomcwaningi (Musa Mzobe) kule nombolo engezansi kuyo lencwadi.

Ozithobayo

Musa Mzobe

[REDACTED]

ISIVUMELWANO

Mina _____ (igama nesibongo oMzali)
ngiyavuma ukuba umntwana wami _____
(igama nesibongo somntwana) abe yinxenye yocwaningo njengoba kuchaziwe ngenhla.
Ngiyaqonda ukuthi angeke kube khona mikomelo eyonikezwa.

Umzali makasayine emgqeni ongenhla

Usuku

LETTER TO THE PARENTS OF LEARNER PARTICIPANTS


Email: musacm1@gmail.com

Greetings

My name is Musa Mzobe. I am studying PhD degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As part of the requirements for this degree, I am conducting a research project in which I investigate the teachers' experiences of teaching listening comprehension in English as first additional language to grade 4. It will be an honour to allow your child to take part in this research.

You are informed that there are no risks associated with your child's participation in this study and no remuneration is offered. The participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw your child from the research at any time.

I would like to thank in advance for allowing your child to participate in this study. Please write your name and sign the consent.

Should you have more questions and problems related to the study, please feel free to contact me to call me (Musa Mzobe) on the number below.

Yours Sincerely

Musa Mzobe


CONSENT

I _____ (Name and surname of a parent) consent my child _____ (name of a child) to participate in the research study. I understand that there is no incentives or reimbursements for participation.

Signature

Date

Appendix 1H

Lungile Nkululeko Msomi



New Germany

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that the Thesis: Grade 4 English First Additional Language Teachers' Experiences of Teaching Listening Comprehension Skills: A Case Study of Selected Schools in the UGU District in KwaZulu Natal written by Cleopatra Musa Mzobe has been edited by me for language.

Please contact me should you require any further information.

Kind Regards

Lungile Msomi

msomi.lungile@gmail.com



Appendix 2 A

LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC
SECTION B: LESSON OBSERVATION

SECTION A

SCHOOL VISIT DETAILS	
1. Teacher name and surname	
2. Home language	
3. School enrolment	
4. Grade 4 classes	
5. Teacher/learner ratio	
4. Class size	
5. School	
6. Gender	
7. Qualifications	
8. Teaching experience	
9. Date of visit	
10. Duration of a lesson	

SECTION B: GOOD LISTENING PRACTICE

PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES	COMPREHENSION					
		NO	YES-	YES-	YES -	N/A
The teacher:						
Starts a lesson (with oral activity like song or poem)						
Introduces listening comprehension (write or paste keywords and show pictures to draw attention)						
Activate existing knowledge (ask the meaning of keywords)						
Reads the title						
Discusses the title with learners						

Builds knowledge (ask learners to use keywords to make sentences to show understanding and give another meaning: homonyms)						
Asks learners to predict listening comprehension						
Uses teaching method/s						
Uses teaching materials (herself/audio)						
Encourages learners to participate						
Gives questions that s/he will use in the post-listening						
Asks learners to take notes during listening comprehension						

General notes

Classroom environment:

Comments on pre-listening comprehension:

DURING LISTENING COMPREHENSION, the teacher ...	NO	YES-	YES-	YES -	N/A	
Reads with audible voice/plays audio clearly						
Pronunciation (words are well pronounced)						
Speed/pace is too quick or too slow						
Uses gestures to draw attention						
Language usage (only English)						

Not too long listening comprehension (length of LC)						
Monitors learners that are still listening by asking questions						
Reads/plays familiar listening comprehension						
Reads/plays listening comprehension three times?						
Asks the different level of questions. (Lower, Middle, and High order questions- the purpose of differentiation)						
Moves around the class during listening comprehension						

Comments during listening comprehension:

Post listening comprehension, the teacher ...		YES-	YES-	YES -	N/A	
Engages learners in activities that consolidate their learning from listening comprehension.	No					
Uses oral or writing as a tool to assess learners.						
Asks questions that help learners to give a sequence of listening comprehension						
Asks questions that help learners to connect listening comprehension to their own lives.						

Asks learners to give their own title to the listening comprehension.						
Provides opportunities for the learners to summarise listening comprehension.						
Gives feedback						
Praises learners if answer correctly.						
Gives positive feedback if learners give the wrong answers.						
Encourages learners to participate						
Supports learners who did not understand the lesson comprehension						

Comments on post listening comprehension:

Appendix 2 B

Semi-structured interview schedule for Grade 4 English First Additional Language teachers

PART 1

1. How old are you? Can you please choose from -25; 25-30; 31-35; 36-40; 41-45; 46-50; +50
2. How many teaching staff in your school?
3. How many teachers are teaching EFAL in grade 4?
4. What teaching qualifications do you have?
5. Was English one of your major subjects at the higher institution?
6. How is your school allocating subjects to teachers?
7. Where do you get support in order to teach listening comprehension better?
8. How is the listening comprehension pass rate in grade 4?
9. Does your school have library?
10. What/How is your relationship with grade 3 teachers based on ESL listening comprehension?
11. Does your school have electricity?
12. Does your school have audio and audio-visuals?

PART 2

1. What are EFAL teachers' experiences of teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?

- 1.1 How do EFAL teachers approach lesson planning for Listening Comprehension skills in Grade 4?
- 1.2 What experiences do EFAL teachers face when teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?
- 1.3 What resources and materials do EFAL teachers find most effective in teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?

2. How do EFAL teachers teach Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners?

2.1 What instructional methods do EFAL teachers use when teaching Listening Comprehension skills to Grade 4 learners?

2.2 How do EFAL teachers tailor their teaching strategies to accommodate different learning styles and abilities within Grade 4?

2.3 How do EFAL teachers encourage active participation and engagement during Listening Comprehension skills lessons for Grade learners?

3. Why do EFAL teachers use these strategies when teaching listening comprehension?

3.1 What methods or pedagogical theories influence EFAL teachers in selecting specific strategies for teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners?

3.2 Are there any specific goals that EFAL teachers aim to achieve by employing these [particular] strategies in teaching Listening Comprehension to Grade 4 learners?