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Teaching Strategies for Improving Creative Writing in English First Additional Language

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Abstract

Research suggests that most South African learners are struggling to write effectively. Previous studies show misconceptions about teaching strategies for teaching creative writing skills. This paper sought to establish teachers' views about how they teach creative writing skills to English First Additional Language learners in grade 12. This research analysed process writing approach and genre-based approach in teaching creative writing skills. The study is grounded in an interpretive research paradigm within a qualitative approach. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select ten teachers from five schools in uMkhanyakude district in KwaZulu Natal Province in South Africa. Socio-cultural theory and genre-theory underpinned this study. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, non-participatory classroom observations and document analysis. Thematic analysis was employed for data analysis. Findings revealed that teachers were poorly aligning their pedagogical practices to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement. Moreover, there were teacher misconceptions of teaching strategies. Teachers lacked Pedagogical Content Knowledge to effectively teach complex skills required for creative writing. The findings in this study also suggest that teachers are poorly trained in curriculum interpretation. Furthermore, many teachers were unable to effectively utilise teaching strategies that enhance creative writing skills and design engaging writing activities that stimulate learners imagination. It is therefore recommended that teachers are capacitated on effective pedagogies and various genres that will improve and broaden their learners writing skills. The Department of Basic Education would need to strengthen their support and regularly monitor and evaluate teachers regarding policy implementation to avoid policy misinterpretation.

Keywords: Process writing approach, genre-based approach, pedagogical content knowledge and qualitative approach.

1. Introduction

It is vital for teachers to be well-capacitated on appropriate teaching strategies that need to be utilised in enhancing creative writing skills amongst learners. In view thereof, many studies point out that creative writing in English is among the essential skills with many complexities (Choshi, 2015, Mohammed, 2019 & Fareed et al, 2016). Therefore, for this skill to be mastered, teachers need to intentionally teach this skill through the use of effective pedagogies (Fared et al, 2016 & Dlamini, 2019). However, relatively, few consideration has been leveled at the misconceptions within the utilisation of the pedagogy of creative writing (Mpiti, 2016 & Blease, 2014 & Akinyenye, 2015). Research studies reveal that a vast majority of the learners fail to write effectively as creative writing is a rather complex process which demands cognitive and metacognitive skills (Choshi, 2015, Gains & Graham, 2011, Akinyenye, 2015, Graham et al, 2016; & Manning, 2017). This lack thereof is exacerbated by poor utilisation of the pedagogy of creative writing skills by teachers (Manning, 2017). Many scholars assert that there are many pedagogical approaches to teaching creating writing (Harmer, 1998, Myhill et al, 2021 & Satya Sri Durga & Rao, 2018). For example, firstly, process writing approach entails organisation of ideas, drafting, revising, and editing (Nunnan, 1999 & Ngubane, 2018). Secondly, text-based approach involves building the context, modelling and deconstructing text, joint construction of text, independent construction of text and links to related text (Mohlabi-Tlaka, 2016). However, teachers tend to struggle to explicitly teach these skills (Ngubane, 2018 & Mohlabi-Tlaka, 2016). Furthermore, research evidence points out that many teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Mohlabi-tlaka, 2016). Thus, it has been argued that for teachers to effectively teach creative writing skills PCK should be viewed as a reference point (Walshaw, 2012, Smithers & Robinson, 2013; & Myhill et al, 2021). Despite several studies available research remains limited on the best pedagogical practices of creative writing especially in English First Additional Language. The present study explores teachers' views about how they teach creative writing of EFAL in grade 12. In particular, objectives examined the utilisation of teaching strategies, the challenges teachers experience in their classroom practice to enhance creative writing skills and the tools they adopt to overcome these challenges.

2. Literature Review

This paper examined teachers' views about how they teach creative writing skills of EFAL in grade 12. Therefore, this paper is grounded on two pedagogical approaches: process writing and text-based approaches to creative writing. Teaching creative writing is a mixture of content and knowledge (Myhill, Cremin & Oliver, 2021). In essence, creative writing skills attainment should be viewed both in a sense of subject knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. In support, Shulman (1987) maintains that it is pivotal for teacher education to include both classroom skills and a strong knowledge base. Various scholars over the years (Shulman, 1987; Walshaw, 2012; and Smithers & Robinson, 2013) argue that for teachers to be able to attain the objectives of teaching and learning, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is integral. According to Myhill et.al. (2021), PCK is an amalgamation of teacher knowledge as a subject specialist and teaching strategies within the classroom practice.

2.1 Process Writing Approach

According to Satya Sri Durga and Rao (2018), writing is a multidimensional cognitive discourse whereby writers need to consider and control different variables in the writing process. One of the envisaged writing approaches that is stipulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is the process writing approach (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Many scholars have more or less a similar definition of the process writing approach. Satya Sri Durga and Rao (2018) define process approach as an approach that encompasses writing activities that propel learners from generation of ideas, data gathering and ultimately the presentation of finished text. In addition, Bayat

(2014) posits that process approach in writing is not a finished product but rather writing in process. Faraj (2015) moreover, adds insight into the process writing approach that it is used as scaffolding in creative writing. Furthermore, Faraj (2015) suggests that teachers should use process writing approach to further improve learners' writing abilities.

Moreover, according to the Department of Basic Education (2011), process writing steps include planning/prewriting; drafting; revising; editing; proofreading; and presenting. During the planning/prewriting stage, learners are expected to brainstorm ideas and organize their thoughts and content for the purpose of writing (Jameel & Mohamood, 2017). Likewise, Hassan et al. (2020) assert that brainstorming strategy is the planning process during which many ideas are conceived during the writing process. Research undertaken by Hassan et al. (2020) in Pakistan confirms the pivotal role played by process writing. The findings revealed that brainstorming activities allowed learners to fully understand and prepare for the writing process (Hassan et al., 2020). Brainstorming is not the only component of process writing steps, there are other components as well such as drafting; revising; editing; proofreading; and presenting. Graham et al (2016) elucidate clearly the above-mentioned steps. For drafting learners engage in writing a rough draft and also taking into account purpose, audience, topic and text types. In addition, when drafting learners should concentrate on words and sentence structures to convey meaning (Graham et al, 2016). Moreover, learners should revise their writing and peers' writing to ascertain any discrepancies regarding the intended writing objectives. Furthermore, the feedback received from peers should be used in the editing segment of the process writing approach. Moreover, learners should proofread their writing before presenting the work for assessment (Graham et al., 2016 & Department of Basic Education, 2011). It is critical for teachers to monitor vigorously the process writing approach thus allowing learners to work as a team. In essence therefore the teachers should properly utilize process writing approach in teaching creative writing.

The utilisation of the process writing approach would not only mean alignment to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) but also crucial curriculum policy interpretation. On the contrary many studies have asserted the lack thereof of teachers utilising proper teaching strategies as envisaged in the CAPS document. Many scholars (Gains & Graham, 2011; Akinyenye, 2015; Choshi, 2015; Graham et al, 2016; & Manning, 2017) have explored pedagogical gaps in the utilisation of prescribed pedagogical strategies. According to Gains and Graham (2011), a vast array of teachers experience anxiety regarding the implementation of a variety of teaching strategies. In light of these findings, many teachers lack acceptable pedagogical implementation. Furthermore, teachers lack basic fundamental theoretical underpinnings of the pedagogy of creative writing (Akinyenye, 2015) and how best to integrate various teaching strategies into their practice (Choshi, 2015).

In view of this disjuncture, Manning (2017) rightly asserts that teachers experience challenges in understanding creative writing approaches as envisaged in the CAPS document. A study conducted in Pakistan on exploring challenges of writing in English Second Language learners revealed many challenges such as insufficient linguistic proficiency in grammar, syntax and vocabulary (Fareed, Ashraf & Bilal, 2016). According to their study, the challenges mentioned above were as a result of untrained teachers and ineffective usage of teaching methods. On the same note a study conducted in eSwatini on in-service training needs of teachers in teaching creative writing skills, some challenges were unpacked such as inadequate knowledge of teaching methods of creative writing (Dlamini, 2019). The challenges elucidated in the above studies clearly outline lack of pedagogical content knowledge in their classroom practices. Considering the challenges mentioned above, teachers need to be properly trained, continually capacitated and supported to appropriately navigate the pedagogy of creative writing. On that note, Graham et al. (2016) maintain, that there should be an explicit teaching of creative writing and developing creative writing skills through using the process approach.

2.2 Text-Based Approach

There are many complexities involved in the teaching of creative writing skills thus different teaching approaches should be utilised. The text-based approach is one of the teaching approaches that is

envisaged in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement allowing learners to be exposed to different types of text (Mohlabi-Tlaka, 2016 & Department of Basic Education, 2011). There are six primary genres of writing: narratives, recounts, information reports, instructions, explanations and expository (Derewianka,1990 & Macken-Horaric, 2002). The teachers, therefore, are required to teach all the genres when teaching creative writing skills (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Studies reveal that the teaching of all the genres using text-based approach improved learners' confidence in writing and also created a positive attitude towards writing (Kerfoot & Van Heerden, 2014 & Ahn, 2012). In this regard, teachers should expose learners to the various genres of writing and explore a variety of strategies for teaching creative writing skills in order for learners to enhance their writing skills.

For text-based approach to be effectively utilised, Mohlabi-Tlaka (2016) cited in Richards (2006, 39-41) on the model presented by Feez and Joyce (1998) that explicitly outlines the different phases of the text-based model:

Phase 1: Building the context
- Introduction of social context of an authentic model of the text type
- Exploring features of the general cultural context in which the text type is used and the social purpose of text
- Building knowledge of the topic of the model text and knowledge of social activity

Phase 2: Modelling and deconstructing text
- Investigating the structural pattern and language features, comparing the model with other examples of the same text type

Phase 3: Joint construction of the text
- Beginning to contribute to the construction of the whole examples of text types
- The teacher gradually reduces the contribution as learners move closer to being able to construct text independently

Phase 4: Independent construction of the text
- Working independently with text
- Writing tasks which demand drafting and presentation of whole texts

Phase 5: Linking to related texts
- Reflect on text learnt
- Comparing the use of text types across different fields
- Role-playing what happens if the same text type is used by people in different roles and relationships
- Researching other text types and how key language features are used in other text types (Adapted from Richards, 2006, 39-41).

In essence, the model presented above provides myriad phases that encompass a text-based approach to teaching and learning creative writing skills. In view of text-based approach as a prerequisite for Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement many studies have identified that there are indeed pedagogical gaps (Kerfoot and Van Heerden, 2014 & Ahn, 2012). The above studies paint a clear picture of the importance of the incorporation of the text-based approach in teaching creative writing skills in English First an Additional Language. There are many text types according to Department of Basic Education (2011) which should be taught in schools. However, the emphasis should be placed on the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) of the teachers. For instance, Lingzhu (2009) asserts that through the utilisation of genre-based pedagogies, learners are able to conceptualise both structural organization and linguistic features of the various genres when writing. In light of the findings in research, it is evident that text-based approach is vital in teaching creative writing.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Socio-Cultural theory and Genre-Based theory

This paper has adopted Socio-Cultural theory and Genre-Based theory as both theoretical frameworks are closely aligned to the pedagogical approaches envisaged in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Socio-ccultural theory is underpinned by two fundamental principles of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding (Bandura, 1986). The first principle, ZPD advocates that learners should be assisted by the more knowledgeable others in order to achieve the objectives of the lesson (Vygotsky, 1978). The second principle, scaffolding, refers to a form of assistance that helps learners to solve problems which could have been beyond their achievement (Verenikina, 2003). On that note, it is clear that Socio-Cultural theory aligns perfectly with the context of the study as it allows teachers to act as facilitators during teaching and learning.

In view of Genre-Based theory, according to Hyland (2003), genre refers to abstract, socially recognized ways of using a language and it is based on the assumption that the features of a similar group of texts depend on the social context of their creation and their use. The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement advocates for different text types that belong within the same social context and thus learners should be exposed to a multiple number of genres within creative writing discourse (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

4. Methodology

4.1 Research design and Methodology

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm and a qualitative approach to ascertain grade 12 teachers' views about how they teach creative writing skills of English First Additional Language (EFAL) in grade 12. The rationale for the choice is that it provided an opportunity to understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes and experiences of participants considering the process of making meanings or drawing inferences about phenomena (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2018 & Kumar, 2019). The instruments yielded detailed description and in-depth understanding of their views about how they teach creative writing skills, the challenges teachers experience in their classroom practice to enhance creative writing skills and the tools they adopt to overcome these challenges. A multiple case study research design was employed to conduct an in-depth investigation of the case (grade 12 teachers) in their own natural spaces and contexts (Creswell, 2014 & Merriam, 2008). These methological choices were well aligned with the research objectives and thus contributed to the depth and richness of the study findings.

4.2 Target Population and Sampling

Shulze (2005) defines purposeful sampling as a method that is utilised to select a sample with a specific purpose in mind. In essence, the researcher utilised a purposive sampling procedure to allow for the selection of participants that were contextually relevant to the current study. The study was conducted in the uMkhanyakude district, one of the eleven district municpalities in the far north of KwaZulu-Natal, which is one of the nine provinces in South Africa. The researcher selected Hlabisa circuit to conduct the research. The study's target population was limited to grade 12 English First Additional Language teachers in five different schools, and ten teachers were selected within the uMkhanyakude district. thus two teachers from each of the five schools participated in this study. The study purposefully selected these participants to to explore teachers' pedagogical practices in teaching creative writing skills of English First Additional Language. Consequently, in relation to the limitations, this study cannot be generalized to all grade 12 English First Additional Language

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teachers within a broader context of South African schools. The study nevertheless, was successful in collecting empirical and valid data using different research tools to triangulate its findings.

4.3   Data Collection Procedures

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect data. Semi-structured interviews allowed for the freedom to probe participants' responses extensively (Punch, 2014 & Kumar, 2019), hence the study was interpretive in nature. The rationale for using semi-structured interviews was that it offered a detailed exploration of individuals' experiences and thus provided a great deal of critical information. During semi-structured interviews, many participants did not fully comprehend some of the research questions. In view of this misunderstanding the researchers rephrased and reworded questions for clarity. Non-participant observation schedule as a data collection instrument was also used. The researcher was thus able to observe purposefully, systematically and selectively as the interaction was taking place in the classroom between learners and teachers (Kumar, 2019). This method helped the researcher to be able to observe how teachers taught creative writing skills. Teachers were observed whether they were able to display pedagogical knowledge of creative writing. In addition, a document analysis data instrument tool was also used. Creswell (2014) confirms the importance of document analysis when saying that it helps in answering some research questions in a study that could not be answered by other instruments. In this study document analysis reduced potential biasness and corroborated information gathered from semi-structured interviews and observation schedules.

4.4   Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of organizing data into themes and perusing data several times to get a sense of what it contains (Leedy & Ormord, 2005 & Creswell, 2014). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher employed thematic analysis to analyse data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and these interviews were recorded to ensure data was stored for transcription, notes were taken as well to corroborate voice recordings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data were analysed and presented according to research questions, using the following research instruments: semi-structured interviews, observation schedules and document analysis.The researcher used Braun, Clarke, Hayfield and Terry (2019 six phases framework to analyse and present the data. This framework comprises of the following six steps which includes familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, revieiving themes, defining and naming themes and writing the report. The data as noted above was transcribed and five common themes emerged as guided by the research objectives of the study. The themes that emerged were utilisation of teaching strategies when teaching creative writing; CAPS alignment to teaching creative writing; challenges of language structures and conventions in teaching creative writing skills; overcoming challenges of creative writing skills; and integration of learner teacher support materials in teaching creative writing skills.

4.5   Ethical Considerations

The institution granted the researcher an ethical clearance certificate which allowed the researcher to proceed with the research. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education was approached for permission to conduct research in its institutions. Moreover, permission was sought from school principals. Subsequently, the teachers' permission was sought and they signed consent forms which were collected for safekeeping. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants. Participants were informed of their confidentiality and that pseudonyms were used instead of their names. They were further informed that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any given time.

5. Findings and Discussion

Many studies alluded to the effective utilisation of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in teaching creative writing skills (Shulman, 1987; Walshaw, 2012; Smithers & Robinson, 2013; Mohlabi-Tlaka, 2016; & Myhill et al., 2021). This paper, however, focused on two critical pedagogical approaches: process writing and genre-based. Therefore, for teachers to effectively and efficiently teach creative writing skills, pedagogical content knowledge is pivotal. This paper seeks to answer the main research question: 'What are teachers' views about how they teach creative writing skills of EFAL in grade 12?' This research question was employed during semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, a vast array of themes emerged during data analysis and thus discussed in accordance with the literature reviewed and in conjunction with sociocultural theory and genre-based theory.

5.1 Utilisation of teaching strategies when teaching creative writing

The theme reveals findings from the participants during semi-structured interviews. Many participants failed to clearly elucidate how they utilised teaching strategies when teaching creative writing, especially for English First Additional Language (TA1, TA2; and TD2). Scholars (Barends, 2022; & Mohlabi-Tlaka, 2016) advocate for the proper utilisation of pedagogical strategies and deep comprehension of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Therefore, the lack thereof of these skills will negatively impact the quality of creative writing skills. As noted TA2, TA1 and TD2 were not explicit in their assertions and were very brief which may be due to their own lack of knowledge. In verbatim these were their assertions:

> "... I also expose my learners ummm ... to process writing where they have to plan, edit, revise, proofread and present..." (TA2). "I used to use the strategy of telling learners firstly to brainstorm..." (TA1). "it is also important to do first draft before they... they conclude their writing into a final draft do proofreading..." (TD2).

In Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (1986), there are two fundamental principles: Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding where essentially learners need to be assisted by the more knowledgeable other to attain desired educational goals. In case of the findings from the participants' interviews, participants struggled to communicate and explain how these principles were incorporated in their classroom practice. Therefore, in view of Manning (2017) the findings concur that many teachers experience challenges in teaching creative writing due to pedagogical approach misconceptions. In case of the participants (TA2, TA1 & TD2) pedagogical misconceptions are evident in their approach to teaching creative writing. Furthermore, none of the participants systematically stated the writing steps in the process writing approach. According to research evidence, (Hassan et al, 2020; & DBE, 2011) process writing approach entails brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading and presenting. Contrastingly, only a few participants partially mentioned these writing steps thus further showing misconceptions of curriculum interpretation.

It is important that learners also need to be concurrently exposed to other teaching approaches as well. A genre-based approach to teaching creative writing is another teaching approach that is outlined in CAPS. According to Hyland (2003), genre encompasses abstract and socially accepted methods of using language for a specific context. In essence, every genre in writing has its own linguistic features pertaining to specific contexts. It is, therefore, critical for teachers to afford learners an opportunity to be exposed to different genres for the purpose of writing. The findings reveal however that participants did not clearly articulate adopting this teaching approach into their classroom practice. However, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy clearly states that learners should be exposed to different text types (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Different text types or genres allow learners the freedom to explicitly incorporate language functions in different social contexts (Hyland, 2003). Furthermore, participants haphazardly excluded the text-based approach in

their responses to teaching creative writing. Scholars (Derewianka, 1990; Dirgeyasa, 2016; Hyland, 2003; & Elastri, 2013) maintain the importance of genre-based approach that it is goal-orientated and thus differentiated into texts that have similar purpose, structure and target. Participants TA1, TA2 (as alluded above), TB1 and TE2 attempted to provide how they are able to integrate the genre-based approach in teaching creative writing. TB1 stated:

> *"it is very important to allow them [learners] to use process writing, sentence construction is very important, paragraph writing also important, language structures as well." Furthermore, TE2 maintained: "...you see I teach them using steps like brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, publishing" "...we have to teach them structures of essays like introduction, body and conclusion. I also teach them text structures and language features."*

Genre-based approach incorporates three phases: modelling, joint construction and independent construction (Luu, 2011). In addition, however, Nagao (2019) argues that genre-based approach should be extended to four stages: modelling, writing of targeted texts, genre analysis of peers' work; and writing analysis of reflection. In view of the participants' responses, there was no mention of teaching different text types. Furthermore, participants were not able to state clearly the critical phases encompassed in genre-based approach and the various activities they are able to adopt during their lessons. Consequently, participants showed a lack of Vygotsky's principles of scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Most significantly, it seems evident that learners were not exposed to a modelling activity in the form of a pre-writing activity.

5.2 Curriculum and assessment Policy Statement alignment to teaching creative writing

The findings in the previous theme suggested misconceptions in regard to the proper utilisation of teaching strategies. CAPS has envisaged many teaching strategies that ought to be utilised when teaching creative writing. It is therefore pivotal that teachers align their teaching to CAPS. According to DBE (2011) teaching creative writing is a multi-dimensional process incorporating: process writing, learning and applying knowledge of structures of different text types; and learning and applying knowledge of sentence and paragraph structures and punctuations. This multi-dimensional process was not however stated explicitly by the participants. Findings revealed poor alignment to CAPS in teaching creative writing. Participants TB1, TB2, TC1, TC2, TD1; and TD2 lacked clarity as to how their teaching strategies were aligned to CAPS. TB1 when asked if his teaching strategies were aligned with CAPS stated:

> *"Eeem... I ... I ... think so my brother because I plan my lessons according to the CAPS everything I do I take from the CAPS." TB2's response was: "Oooh ... uumm ... yes I think my strategies are in line with CAPS the strategies I was talking about above are taken from CAPS document so yes they are aligned." TC1 stated: "Most definitely my ideas and strategies are CAPS aligned I ... mean it is CAPS who recommends these strategies so well yes I believe my strategies are CAPS aligned." TC2 maintained: ."Ja(yes) every time I teach I refer to CAPS document and all eemm ... my strategies are taken from CAPS." TD1 said:*

> *"yes all I do I take from CAPS document so yes I think everything is according to CAPS." TD2 maintained: "I think they are aligned like I take these strategies from CAPS so yes they are in line. CAPS document states clearly what needs to be done."*

The participants' brief responses and inability to explain the alignment gave the researcher a clear indication that the participants did not clearly understand the policy documents, thus resulting in misalignment between policy and practice. Furthermore, findings reveal that participants failed to align their teaching strategies to CAPS, thus the need for bridging the policy and practice gap. In concurrence, Donsa (2017) argues that lack of curriculum interpretation poses a serious threat to classroom practice. Moreover, Myhill et al (2021) assert pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is a

combination of the teachers' knowledge of the subject and teaching strategies. Therefore, if teachers lack PCK, their classroom practice will be compromised.

5.3 Challenges of language structures and conventions in teaching creative writing skills

Many challenges were encountered by the participants in regard to linguistic proficiency such as language structures and conventions. Participants TA1, TA2 and TB1 cited linguistic challenges. TA1 stated:

> "...some of the challenges that are faced by our learners … eeeh…. Eeehh… firstly it's lack of vocabulary … [they don't have] resources like dictionaries." TA2 maintained: "… you find issues with spelling, tenses, you find that learners fail to relate to the topic … you find issues with sentence structures…"TB1 stated: "… they are struggling with vocabulary and grammar but I try to help them."

The participants' lack of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) may be attributed towards learners encountering challenges in linguistic features. Participants are unable to align their teaching strategies to CAPS therefore, evidently, challenges encountered emanated from poor curriculum interpretation for classroom practice. A model presented by Feez and Joyce (1998) outlines phase 2 as a modelling and deconstruction of text. In this phase, learners should be exposed to structural patterns and language features. However, participants in the preceding themes were unable to use this strategy hence the challenges of language structures emanate. In agreement, Fareed, Asharaf and Bilal (2016) assert a vast array of second language learners have challenges in linguistic proficiency, citing grammar, syntax and vocabulary thus the need for additional support.

5.4 Overcoming challenges of creative writing skills

There is a vast array of challenges emanating from the pedagogy of creative writing. Participants TA1, TA2, TB1 and TB2 failed to mention strategic remedial measures for addressing the challenges.

> "Many learners as I have mentioned above are lacking in basic structure of eeem… sentence construction I then make time and try to teach the basic skills of sentence construction. I then normally put them into groups, start by revisiting sentence structures and parts of speech. I do also encourage them… you know…eem… a culture of reading I believe through regular reading they could be exposed to vocabulary and spelling" (TA1). "I try by all means to explain the rubric to the learners for all the forms of writing I explain what is expected from them I allow them to do reflection every day to get used to expressing themselves eeh I allow eeh them to… to … work in groups so that they would be able to share their responses with their peers and allow them a chance to correct each other to learn from one another" (TA2). "I do photocopying of the material they need my principal also bought dictionaries for them I also download past question papers and study guides to help them" (TB1). "Ja (yes)… you see I try to use code switching if teaching so learners understand I come with English Zulu dictionary I hope this will help them gain more vocabulary" (TB2).

The assertions above clearly did not come up with remedial measures for overcoming challenges. Evidently, this suggests poor implementation of remedial measures by the participants. In view of this lack thereof, it is evident that participants lack proper curriculum interpretation and deep understanding of teaching and enhancing creative writing skills. On the positive note, to redress linguistic challenges, teachers should expose learners to reading (Anwar & Ahmed, 2016). Moreover, teachers should engage learners in the process of scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD and scaffolding allow the teacher to guide learners in a learning process through efficient curriculum interpretation (Verenika, 2003). According to (Myhill et al., (2021) and Mohlabi-Tlaka, (2016) efficient curriculum interpretation could be attained through Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) with continuous support for training and intentional capacity building geared towards enhancing creative writing skills.

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5.5 *Integration of learner-teacher support materials in teaching creative writing skills*

According to Donsa (2017), teachers should use multiple teaching aids when teaching creative writing skills. Teaching aids include amongst others computers and libraries (Makeleni, 2013). In addition, DBE (2011) maintains each learner should have textbooks, dictionaries, magazines and literature books. The findings reveal that many participants maintained that they use learner-teacher support materials (LTSM) when teaching creative writing. TA1 stated:

> *"I use textbooks, stationery, study guides, dictionaries and thesaurus. I eeem… the use of these materials is effective because learners are able to learn how to write creatively using examples from the books and also improving their vocabulary" (TA1). TB1, TC2 and TE1 echo similar sentiments, "I use dictionaries, newspapers, magazines and laptop" (TB1). "I use textbooks, dictionaries, study guides, support materials from the department" (TC2). "We use dictionaries, textbooks, study guides, magazines and newspaper articles. These are very limited but I try my best" (TE1).*

Findings reveal that indeed participants integrate LTSMs when teaching creative writing, however, the researcher noticed during observations that LTSMs were not adequate and participants did not effectively integrate and align with their planned lessons. Thus, the lack thereof of LTSMs and ineffective integration may pose a learning barrier in teaching and enhancing creative writing skills.

6. Discussion of Findings

Creative writing is a complex skill; therefore, it ought to be closely scrutinized especially the pedagogy of creative writing. This paper explored one critical research question: what are teachers' views about how they teach creative writing skills of EFAL in grade 12? A vast array of themes emerged: utilisation of teaching strategies; CAPS alignment to teaching creative writing skills; challenges of language structures and conventions; overcoming challenges of creative writing skills; and integration of Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) in teaching creative writing skills. In view of the utilisation of teaching strategies, most teachers lacked deep understanding of the various teaching strategies and approaches to writing and, thus struggled to interpret and effectively integrate them into their practice. Scholars (Myhill et al, 2021 & Mohlabi-Tlaka, 2016) argued that for teachers to be effective in teaching creative writing, Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is essential. Likewise, other scholars (Verenika, 2003 & Luu, 2011) posited that there is a mixture of teaching strategies that ought to be incorporated when teaching creative writing such as process writing approach and genre-based approach. Furthermore, in view of challenges in language structures and conventions, many participants were unable to remedy the challenges due to their own lack of knowledge. The findings further revealed the lack of poor curriculum interpretation, thus the need for bridging policy implementation and practice gaps. Gains and Graham (2014) rightly posit that lack of knowledge yields poor teaching strategies. In essence, from the brief participants' responses and their inability to articulate their practices, there is a need to strengthen their PCK and provide implementation support. In the theme of overcoming challenges of creative writing, participants lacked concise remedial measures. Finally, integration of LTSM in teaching creative writing skills, many participants cited the use of LTSM however upon classroom observation; there was lack of adequate LTSM and effective integration into their lessons. Findings from this study suggest a need for teachers to be effectively capacitated and supported so as to adopt and integrate relevant teaching strategies to enhance creative writing skills. Policy documents such as CAPS act as guidelines in guiding teachers however, policy documents are not used effectively which thus leads to a lack of effective policy implementation and misconceptions.

7. Conclusion

Teaching creative writing is a complex skill, especially with regards to English Second Language (ESL) learners. It is crucial to adhere to the prescripts of policy documents for effective teaching of creative writing. Therefore, for Mohlabi-Tlaka (2016) pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is a critical concept in effective teaching of creative writing. Critical conceptions of pedagogical strategies and theories are pivotal when teaching creative writing. The main objective of this study was to establish teachers' views about how they teach creative writing skills of EFAL in grade 12. Many studies alluded to the importance of PCK in teaching creative writing. The reference by the studies thereof suggests the criticality of appropriate adoption of a variety of teaching strategies. The study identified gaps in the utilisation of teaching strategies when teaching creative writing. Among the findings of the study, it was apparent that teachers lacked pedagogical conception of teaching creative writing skills. Furthermore, findings revealed teachers were misunderstanding policy documents which thus impeded effective implementation of teaching creative writing skills.

In view of process writing strategies, findings revealed that teachers were not effectively utilising this teaching strategy, therefore, the misconception affected teaching and learning. Moreover, genre-based pedagogy as teaching strategy was also not effectively utilised thus disadvantaging learners in attaining appropriate writing skills. On the positive note, some participants were able to partly interpret policy documents albeit not in totality. Participants lacked theoretical underpinnings and thus were unable to effectively utilise teaching strategies as envisaged in Curriculum and Aassesment Policy Statement documents. Informed by the findings, the study concludes that teachers should be thoroughly capacitated on the different stages of the writing process, integration of vocabulary development, sentence structure, grammar and scaffolding techniques so as to enhance creative writing skills more especially among English First Additional Language learners. The study further recommends departmental support to be strengthened and professional development programmes specifically focusing on pedagogies that improve creative writing skills and policy document interpretation and proper implementation. Comprehensive training for teachers should include both introductory, intermediate and advanced workshops aligning with their specific needs and addressing the challenges and misconceptions they face during their classroom practice. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education may consider implementing practice based coaching so as to support teachers in improving and strengthening their instructional practices. The school management team may be empowered so that they play a pivotal role in facilitating effective curriculum policy interpretation, regularly providing constructive feedback to teachers regarding use of curriculum and successful implementation of curriculum policy. Since creative writing involves much more than just structure, further research, based on these and other issues, can assist in guiding and supporting more especially EFAL teachers in adopting innovative pedagogical strategies to improve their practice.

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