ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?

By

Nchabeng Simon Nchabeng

(200901319)

DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND SOCIAL EDUCATION IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION DEGREE IN THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

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CERTIFICATION

This serves to certify that this dissertation has been submitted to the Department of Languages and Social Education where it was certified as having fulfilled the requirements of Faculty of Education in the National university of Lesotho.

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Supervisor

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Head of Department

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Dean of Faculty

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External Examiner

_____

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that *" ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?"* is wholly my original piece of work and that all the sources I have cited have been specified and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Signature   Date

Nchabeng Simon Nchabeng

Student no: 200901319

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late sister, 'Maseabata Nchabeng who always wanted me to be educated and persistently encouraged me to enroll for further studies. My dedication also goes to my beloved father, Thabo Jonas Nchabeng, my son Molemo Nchabeng, my wife 'Makananelo Nchabeng, and all the family members.

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ABSTRACT

The JC ECOL report for 2016 and 2017 reveal students' underperformance in the Literature in English. The majority of JC students obtained low grades in Literature in English essay-type questions compared to the short questions. This study, therefore, investigated challenges faced by Literature in English junior high school students on essay-type questions.

Three research questions inquired into challenges students in Lesotho encounter on LE essay-type questions, possible causes of those challenges and what pedagogical implications of those challenges are for teachers of LE at junior high school. The study adopted the quali-quantitative interpretive case study design. Three data generating tools were students' tests, teachers' open-ended questionnaires and teachers' focus group discussions. Three schools, thirty students and seven teachers were purposively selected for this investigation.

The Educational Productivity theory by Walberg (1981) was used for data analysis. The dominant theme emerging from findings falls under pedagogical factors; it has 4 variables (inadequate resources, motivation, writing practice and academic style). It occupies 54 % against students' attributes of 27 % and 19 % of psychological factors. Diction and linguistic competence were grouped under the students' attributes while poor foundation, class size and subject matter were grouped under psychological factors. Additionally, motivation, writing practice, poor foundation, limited time and language out of school surfaced as the main findings under research question two. Educational implications for the teaching of Literature in English were also established. The use of technology is recommended to enhance students' knowledge and schools should provide adequate instructional material.

Key words: challenges, literature; essay-type questions

LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Curriculum & Assessment Policy
ECOL	Examinations Council of Lesotho
EL	English Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
JC	Junior Certificate
LASED	Languages and Social Education Department
LE	Literature in English
LGCSE	Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education
MEMD	Ministry of Education and Manpower Development
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to present and discuss the main contents of this study. Some contents will be further expatiated in subsequent chapters. This chapter gives a background to the study. It provides the statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study, delimitations of the study, trustworthiness and ethical considerations, organisation of the study follows then a summary completes the chapter.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Positions around the definition and what essay-type questions entail seem to be similar. Although different terms are used to outline what constitute them, these types of questions appear to be understood and defined in the same way by different researchers. Essay-type questions are interrogative sentences requiring continuous logical paragraphs made up of different unique parts (McCune, 2004; Peterson, 2012; Court, 2014). In line with these definitions is Mutikiri (2016) who affirms that essays are continuous pieces of writing on any subject. Synthesis of the cited scholarship reveals that in a summative conception, essay-type questions can be interpreted to mean questions whose answers should be in paragraphs. It therefore makes academic sense to argue that although they are defined in different terms, essay-type questions basically have commonality in definition. These definitions imply the need for cohesion and coherence in essay writing. In as much as essay-type questions are of value, the language policy in Education which prescribes English as a language of teaching and learning disturbs the coherence of thoughts.

 The use of English as a second language (ESL) of instruction is seemingly an impediment to teaching and learning of essays in several countries. For instance, in Nigeria, Hadiza, Shafaatu and Nafisat (2017) note that the multi-lingual state of the country has resulted in a policy that adopted English Language (EL) as the medium of instruction. Likewise, the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho (MOET, 2009) asserts that all levels of education should use English as the medium of instruction, except for grade one up to grade three where mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction though this mostly seem to be applicable in government schools. The language situations in various countries therefore seem to impose

learning challenges as students use an unfamiliar language as a medium of instruction. Despite these challenges, English is still regarded as the passing subject at secondary level in Lesotho (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). The Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL) report (2015) depicts that students' performance in Literature in English (LE) is poor at the secondary level, hence the call for carrying out of a study enquiring into such. By implication, the research of this nature could shed light on the demands and required writing skills of LE.

Some subjects call for application of essay writing skills than others. Such subjects among others include LE which seeks to assess high order questions. To exemplify, in the English syllabus, the Ministry of Education and Manpower Development (MEMD) (2002) in Lesotho states that paper one which is LE contributes 50% of English examination; having four sections - drama, poetry, stories and short stories, each section carrying 25 marks. MEMD (2002) further endorses that two sections which are half of the paper are made up of essay-type questions hence adding up to 50% of LE paper. Evidence from literature validates the notion that essay-type questions play the major role in examinations of LE as they assess student's deeper understanding of the subject content and ability to write. Understanding an essay in LE would mean the need for research appraised knowledge. This suggests an essential move to investigate into such, drawing research gaps from the previous pertinent established investigations.

Established investigations reveal several challenges faced by students on LE essay-type questions. These questions appear to be challenging because they require writers to be communicatively competent and knowledgeable of grammar rules as well as principles of organisation in second language in order to produce a good written text (Byrne, 2000; Myles, 2002; Tangpermpoon, 2008). This assertion certifies that students struggle to address LE essay-type questions since they fail to articulate their ideas well in writing. In the similar line of conception, Byrne (2000) mentions that effort ought to be made to train learners with writing skills to allow them to put their ideas orderly so that a reader who is not present or unknown to them can comprehend what is written. These findings infer that students' lack of writing skills may hinder them to express themselves correctly. Thus, the intended meaning could be distorted. The essay-type questions therefore appear to pose challenges to students. This condition highlights a state that needs attention and proves that the requirements of LE and its teaching should be informed by research.

The requirements of LE seem to present challenges on essay-type questions. This position is in line with Vardi's (2000) affirmation that differences in discipline have impact on the nature of the given tasks to students and as a result impact on the writing requirements. At Lesotho junior high school level, EL requirements differ from LE requirements. Unlike in EL essays where students are expected to expand on the topic sentence, LE essays are only continuous, yet explicit. Thus, format, linking devices and language competence do not earn students marks. ECOL report (2013) reveals that, the core emphasis of English Paper 1 is not on the technical aspect of the language, but mainly on the candidates' ability to make use of the information from the recommended text books. Drawing from the foregoing contention, it can be implied that EL rules are not applied in LE essay-type questions since students who write a point and expand it obtain just two marks for the point while expansion is ignored. In the similar perspective, Myles (2002) posits that writing complexity requires awareness of the subject matter since different disciplines differ in the discourse patterns along with the aspects of linguistics. Thus, an empirical study is required to provide a basis for a deeper understanding of the actual experiences of students and teachers in relation to challenges posed by essay-type questions in LE.

Students' challenges on essay-type questions have been inquired into at different educational levels in various parts of the world, inclusive of Africa. They are still in evidence; this is testified to by several academicians. For instance, Hussein and Alemami (2016) conducted the descriptive-analytic study in Saudi Arabia on challenges to teaching Literature in English. The main findings of the study point to poor performance in high order questions, which are mostly essays. It is further noted that they are not performed well due to students' level of language proficiency. Findings of another qualitative study by Setyowati and Sukmawan (2018) in Asia on writing for comprehension in prose fiction analysis reveal that marking essays effectively and analyzing prose writing assists to sharpen students to read and write; though this is a challenge. The study revelations also indicate that writing essays and analysis of fiction help students to comprehend literary aspects; failure to do so leads to little insight of texts thus students' failure.

Still in Asia, Riddell's (2015) mixed methods study concurs with the aforementioned researchers. The study was on metacognitive approaches to essay writing for improvement of essay questions in first year Literature course. The researcher's findings reveal that early

involvement of Literature courses helps students improve their essay writing skills and that carefully scaffolded assignments assist growth of students writing skills with time. Recommendations propose a metacognitive approach to essay questions as it provides important opportunities for students to improve their writing skills. The outcomes presented by the consulted studies point to the need for further research, revealing that LE essay writing competences should be enquired into.

Challenges presented by essay-type questions to students have also been documented in Africa. For example, in Nigeria, Ezeokoli and Adeuja (2017) conducted a correlational design study on text structure, vocabulary knowledge and students' achievement in LE. The revelations of this study show that performance of students in LE inclusive of essay-type questions at post primary schools is poor. The investigator also discovered that candidates generalised their answers out of context and merely narrated the story line in past examinations. The implication could be that students were not taught essay-type questions well. It is therefore important to find out why students are challenged by LE essay-type questions.

Researchers in Sudan also examined students' challenges on essay-type questions. Ali and Ahmed (2015) conducted a comparative quantitative study on the effects of using literature to deal with some grammar rules in Sudanese English classrooms on the promotion of students' performance. The discoveries of the study disclose that establishing an English language syllabus that introduces language grammar through literary texts at secondary school level helps students answer both short and essay questions correctly. The researchers also discovered that students' LE failure was due to inability to apply grammar rules in both short and essay questions. These researchers recommended the use of Literature in teaching English past tenses as it turns out to be effective. The implication of the foregoing supposition could be that grammatical aspects need to be dealt with while teaching LE essays. In essence, Ahmed (2015) reflects that grammar worsens the writing problems of students thus, the study calls for examination of LE challenges, inclusive of the grammatical ones.

Research based knowledge on LE students' challenges on essay-type questions appear to exist at different levels of education within SADC region. Simuchimba (2006) carried out a qualitative study in Zambia, seeking to find factors contributing to poor performance of grade 12 students of

LE. Various factors impeding smooth teaching of short and essay questions competences were put into surface by revelations of the study. The main findings of the study included lack of teaching and learning tools in each sampled school. The book to pupil ratio was found to be poor and negative attitudes towards LE were found to be the cause of poor performance. Along the similar perspective, Dlavane (2003) also conducted a study in South Africa on problems experienced by internship students in teaching literature of African languages. The researcher found out that literature student teachers should teach five other components which are: language; vocabulary; composition; reading and poetry; applying necessary skills to integrate them. Inappropriate teaching of LE was found to be leading to students' poor performance of both short and essay type questions. The implication is that challenges on essay-type questions should receive examination given the impression that there seems to be shortage of specific research which features such constituent in LE at secondary level in some parts of Africa.

Synthesis of literature seemingly reveals dearth of research on the phenomenon of this investigation in Lesotho. So far documented knowledge in Lesotho on essay-type questions seems to be on EL. Although there is fast growing knowledge on essay writing, in the last six to seven years, the researcher fails to see studies which are in the confines of LE. To exemplify, Moji (2014) conducted a qualitative study on how the cohesive devices are used in the writing of English essays, Mpoi (2014) also conducted a study on factors that influence learners to commit errors in EL acquisition. Moreover, Tlali's (2018) qualitative study was on argumentative essay writing while Lebona's (2019) qualitative study was on tense shift in EL essay writing. Even though existing scholarship is confined to EL, the main findings could be related to LE since it is one of the subjects which characterised by essay writing. For this reason, further research on challenges students face in relation to essay writing in the context of LE is needed.

Although research appraised scholarship pertaining to students' challenges on essay-type questions in LE exists, there are issues that still remain unanswered. Among others, researchers like Simuchimba (2016) and, Ezeokoli and Adeuja (2017) focused on writing as the major setback which impedes achievement of good grades in LE. Notably, they focused on some similar aspects of the current study since they inquired into what challenged students to perform well. However, these studies were in different locations; namely, Zambia and Nigeria. This therefore calls for similar research in Lesotho in order to expand knowledge in the subject

matter. Although the focus of the current study is at junior secondary, existing studies highlighting challenges faced by LE students appear to have been conducted beyond secondary level. For instance, Dlavane (2003) and Ridell (2015) conducted similar studies at the university level; while Ezeokoli and Adeuja (2017) as well as Simuchimba (2016) studies were at high school level. It still remains unknown as to what knowledge might be generated if a similar study is conducted at junior high schools in Lesotho. It also appears that obtainable empirical literature pertinent to this study is on EL essay writing in Lesotho as highlighted in preceding paragraphs. These studies were focused on essay questions in the restrictions of EL essay writing. Despite the fact that these studies generated knowledge on what causes students' poor performance in EL essays in Lesotho, findings put into surface still need to be informed by further research in relation to a different subject such as LE. It is important for this reason to add literature and unearth secondary students' challenges on LE essay-type questions in Lesotho.

In spite of the significance attached to the LE essay-type questions in Lesotho, students' performance standards still appear to be declining. It is for this reason that the researcher sought to undertake the examination of challenges faced by junior high school students on LE essay-type questions as reflected in the ECOL reports. In sum, below are research gaps recognized in the background to this study which led to statement of the problem:

- Dearth of research in Lesotho on LE essay-type questions.
- Cited scholarship focused on some similar aspects of the current study but they were in different locations to the study in question.
- Studies pertinent to this study, focused on LE students' essay-type questions challenges beyond junior high school.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem is what is being investigated in the study Maree (2016). The problem statement of this study is impelled by scholarly documents and the researcher's teaching experience. The students' capability to write appropriately is a key part of students' assessment at junior and senior secondary levels of the Lesotho education system (MOET 2009). Nonetheless, LE essay writing skill is a challenge that JC students face. The ECOL reports (2016

& 2017) on candidates' achievement in LE at secondary level have shown that students face challenges on LE essay-type questions hence lowering the overall performance in English. In an attempt to assist students achieve essay writing competence, MOET (2009) further shifted to the student centred integrated approach. In spite of the Ministry's intervention, the reports still reveal that students face challenges on essay-type questions in LE at junior high school level.

Apparently, in Lesotho, essay-type questions in the context of LE have not received the attention of researchers. It appears that obtainable empirical literature pertinent to this study is on EL essay writing in Lesotho (Moji, 2014; Mpoi, 2014; Tlali 2018; Lebona, 2019). This could imply that undesired educational outcomes in the context of LE are a result of unknown essay writing challenges faced by junior high school students.

As it can be noted in the background (Vide 1.1), studies similar to the study in question have been undertaken outside Lesotho and all are, revealing different challenges concerning essay-type questions. LE practitioners and students in Lesotho will encounter a problem in the absence of research appraised knowledge since teaching will not be effective. Given that English is regarded as a passing subject in Lesotho, the implication could be that overall students' performance will deteriorate. In accordance with the cited empirical body of academic knowledge, Moutlana (2007) maintains that several researchers point to academician's complaint about a decline in students' essay writing standards. Although there have been many attempts to find the students' challenges in relation to LE essay-type questions, this type of question is seemingly still a challenge to students.

Research appraised scholarship on the phenomenon of this study appears to have been done at high school level and beyond. It still remains unknown as to what knowledge might be generated if a similar study is conducted at junior school levels in Lesotho. Without research on essay writing challenges of junior high school students in the context of LE, there would be absence of knowledge on what their causes are, hindering the nation to achieve its aspiration to provide quality education (Sedau, 2004). Thus, the need to have basis of research on challenges that junior high school students face on essay-type questions.

In the similar line of thought is the researcher's seven years of experience teaching LE which has taught him that these challenges seemingly persist. This is further certified by the ECOL (2017)

report which shows that JC students are consistently performing poorly on essay-type questions. It is therefore important to find out what these students' challenges are on JC LE essays.

As global established investigations reveal that LE is the phenomenon that needs to be examined, the study in question aimed at finding out challenges faced by students on essay-type questions in LE. Below are the research questions which are drawn from this statement of the problem.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Research questions direct researchers to the suitable research literature for the study in question. Maree (2016) affirms that research questions are questions that specify what intrigues the researcher and focuses the researcher on what is being studied. The author further points out that these questions tell which literature to be read and narrow down the researcher's bibliographic search. As basis for reasoning, it can be deduced from Maree's (2016) assertion that research questions prevent one from drifting from the purpose and keep the researcher focused on one particular interest. In the light of the above statement of the problem, the study attempted to provide answers to the following main research question and its subsidiary questions:

1.3.1 Main research question
1. What challenges do junior high school students encounter with LE essay-type questions?

1.3.2 Subsidiary questions
1. What challenges do junior high school students in Lesotho encounter on LE essay-type questions?

2. What are possible causes of these challenges?

3. What are the pedagogical implications of these challenges for teachers of LE at junior high school?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
Significance of the study is the section of the research which states who will benefit from the study and how particular people benefit from the study findings. Leddy and Omrod (2010) point out that significance of the study refers back to the statement of the problem and clearly defines

the contribution of the study, showing how the study might assist different people. This study will hopefully benefit, the researcher, LE teachers, LE learners, other researchers and MOET.

Even though this is not an action research, as the researcher, I am the immediate beneficiary as the findings of the study will have implications for competences required for teaching of LE essay type questions. The researcher hopes that findings of this study may also help other teachers and enlighten them on the suitable teaching methods needed for the effective teaching of LE essay type questions. This study may also give Heads of English Departments essential knowledge to use when monitoring their subordinates in the teaching of LE in schools as Turner (1996) points out that the management role of heads of departments in schools is crucial if the quality of teaching is to be high and pupils of all abilities are to make progress.

It is anticipated that the study might also help learners and other researchers by contributing to the research literature. This study is likely to add a new dimension to the existing scholarship as it is hoped to increase knowledge about the students' challenges on LE essay questions in secondary schools. Additionally, this study could form a basis for further research or prompt other researchers to carry out similar studies in other countries, regions or levels of education.
This study can be helpful, not only for the teaching of LE but also to MOET. It might provide insight into the problems whose solution might help out to inform exact measures to be taken to proficiently deal with the challenges faced by secondary school students on LE essay type questions. The findings of this study could shed light in the education field and show how quality education could be accomplished in similar schools whose students are challenged by LE essay type questions.
It is also envisaged that the discoveries of this research would contribute towards the diagnosis of the challenges faced by Leribe LE teachers on essay questions. The Leribe English Teachers Association (LETA) is foreseen as the beneficiary because the findings of the research will be discussed with teachers during LE workshops. As it is apparent that there is scarcity of literature in relation to the phenomenon of this enquiry, it might be eye-opening to members of the association as teaching challenges still remain unknown since there is no research enquiring into such.

1.5 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

This inquiry was demarcated within the field of education. The study was delimited to only three junior high schools in Leribe. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state that delimitations of the study refer to personal set boundaries by the researcher on the scope of the study as well as purpose of the study. Financial and time constraints restricted the researcher to only three schools hence expansion of the scope of the study will be restricted. The reason for selection of three Leribe based schools was convenience as the researcher lives in Leribe. The schools were therefore easily accessible, easing the collection of data on the basis of time and finance.

The study was focused only on the Grade 10 teachers and students in the three selected schools. The assumption was that students had knowledge on the content under investigation. Puposive sampling was used to choose Grade 10 teachers as participants for this study on the basis of judgment of their typicality or possession of LE teaching skills (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The study purposely used only Grade 10 LE teachers for they were believed to be knowledgeable on the subject matter to be investigated. This study was focused on the challenges of JC students on essay-type questions in LE as documented scholarship reveals that it appears to be a challenge to students.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This segment briefly explains how the study was conducted; the contents briefly discussed here are fully explained in Chapter three. Kothari (2004) attests that research methodology is the logic behind the methods and techniques used in the context of research study and justifies the use of particular methods and not others so that research results are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher or others. This chapter presents: research paradigm, research design, participants, participant selection, data collection techniques, data collection procedure, data analysis and ethical issues are discussed.

1.6.1 Research paradigm

This study espoused the epistemological perspective of interpretive paradigm as open-ended questions were included for the participants to give their individual meanings to their social reality of LE essay-type questions. The interpretive paradigm was employed to obtain an understanding of the phenomenon of this study from individual perception (Opie, 2004; Morgan, 2007). The interpretive paradigm also helped the researcher to select appropriate methods of data

collection which gave researcher the allowance to socially interact with participants at their usual locations to understand their subjective experience.

1.6.2 Research design

Since this study was grounded on an interpretive paradigm, it was befitting to deem quali-quantitative design appropriate for it. Leedy and Ormrod (2012) state that qualitative studies are used to answer questions on complex nature of phenomena, describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' viewpoint. This study adopted a quali-quantitative design of multiple case studies. In line with this assertion, Marzano, Vegliante and De Angelis (2015) postulate that quali-quantitative research incorporates the qualitative and quantitative methodological and epistemological domains. Multiple case studies were found to be suitable for this study as they use different data collection techniques and settings, allowing the researcher to triangulate data. According to Duff (2008) this flexibility in the triangulation of data collection grants the case studies the ability to produce converging or diverging observations and interpretations. The researcher used the quali-quantitative approach due to its appropriateness in social research, which can be done in the subjects' natural setting (De Vos, 2001). In essence, the researcher used this design in order to get insightful knowledge about the challenges faced by secondary students while writing LE essays.

1.6.3 Participants

A participant is a person who takes part in a research by being a target of observation (Coleman, 2005). Therefore the participants that were targeted in this study included the Grade 10 students and LE teachers in three selected schools in Leribe. The selected participants formed a homogenous sample and provided required information; both students and teachers are assumed to be knowledgeable on essay type questions.

1.6. 4 Participants selection procedure

Choice of participants is important in the study. Patton (2002) accords that predominant qualitative studies focus on rich information data obtained from a small number of participants that are selected purposefully to help out in answering the major aims of the researcher. A purposive selection of three schools was based on their characteristics which met the objective of

the study; the three chosen schools all offer LE. Convenience sampling was used to select the schools. Thus, they were chosen due to their nearness to the researcher (Maree, 2016). The schools are closer to the researcher's place of work and for that reason; collection of data on the basis of time and finance was easy.

Grade 10 students were found to be suitable for the study as they were the main examination group. Those students wrote essays on LE and only ten scripts from each school were selected for marking. All Grade 10 LE teachers per school participated in focus group discussions. The total number of students who were the participants for this study was thirty which is above half of the standard class size in Lesotho. UNESCO (2010) points out that an average ratio of 1:40 of teacher-student is expected in African countries.

1.6.5 Data gathering techniques

In order to scrutinize the problem from different perspectives, the researcher chose several data gathering techniques which align to the design and paradigm of the inquiry. Chosen data collection techniques were relevant to the design and paradigm of this study as open-ended questions were used in the questionnaires and focus group discussion allowed participants the free will to answer questions in as much detail as they wish (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006). In the study, the researcher's major aim was to gain information regarding challenges faced by JC students on LE essays hence questions, opinions, and explanations were on open-ended questions for later interpretation. Below is a list of data collection techniques.

(i)   Qualitative questionnaire

The open-ended questionnaire as a data collection technique was issued to the teachers to enable the researcher to make interpretations that would address the research questions. According to Kothari (2004) a research questionnaire constitutes a number of questions that are in an explicit order on a form or set of forms. Hence, these questionnaires were given to Grade 10 teachers.

(ii)   Test

An essay-type question in LE was given to students to assess their ability to write essays. Thissen and Wainer (2001) postulate that a test is an assessment tool anticipated to determine students' ability to perform to specification.

(iii)   Focus group discussion

Focus groups are form of group interview that get the most out of communication involving research participants in order to create data (Cyr, 2016). This study made use of focus group discussion to get inner nature of the challenges students face on essay-type questions of LE.

1.6.6 Data collection procedure

All the steps undertaken and showing how the researcher used the data collection techniques in this inquiry while gathering data are illustrated in chapter three. Kombo and Tromp (2006) avow that data collection procedure means the way the researcher is gathering information to verify a number of facts. The National University of Lesotho (NUL) granted the researcher a permission to collect data from schools through the head of department of LASED. Arrangements were thereafter made with the schools to collect data. The tests were written under my supervision with the help of Grade 10 LE teachers and marked by the researcher. The teachers filled their individual qualitative questionnaires.

1.6.7 Data Analysis

Data can either be analyzed qualitatively or quantitatively. This study therefore employed qualitative data analysis model. According to Kawulich (2004), data analysis refers to reduction of large amounts of data to make sense out of it. The data from tests, qualitative questionnaires and focus group discussions went through immersion, analysis and interpretation (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The collected data was analyzed and presented in the ways that attempted to answer this study's research questions with the help of Walberg's (1981) variables of Educational Productivity theory. Drawing from the theory data the was analysed deductively for the theory gave out components or themes which categorized challenges LE JC students face in relation to essay-type questions. Key variables that influence educational outcomes according to this theory are: student capability, motivation, developmental level, quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, classroom atmosphere, home environment, peer group, and exposure to technology outside of school. These components were later categorized into three sets namely: internal/student aptitude, pedagogical factors and environmental factors (Walberg & Tsai, 1985). It is notable that the theory therefore benchmarked the researcher's grouping of the challenges discovered in this study under the above outlined sets by Walberg.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

All the activities of data generation and data analysis must be trustworthy. Sinkovics, Penz and Ghauri (2008) opine that qualitative researcher's tool chest should be geared towards trustworthiness. In definitional terms, Korstjens and Moser (2018) state that trustworthiness in qualitative research shows how the findings can be trusted. In chapter three, the researcher elaborated on how believability in the findings of this qualitative study was ensured by means of credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability.

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher should understand the ethical concerns and regulatory codes of research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The researcher therefore took into consideration ethical issues such as confidentiality and anonymity. In essence, the researcher treated collected data confidentially, making use of pseudonyms for schools and not disclosing names of participants. Thus, the ethics applied to all participants in this research.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The chapters are outlined as follows:

Chapter one provided the introduction, background to the study, problem statement, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, organization of the study and summary of the chapter.

In Chapter two, the literature related to the study, was critically reviewed. Key terms were operationalized, followed by literature on each research question and summary of the chapter.

Chapter three presented the introduction, research methodology, research paradigm, research design, participants and participants selection criteria, data collection measures, data collection techniques, how trustworthiness of main findings was satisfied and summary of the study.

Chapter four featured presentation and interpretation of findings while Chapter five drew conclusions and recommendations based on the findings and their interpretations.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter is the introduction to the study. It is made up of an introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study , description of the method of investigation, delimitations of the study, organization of the study and the conclusion. In the next chapter the literature review is presented.

CHAPTER 2
THE RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Literature review is a summing up of a subject field that supports the identification of specific research questions (Rowley & Slack, 2004). This chapter entails the examination of scholarly literature about what makes essay type questions challenging to students. To start with, the chapter presents operationalisation of key terms. The next section deals with the broader area of research on LE at JC. The theoretical framework underlying the study then follows. The last large segment of the chapter includes an overview of challenges faced by JC students on LE essay questions; this is a review of literature on research questions.

2.1 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The following key terms were interpreted so as to provide an in-depth understanding of this study:

Literature: Any text written in a form of prose or poetry, involving what has been designated imaginative, creative or fictional writing, (Wolfreys, Robbins & Womack, 2011). Narrowly, and for the purpose of this study, it refers to Literature in English only. Having seen the meaning of Literature in general, LE as viewed by Basotho is the study of novel, story, short story or poem in English yet rooted in the culture of Basotho.

Essay-type question: A question whose answer requires a lengthy piece of writing. This position is drawn from Connelly and Forsyth (2011) who postulate that responses of essay-type questions are long pieces of writing, which endeavor to detect a particular subject ; having certain characteristics.

Challenges: A difficult thing whose attainment involves excessive effort (Nyasimi, 2014). For the purpose of this study, challenges should be conceived as learning difficulties encountered by students.

Students: This term means pupils or learners enrolled in educational institutions in order to receive formal education (Collins dictionary, 2012). This term will be used for consistency in this study, implying secondary schools pupils.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The role of the theory is to guide the study. According to Swanson (2013), the theoretical framework is the structure that is holding up a theory of a research. It could be understood as what is connecting the researcher to the already available body of knowledge. So as to gain greater understanding of students' challenges of essay writing in the context of Literature in English, Walberg's (1981) theory of Educational Productivity is used. The theory was later developed by its proponent in the following years: (1985, 1986, 1991 and 1992) respectively. Although it appears to be old, this theory is still valid for it was earlier used and is still being employed by a number of scholars. Among others, scholars including Haertel et al., (1983), Wang (1999), Ballester (2012); and Mandimika et al. (2013) have investigated students' learning challenges employing this theory. Educational Productivity theory is for this reason guaranteed to guide the researcher to investigate the challenges that students face while writing LE essays and how they can be overcome.

Walberg's theoretical model seeks to explicate existing relationships between learning goals and educational results of the students. Thus, this theory of learning shows the major educational variables which have impact on students' process of learning. Reynolds and Walberg, (1992) postulate that this theory shows how psychological distinctiveness of every student and their immediate psychological environments influence learning outcomes. Key variables that influence educational outcomes according to this theory are: student capability, motivation, developmental level, quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, classroom atmosphere, home environment, peer group, and exposure to technology outside of school (Walberg, 1981).

Walberg later showed that these nine predictor variables could be grouped into three categories of students' aptitude, instructional factors and environmental factors (Walberg & Tsai, 1985). The first set comprises student's aptitude variables that contain age, motivation and ability of the student. Based on the principles of this theory, what emerges is that students' aptitude is capabilities of the students or what students can do while instructional factors are pedagogical aspects.

The second set is made up of students' learning quantity and quality of instruction; it is categorized into pedagogical factors (Walberg & Tsai, 1985). On the one hand, the quantity of

instruction can be understood as amount of time students spend on learning a certain concept. On the other hand, the quality of instruction is depicted by the teacher's plan and presentation of the topic in a way that is geared towards clarity of the concept in question. Instruction therefore could be seen as quality if the teacher teaches what is stipulated by the syllabus clearly and understandably to students.

This model's last set groups environmental factors surrounding the students. These variables are home environment, climate in the classroom, peer group, and technology. Home environment means the support given to students when they are at home while classroom climate is the atmosphere within the classroom. Lastly, peer group refers to the way students get along with one another outside of the school environment (Walberg & Tsai, 1985). It can therefore be deduced that environmental factors could mean surrounding features around students' learning.

Founded on the aforementioned variables of the Educational Productivity theory, this study will analyze and interpret students' challenges on essay type writing questions of LE in terms of their aptitude, pedagogical factors and environmental factors. Each research question's results will therefore be analyzed on the basis of three categories of this theory. In essence, this theory benchmarked the researcher's grouping of the challenges discovered in this study under the above outlined sets by Walberg. The nature of this theory therefore provides for analysis of the challenges in terms of three categorizes shown above.

2.3 LE AND ITS ROLE AT JC EXAMINATION

Literature in English refers to the study of different books constituting: drama, prose and poetry which are the genres of literature (De Naplis, 2002). LE in the Lesotho junior high school is a three year course whose focal point is the extensive reading (MOET, 2009). It falls under the core subjects studied at JC. MEMD (2002) emphasizes that LE is a subject that broadens and sharpens students' minds through the exposure to a variety of textbooks. In Lesotho's education system, LE is important since it is geared towards attainment of educational goals of the curriculum framework; it is a subject that goes beyond preparation for the end of year Grade 10 examinations because it prepares learners to be societal beings (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015).

Being conscious of the probable benefits that could be accomplished as a result of integration of LE and EL in the English school syllabus, curriculum developers in Lesotho have integrated EL

content into the recommended LE textbooks as indicated (vide 1.1). In Lesotho, LE at senior high school classes is done as an optional independent subject as opposed to junior high school level where it is incorporated in English Language (MOET, 2009; MEMD, 2002). It is notable that the curriculum at junior high school integrates EL and LE. It appears that in the Lesotho junior secondary curriculum, English has the prominent status in the education system, of which LE is part of. In line with this position is Sedau (2004) who attests that the inclusion of literature component in secondary schools gives students exposure to literary texts, and this helps them to improve their standard of English Language. In the context of this study, LE should be understood as the component forming part of English assessment in the final examinations of Junior Certificate.

Synthesis of the preceding quoted scholarship points to implications for the role of LE essay questions in relation to ECOL standards for passing JC. Since the two subjects (LE and EL) complement each other, essay-type questions in both subjects should be dealt with thoroughly. Showing the role played by LE, Basiga (2009) accords that LE is brought into play as a basis for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). It appears that EL is studied through LE for students' assistance in the mastery of essay writing, grammar and vocabulary. In the similar verb, Simuchimba (2016) makes a claim that ignoring LE as a component of EL through extensive reading in the teaching of EL could endanger students' learning, leading to them not being well versed in vocabulary and language rules. It makes academic sense to consequently draw a conclusion that challenges on essay-type questions may be inevitable if LE is not taught well. As to whether or not this was the case at JC was what this study anticipated to ascertain.

2.3.1 Essay-type questions

Essay-type questions are short written works, more often than not in prose where a certain issue is discussed and assessed (Spurr & Cornelia, 2005). Mutikiri (2016) adds that these questions are continuous pieces of writing on any subject, having different parts namely: introduction, body and conclusion. In sum, these questions could be perceived as forms of writing containing a series of paragraphs. In the context of the current study, they should be understood as guided by MEMD (2002) in the JC LE (101/1) syllabus (2002).

Essay-type questions are considered to be important questions that students are expected to master at junior high school. English (101/1) paper is made up of short and essay-type questions

which make half of the paper. While writing essays, students are supposed to develop ideas in a coherent manner at word level, sentence level and paragraph level. They need to use correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and use a varied range of vocabulary, sentence structures and cohesive devices (MEMD 2002). This is where students write down an essay which is one page long. It is for this reason important to ensure that LE is instructed well by teachers, in particular, the skills of writing. Because of the nature of our curriculum in Lesotho, writing skills need to be stressed because they mainly assess student's ability at all levels of education.

2.3.2 Essay-type questions demands

This section elaborates the demands of essay-type questions in Lesotho. Annually, ECOL presents comments on the responses of students on each question by showing their weaknesses and misconceptions as opposed to the expected answers. It is the main focus of the LE syllabus that students should be able to answer essay-type questions and display a careful judgment to any textbook or genre of literature under discussion. MEMD (2002) endorses that the students should be able to make connections between the fictitious art and the real world around them. ECOL (2016 & 2017) reveals that these questions are underperformed presumably due to lack of observance of their demands. In essence, LE essay-type questions tests students' ability to enter the imagined world in books; demanding them to display knowledge of the content by comparing issues in the book to issues in the real world situation.

The performance of students is measured by performance indicators such as marks scored and, this leads to their divisions. The reports on the performance of students in LE imply the instructional challenges on essay-type questions since there have been learners' lack of ability to meet a set standard in their competencies. MOET (2009) affirms that performance of students in LE should be based on the educational results which are expected to meet the educational and societal needs. Drawing from the LE syllabus, students should be able to respond to questions analytically and critically. It is therefore suggestive that students should engage with the books or display understanding between fiction and their real world. According to the English (101/1) syllabus, LE gives broaden students' horizons and gives them an opportunity to see the difference between imagined world and fictitious texts. The ECOL criterion of awarding marks is discussed in the next section.

2.2.3 Marking of essay questions

Marking is valuable and it helps students and teachers; it gives them guidance. It still remains unknown as to whether students are aware of the standards as well as expectations of markers at ECOL or whether their challenges are attributable to teachers. The ECOL (2013) report reveals that students are awarded marks based on their ability to:

- Write essays precisely.
- Respond with comprehension of texts.
- Display well-versed response to questions.
- Analyze texts critically ,providing evidence from the books
- Respond without deviating from the context of the questions.

It appears that the marking of essay-type questions is done in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy of high levels of cognitive domain. Bloom et al. (1956) classified the cognitive domains as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These domains are grouped in order of their complexity or level of thinking. Essentially, essay-type questions aim at testing critical thinking of JC students. What emerges from the above report is that knowing ECOL's expectations could be fruitful to students by bringing to their attention common mistakes made by JC students during the final examinations. This could help them to put a stop to reoccurrence of such errors. Consequently they may also know how to improve in performance if marking is done consistently. This study investigates whether students' challenges are as a result of marking standards of examiners or not.

2.3 LITERATURE ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This section critically reviewed literature on the research questions of the study. It examined the challenges faced by students in the learning of LE essay-type questions. The possible causes of these challenges were also looked at. The section also presented the pedagogical implications of these challenges for teachers of LE at JC. The next is the section outlining the challenges faced by students on essay-type questions.

2.3.1 Challenges faced by students in the learning of Literature in English essay type writing questions

Linguistic competence is one of the challenges faced by JC students on LE essay-type questions. Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (Hymes, 1972). This challenge results from errors of addition and omission which are caused by inobservance of a singular or plural subject (Mahmoud, 2005). This is also revealed in the study by Graham and Harris (2003) and Cubukcu (2010) who contend that syntactical aspects are some of the challenges experienced in the learning of essay writing skills in the ESL perspective. Students' difficulty to demonstrate linguistic competence is a challenge additionally endorsed by Younes and Albalawi (2015), Chen (2016) and Skenderi and Ejupi's (2018) confirmation that ESL students who demonstrate inadequacy in punctuation, spelling and grammar are likely to underperform in essay writing. Students' challenge of linguistic competence is also consistent with Nyangau's (2014) acknowledgement that less knowledge of punctuation, spelling and grammar leads to unsatisfactory performance of students in essay writing. Along the same line, Batsone (1994) in Limengka, and Kuntjara, (2013) states that language without grammar would be chaotic and cause the same communication problem such as grammatical errors in writing and speaking. Therefore rather than being only rules for ordering words , grammar is indeed a resource for good communication (Halliday & Hasan, 1989 in Hyland, 2002). By implication, the teaching and learning of LE should be geared towards instruction of grammar, spelling, conjunctions and punctuation. Notably, this weakness call for a functional approach to teaching language or the genre based approach because it addresses the specifics of context and situation (Hymes, 1972). Basotho students also display this deficiency for Lebona's (2019) study reveals that grammar mistakes surface as a result of improper tense shift while Mpoi (2014) and Tlali (2018) illustrate that improper instruction of essays may be the reason behind the prevalence of errors related to linguistic competence. It therefore makes academic sense to conclude that stressing grammatical aspects during the instruction of LE essays would curb the high failure rate of LE essay type questions (vide 1.2). The upcoming section unpacks how spelling is a challenge faced by students.

Misspelling words is a challenge falling under linguistic competence that students are faced with. According to Perveen and Akram (2014), in speaking, the speaker is not worried about the correct form of English while in writing, incorrect form even one single misspelled letter can

change a word and alter the whole meaning of a text, so, writing should have correct form of English words and their correct spelling. In the popular view, correct spelling is a sign of education. On the other hand, bad spelling simply looks ill (Fagerberg, 2006). Cook (1997) also says that effective spelling is important for users of a second language because of its social overtones, if for no other reason. However, the amount of attention given to it in research appears to be minimal. Additionally, Tabrizi and Fard (2016) posits that knowledge of what kind of spelling errors students commit can help teachers improve the spelling proficiency. The foregoing cited scholarship spells the need for thorough teaching of spelling in LE essay-type questions. The above revelations are suggestive that the teaching of LE should be informed by research. The successive part presents literature on inadequate resources.

Lack of teaching resources is a challenge that seemingly hinders effective teaching of LE. According to Akamobi, (1998) instructional materials are those materials used in classroom or workshops for instruction or demonstration purpose by students and teachers. Ogaga, Wallace and Benson (2016) illuminate that choice of relevant instructional materials such as visual aids, audio aids, audio-visual aids and real object improves teaching hence the recommendation is that all schools should provide such instructional material at secondary school level. Cited in Ogaga, Wallace and Benson (2016), Adeyanju (1997) argues that presence of learning material reinforce learning because they stimulate, motivate and arrest students' attention for some time during the teaching process. Consonantal to this position is Akamobi (1998) who states that instructional materials are essential in classrooms or workshops as they are used for instruction or demonstration purpose by students and teachers. According to Mubita and Mwanza (2020), scarcity of resources poses a challenge during the teaching and learning process. In the foregoing study, lack of teaching and learning resources surfaced as one of the major findings. The study established that in Western Zambia, poor performance of LE students arises as result of lack of teaching and learning resources. By implication, resources hamper the teaching and learning process. In consonance, Matimbe (2014) is of the opinion that lack of textbooks can negatively impact on teaching. Correspondingly, Chauha (1973) saw teaching materials as actual equipment used as "hands on" process by students in order to improve the degree of skills sought by the course of requirement. It appears that the non-availability of textbooks may force teachers to narrate stories to students hence the whole process would become teacher centred. Francisca

(2012) asserts that teaching and learning resources develop students' ability to comprehend the taught content or conceptual ideas since provision of adequate resources helps students with practical experiences. This suggests that there is a need for the study which inquiries into such. Without research, it will remain unknown as to what might be established by research in a different geographical region with the similar focus of the cited scholarship. The aforementioned situation, therefore, spells the need to engage with documented scholarship on pedagogical approaches used in schools.

Teachers' reluctance to shift to learner centered approach is a teaching challenge. According to MOET (2009), the curriculum advocates for departure from teacher centered approach to skill-based learner centered teaching. This pedagogical shift appears to impose both the teaching and learning challenges. MOET (2009) posits that knowledge of learner centered teaching methods is one of the most important characteristics that each LE teacher ought to know and understand for application in classrooms. It further endorses that it is inadequate for the teacher to acquire content of the subject only for it should be coupled with the methodological knowledge and the application. The LE teacher is expected to be strategic while teaching essay-type questions so that it could be accessible to the all students classes. Drawing from the researcher's seven teaching years of experience, traditional teaching (teacher centeredness) is to-date still the preferred method by many teachers. This is also noted by the education officers hence back-to-back workshops are held by the Ministry of Education and Training in an attempt to change this ideology of teachers. This points to the need for research based knowledge on how teaching of Literature in English is conducted in JC schools.

Addressing essay-type questions on prose seem to be a challenge for students. For instance, it is documented that prose poses the challenging cognitive task which requires proper choice of words (Cubukcu, 2010; Graham & Harris, 2003). Lack of knowledge and understanding of meaning in prose make it difficult for students to answer essay type questions since students have to understand the main idea of prose first. This seems to be the case on poetry as well. Four challenges in teaching and learning poetry in ELT classrooms are: teachers and students find poems difficult because of language aspects, teachers and students ought to be insightful to get the meaning of poems that they read in classrooms, some students get bored in poetry lessons as

they cannot get the benefits from that activity, unconfident teachers struggle and do not take such chances in teaching (Killander, 2011). Students are therefore expected to understand the central message of poems so as to extract metaphorical idea depicted by the author. It still remains unknown as to what challenges are faced during the learning and teaching of essay-type questions in Lesotho classrooms.

Complexity of essay writing process is the possible challenge faced by students in classrooms. Graham and Harris (2003) note that required skills make the writing process complex. These authors further indicate that planning, generating content, organizing the composition, translating content into written language, revising, and utilizing self-regulation skills are all skills that are required within the writing process. Markedly, organizing ideas logically after setting up the content, then interpreting the message is problematic to students and this presents a challenge to them. This makes it difficult for teachers to teach LE essay type writing questions. It is evident that LE essay writing might be challenging to both teachers and learners. This is suggestive that it is essential to uncover the causes of these challenges.

Choice of appropriate diction is also a challenge that students are faced with. Wei and He (2006) assert that diction is the choice of appropriate expressions or words. Diction is conceived as a writer or speaker's distinctive vocabulary choices and style of expression in a poem or story. It is a style of speaking or writing as dependent upon choice of words (Collins dictionary, 2012). MEMD (2002), in the LE junior high school syllabus postulates that an essay should consist of suitable and varied range of vocabulary, yet this is reported to be lacking in JC final examinations. ECOL reports (2016 & 2017) reveal that students find the appropriate use of words to be challenging. Stressing the importance of word choice, Alamirew (2005) proclaims that when the students put into practice the choice of words that would show the purpose of writing, an essay written by the student would be sensible to the teacher or reader. Mayes and Calhoun (2007) illuminate that choice of expressions has effect on students' written texts. These scholars highlight that expressions impacts students' written work. Additionally, Martins (2014) accords that word choice have an effect on the message to be conveyed. Thus, it could be argued that teachers should teach and show students the importance of diction on essay-type questions to curb the existing challenges as Sardi, Atmowardoyo and Weda (2017) point out that without proper diction, communicated meaning may be compromised. Communicated message might be

affected when the speaker is less careful because English Language has a complex system; it has layers of sound, pattern and meaning of one word owing to influence of other languages (Perveen & Akram, 2014). Their study established that 92% of the sampled students displayed deficiency in written expression. The study further brought to light that one-half of those students showed incapacity on written expression alone. Drawing from this literature, it can be deduced that students' inability to use words distorts the desired meaning of their essays, giving the reader a wrong message. As shown below, lack of practice is another challenge faced by students of LE.

Documented scholarship reveals that lack of practice affects students' ability to reason. As a result of insufficient practice, students fail to state out facts that will sustain their argument. Alamirew (2005) proclaims that writing on a regular basis helps students to enhance their competence. Therefore irregular writing impacts students' argumentative skill. Teachers should focus on training students to argue convincingly and offer frequent exercises. The ECOL report (2016) states that the candidate needs to state points or reasons for the argument but the students' essays had repetitive disconnected reasoning. This position coils back to Tangpermpoon's (2008) affirmation that production of a well written essay entails writers' knowledge of subject-verb-agreement, coherence and cohesion. This may not be achieved if students lack consistent practice. If they practise often, errors may be minimal. This resonates with Alfaki's (2015) position that practice enables students to perfect their writing skills. Lack of this skill could have effect of students' written work; this could result to letting students resort to repeating ideas. This is consistent with Graham and Harris (2003) who affirm that essay writing needs practice since its requirements make it a complex process. It could be deduced that the situation in Lesotho primary and secondary schools necessitates the explicit and frequent teaching of essay-type questions. Overload is another challenge faced by LE students.

Established investigations also reveal that overload is a challenge faced by both teachers and students. Aoumeur (2017) affirms that the greater work load leads to the greater chances of teachers not addressing all the relevant concepts. In the context of Lesotho, MEMD (2002) endorses that the JC syllabus should cover four genres which are play, poetry, story and short story. Notably, there is a high number of literature books to be dealt with in LE and from experience, this overload of work may end up forcing the teacher to exercise teacher centred

learning at the expense of students learning. To exemplify, LE requires discussions to make it relevant to life because literature represents reality yet this may not be accomplished as the syllabus should be covered within the stipulated time. Teacher centred methods are characterised by none participatory teaching, where students are passive while teachers are their source of knowledge (Freire, 1976). The upcoming part sums up this subsection.

Notably, research appraised scholarship reveals several possible causes of challenges facing the teaching and learning of LE essay type writing questions. It is therefore important to discover causes of challenges responsible for unsatisfactory performance of Literature in English essay type writing questions at JC examinations. The next section elucidates possible causes of challenges facing the teaching and learning of essay-type questions.

2.3.2 Possible causes of challenges facing the teaching and learning of essay-type questions

Documented scholarship reveals limited teaching time as the cause of students' essay writing challenge. This negates Scheerens's (2014) position that instructional time positively relates with students' performance; more teaching time breeds obtaining higher grades while less time yields obtaining lower grades. Thus, the allocated time limits the major task of the teacher which is to remove the psychological barrier between students and literature as well as participation (Shakfa, 2012). It appears that limited teaching affects students as they may sit for external examinations having undergone less training in LE due to limited time. In advocacy of extended teaching time, Rivkin and Schiman (2015) point out that additional teaching time leads to quality teaching of the content though resources and environment are added advantages. This may suggest that the teaching of LE is compromised by the time factor hence the need for giving students home work. The upcoming part illuminates how academic style is a source of LE students' challenges.

Students' writing challenges and the struggle to develop the suitable academic style are attributed to writing requirements of individual subjects. Academic writing style is formal English whose rules, structure, and content for academic dialogue and text, and the communicative conventions allow students to meet the demands of school environments (Labaree, 2009). By implication, this is a language which is pronounced as an appropriate one in the academic field. Conversely, informal language is that which is not appropriate for school system, inclusive of contractions. Cummins (1979) cautions that contractions fall under Basic

Interpersonal Skills -language used on a daily basis for social purposes. Cummins further emphasises that this is the informal non-academic language meant for informal settings only. In the same vein, Alfaki (2018) postulates that the prevalence of informal language is as a result of technology that is keeping students glued to their gadgets where they cross barriers of formality since they spend most of their time using spoken language with their peers. In advocacy of technology for learning, Jarvis (2014) contends that it is important to educate students that technology can be used for individual learning. Social sites such as facebook have educational content essential for learning. Noteworthy, Hesse (2010) argues that teachers should devote attention to style of writing and show distinctions between formal style versus informal style of writing since resorting to a certain style reflects writer's awareness of the audience and purpose. It is noteworthy that the use of informal language is penalised in essay writing because essays are formal. Moreover, Vardi (2000), Myles (2002) and Tangpermpoon (2008) attest that complex academic writing aspects in themselves do pose new challenges for students since they vary ways from discipline to discipline. Drawing from these researchers, it is reasonable to conclude that writing effectively in individual subjects entails more than just knowledge of general characteristics of essay-type questions because there are differences which are reflected in the writing of every course. This appears to propose that teachers should try as much as possible to discourage the use of informal language in formal writing as this is likely to negatively impact on students' performance of LE essay writing performance of LE essay-type questions. The forthcoming paragraph sheds light on demerits of limited classroom language opportunity.

Limited classroom language opportunity causes students' challenges. Alfaki (2015) accords that to turn into a skillful writer; the best way is to write a lot. The seven years teaching experience of the researcher has taught him that the students only have a chance to use English Language during LE and English Language lessons because when learning other subjects, teachers code switch. The LE teacher has the opportunity to assist students to develop LE essay writing skills within 40 minutes as the language outside the classroom and at home is mainly Sesotho. Abdi and Hardman (2007) purport that code switching leads to minimal exposure to English. Similarly, those authors purport that exposure to more than one language leads to reliance on one of them or code switching which leads to minimal exposure to English. However, it is against such limiting backgrounds that teachers should promote a reading culture. Extensive reading

promotes language development. This is in line with Adejimola and Ojuolape's (2013) position that students' performance can be enhanced by Literature; they recommend teachers to motivate students to read as that can stimulate their desire to read for knowledge, pleasure or relaxation. Therefore the absence of a community that speaks English cannot be taken as an excuse. The learners need to be motivated to read extensively. The implication is that the students are disadvantaged because teachers have to use faster teaching approaches to meet the predetermined ECOL requirements which ultimately impede effective classroom essay writing practices.

Poor foundation is among causes of LE students' essay writing challenges. Austin (2006) asserts that poor foundation is the poor previous educational experience of the students. In accordance with revelations of Mpoi's (2014) study, disadvantages of poor foundation could be seen as resulting to lack of cohesion in students' work. She further advocates for the teaching of cohesive devices from lower grades as they shape essay writing, giving it a good flow for understanding. Poor foundation may challenge students and be noted by lack of basic writing, spelling, punctuation, reading and listening skills of the students. The support for early foundation is also witnessed in the study by Bekman, Aksu-Koc and Erguvanli-Taylan (2011) who posit that early foundational education helps students to master writing in general later since there is proof of the worth of preschool enrichment classes on writing. This is in line with Alami's (2016) claim that poor foundation affects students' learning in the later stage. Holding the similar viewpoint are Nag , Chiat , Torgerson and Snowling (2014) who maintain that the teaching of literacy in childhood stage is a preparatory point for a child's proficiency in language which guarantees a solid language foundation since the results of improper basis affect students in upper levels of education. Drawing from the cited literature, it is therefore vital to ensure that students are taught all mechanics of writing such as word formation, sentence formation, spelling, grammar and punctuation in lower classes. Additionally, early encouragement of extensive reading could help students as Zuze and Reddy (2014) contend that proficiency in reading is essential for personal growth since there is a relationship between reading literacy and writing which create other scholastic opportunities such as good spelling, improved vocabulary and improved wellbeing. This is in harmony with Mafokwane (2017) who argues that if students have not understood or are not well equipped with the prerequisite reading skill, the probability for such a student to make spelling mistakes or have writing problems is high hence the

achievement in the learning environment would be hindered. It still remains unanswered as to whether poor foundation is a problem in Lesotho LE junior high school classes or not. The next section illustrates how motivation also causes students' challenges on LE essay-type questions.

Motivation has been identified as a cause of students' underperformance. According to Akey (2006), motivation is a driving factor that triggers dedication to do the work. This is also noted by Mark, (2015) who states that performance of a school hinges on the teacher's motivation and if a teacher is unhappy on the job, emphasis will not be put into the teaching. Motivation is in two types namely intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is characterised as that which comes from within the individual. It inspires action even when there is no perceived external stimulus or reward. Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, provides incentive to engage in action which may not be inherently pleasing or engaging, but which may offer benefits in terms of perceived potential outcomes (Stirling, 2014, p. 2). In congruence with this affirmation, Roth and Eyal (2010) aver that lack of extrinsic motivation affects intrinsic motivation among teachers; stating that lack of intrinsic motivation can be exhibited in teacher reluctance to partake in school undertakings, unproductive or non-exciting teaching, poor class attendance and late coming. Therefore, motivating students in the class is an essential part of teaching and must spill over to outside the precincts as well. This means that the teaching of LE needs to be made appealing and attractive. Students can during the course of the year be encouraged to write essays on different topical topics and the essays are rated and put on display. Besides displays, there can be book prizes for the widely read person in the class or grade. Importantly, prize giving days can be organised and the best student per subject get awards per subject. In these ways, students are motivated. What will have started as extrinsic motivation may with the passage of time be intrinsic because of the long term goals. According to Mark (2015), teachers can be extrinsically motivated if they participate and have a voice on issues concerning day-to-day running of the school or are praised. They also thrive to earn respect from the principals. It is in line with the above that Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert and Hayenga (2009) state that intrinsic motivation could be triggered by emotional support. By implication, communication and working together with teachers extrinsically motivate them while helping and supporting them in times of depression keeps them intrinsically motivated.

Another possible source of teaching and learning challenge on essay-type question is the classroom environment (Rajeswari, 2008 ; Shakfa, 2012). In line with the foregoing position is the Educational Productivity theory by Walberg (1981) which singles out classroom atmosphere as the key educational variable which influences students' educational outcomes. Classroom environment goes against MOET's (2009) major aim of learner-centeredness in Lesotho. In the context of Lesotho junior high school, teachers have all the power in the classroom and they are authoritative (Marulcu & Akbiyik, 2014). For example, in Lesotho, the classroom situation assumes that power is expressed by teacher; assuming teacher-centered perspective, where students are not responsible for their learning. The sitting arrangement in the Lesotho classrooms is such that all students are seated facing the teacher who stands before them, instructing and choosing students who should take part in activities. Shakfa (2012) postulates that one of the tasks of the teacher is to remove psychological barrier between students and their participation in Literature classes. In the light of the aforementioned ideas, it is reasonable to conclude that learning environment can influence students' perception of learning essay type writing questions. The learning environment can inspire students if it is conducive while on the other hand, it can discourage them if the environment is toxic. Marulcu and Akbiyik (2014) accord that in a situation whereby teachers are the only sources of information and teaching is one way and not giving students a chance to contribute ideas; learning is less efficient.

The students' negative attitude toward LE poses a barrier for efficient teaching of essay-type questions. Montano and Kasprzyk (2008) define attitude as what is shaped and governed by individual's beliefs and behaviour. Since ESL students differ, some have positive attitude while others have negative attitude towards LE. Martinez-Flor and Usó Juan (2006) point out that the negative attitude stems from the fact that students are incompetent in the English Language and that prevents them from actively taking part in classroom activities. Attitudes can therefore hamper teaching as well as learning of LE essay type questions or improve it, thus, attitude can be seen as an essential instructional aspect. Empirical studies have established that an attitude towards a certain language is important because it influences the process of learning the language in question (Mary, 2014; Fadel & Khaled, 2013; Farooq & Shahzadi, 2006; Eshiwani, 2003). In view of the foregoing assertions, the researcher discovers that attitudes influence a second language students' will to learn, along with mastery of the LE essay-type questions. From these

documented scholarship, the conclusion could be that attitude can either improve or affect the instructional progression of the second language student.

According to this literature, there are a number of possible causes of challenges facing the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. It is important to bring to light the causes that are responsible for LE essay type questions at JC examinations. The next subsection presents pedagogical implications of these challenges for teachers of Literature in English at Junior Certificate.

2.3.4 The pedagogical implications of these challenges for teachers of Literature in English at Junior Certificate

Teaching materials have educational implications for LE teachers. The researcher's teaching experience reveals that traditional teaching is still dominant in Lesotho, technology being the least used instructive innovation. This way of teaching is discouraged by MOET hence it introduced the curriculum and assessment policy. This is revealed by Raselimo and Mahao (2015) who note that teacher centredness is ineffective and discouraged by MOET in its curriculum framework (2009) where it introduces the modern education reform which marks the withdrawal from the subject and examination-driven curriculum to student centred teaching wherein curriculum echoes the everyday life challenges of students. According to Selepe (2016) teacher-centred methods such as lecturing, demonstration, memorisation or question and answer alienate concepts from reality as they are impractical; students are passive and rely on the information from the teacher. Additionally, Selepe (2016) stresses that teaching should be democratic and promote generative learning which is activity-centred as that help students to understand the subject matter. Along the similar line of conception, Freire (1976) posits that teacher centred methods are none participatory. They follow the material arrangement in the books as opposed to the student-centred paradigms that require teachers to help students improve their skills and capabilities in finding out and connecting ideas through their discovery based learner centred undertakings (Harris & Rooks, 2010). In the similar line of conception, Marulcu and Akbiyik (2014) accord that in a situation whereby teachers are the only sources of information and teaching is one way and not giving students a chance to contribute ideas; learning is less efficient. This opposes the sociocultural theory which advocates for learning through interaction with peers (Vygosky, 1978). Again, Vygosky adds that unlike teacher

centred learning where students are just passive; this method places the students as active participants responsible for their own learning. In advocacy of student centred teaching, Dewey (1916) avers that this way of teaching is effective as it is the manner of teaching characterised by promotion of democratic learning; where students make their own choices, interests, abilities, needs, educational goals and learning styles in order to construct meaning or understanding during the learning process. Student-centred ideology stems from the belief that students should be facilitated, to help them grow by guiding them to develop their skills since schools are democratic places, where students should be empowered to independently deal with the subject matter (Dewey, 1916; Schiro, 2008). Li (2011) notes that the teaching and learning in the learner-centred perspective cater for learners' needs and priorities. Again, Grey (1995) asserts that a productive constructivist classroom will therefore be learner-centred and actively involve learners in the learning process. This implies that in student-centred teaching, teaching and learning is student driven where there is more independent problem solving and discovery learning.

Established investigations show the pedagogical implications of teaching and learning LE which could help students guard against the notable LE essay-type questions challenges. Alfaki (2015) cautions that students turn into better writers when they write a lot. The implication could be that students' academic writing proficiency develops with time, and needs regular practice coupled with assessment. It appears that frequent testing of students helps them to develop. This harmonises with Curtis's (2017) position that students' skills are enhanced by regular practice through the use of teaching resources such as cellular phones or computers which students enjoy using on daily basis. This might suggest that students should be given class work, homework or assignments regularly. Below is a part which unpacks how technology can enhance the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions.

The remedy for unsatisfactory performance of LE could be the use of technology. Technology is a sum of methods or skills involving scientific inventions for production (Brian, 2009). In a similar line of thought, Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) also indicate that audio-visual materials like tapes allow students to be creative and stimulate them; they focus students' attention on the writing skills to be learnt. The use of video tapes increases students' learning engagement with sensual experiences as pictures can be seen while sound can be heard; they can also be available

for students to watch any time (Cakir, 2006). It is logical therefore to conclude that if students can be exposed to video tapes or teaching through technology, they may improve their performance on essay-type questions. Students with hearing problems are likely to benefit from this way of teaching because being able to see the speaker's face will help them to lip-read and see facial expressions of actors; this will also assist them in speed and accuracy of grasping the content as opposed to auditory-only recognition (Altieri & Townsend, 2011). Additionally, Juke (2008) cautions that students these days are stimulated and motivated by various technological forms as a result of being raised up in a digital background. It appears that students make use of technology day by day. Curtis (2017) further postulates that students perceive these types of technologies as helpful and very pleasing. These could mean that these students who habituate themselves to technology will relate to using computers, gadgets or cell phones at school to learn essay-type questions. On account of this observation, it could be implied that if students' learning atmosphere mirrors the manner in which they connect with the world, they could stand out in their learning of essay-type questions.

The syllabus aims and objectives should be observed to curb undesired teaching approaches in classrooms. To exemplify, in Lesotho MEMD (2002) endorses that the Literature in English Syllabus proposes the use of different teaching methods such as: inquiry-based, role-play, buzz group or dramatization. Analogous to this notion is MOET (2009) in its curriculum framework which also advocates for the foregoing teaching methods. The envisaged curriculum framework therefore aims at pedagogy that will produce a learner who will be able to bring into play the acquired knowledge and skills to solve day-by-day challenges. What still remains indefinite is whether these methods are in reality implemented in the classrooms. Drawing from the Lesotho junior high school syllabus aims, it can be noted that its focal point is to equip students with skills that will make them functional societal beings who strive for global development as the syllabus calls for comprehension of all parts of the pedagogical elements. In essence, the teachers' tactics while teaching Literature in English essay type writing questions should blend both the practicality and theoretical pedagogies. As to whether this is followed by LE teachers in Leribe secondary schools is an issue this study is inclined to pursue.

Students should be taught things that they are familiar with. LE syllabus (101/1) in Lesotho is dependent on other cultures, implying the educational challenges for its delivery. This shows the mismatch of content with the Ministry of Education and Training goals since MOET (2009) aims

at fully localizing Lesotho's curriculum. Although secondary text books read in Lesotho are African, they are drawn from other cultures which appear to be different from Basotho culture. Basotho junior high school students who may have read The Rainy Season by Shelley Davidow (1997) have come upon words like papadums or bunny chow without knowing their meaning as there is no such food in their culture. Learning Literature in English in Lesotho might not be easy for students as literature is culturally, linguistically and socially alienated from the students. Thus, Indian readers will vividly understand this text book while Basotho readers are different and the understanding of these words for Basotho is likely to be problematic. The pedagogical implication could be that Indians will read with a deep understanding of the emotions in the story, unlike non-native readers of the book. This may influence students' achievement of high grades on the subject matter, inclusive of essay type writing questions for the reason that students are not familiar with culture, setting and jargon used in this book. As to whether or not the prescribed texts bring about teaching and learning challenges for all Grade 10 students is an issue that this study wants to establish.

Teacher training is the significant aspect in teaching and learning. A teacher is expected to function as a well-informed caring adult, providing required information. It is expected that the teacher should make evaluations when called for, help in disciplinary measures and decision making and adding to the richness of the environment by introducing new things into it (Njuguna, 2012). It can be deduced from these scholars that a teacher is required to be knowledgeable in the essay-type questions of Literature in English itself so that he/she can make valuable decisions regarding what should be taught in relation to essay type questions, and how the teaching should be done. Mosha (2004) maintains that among the challenges of students are qualities of teachers. Teachers who do not stress the essay writing part might therefore compromise students' writing abilities, leading to their failure to tackle essay questions. The upcoming section shows the significance of average LE classrooms in schools.

Literature proposes that schools should have adequate classrooms and student-teacher ratio should be observed; schools should avoid congested classes. The big size of class minimises whole class participation, leading to poor quality instruction and individual attention (Pearson, 2017). Teachers' attention cannot be on each student due to big classes hence assessment of the taught content might not be thorough. UNESCO (2010) states that an average class consists of a

35

maximum of 40 students as the bigger number hinders an effective teaching. In the same line of thought, Freire (1987) argues that bigger classes impede smooth teaching and learning because they make it difficult for a teacher to focus on every student therefore forcing them to spend a small amount of time when assessing each student's work; also forcing teachers to teach basics of a subject only. From the cited scholarship, there seems to be challenges posed by class size. Thus, it is evident that an average class gives students sufficient time to interact with the teacher, allowing a teacher to see improvement of every student. The implication could be that class sizes in schools predict whether education is productive or not.

2.4 SUMMATIVE PERSPECTIVES

This investigation's aim was to uncover challenges faced by LE students on essay-type questions. The study was informed by Walberg's (1981) framework which uses the concept of Educational Productivity to indicate how students accomplish the expected educational outcomes as result of educational predictor variables. Due to the nature of this theory, it was used as the theoretical framework and data analysis tool in Chapter four.

Synthesis of literature reveals that students are faced with a number of LE challenges in relation to essay questions. Students clearly vary in their competence to effect personal improvement in essay writing skills. Nonetheless, awareness of their strengths and weaknesses followed by adequate instructional quantity may assist them. Certain measures can be taken by teachers in order to help students to take appropriate steps headed for assisting them to produce good essays as well as changing LE students' writing attitudes.

The published writings bring to light some of the sources of LE students' challenges on essay-type questions. Areas of concern were government related causes and environmental factors. Also featuring as causes were: the teacher associated, individual as well as social factors. They were found to hamper proper teaching of the essay-type questions (vide 2.3.2). As a consequence of these sources, meeting the predetermined examinations requirements was a problem; leading to underachievement of essay-type questions.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In the first section of Chapter two, the researcher outlined an overview of the chapter. Key terms were operationalized afterwards. The theoretical framework underlying the study was also

featured. The researcher indicated the significance of teaching LE in the Lesotho's education system, the marking and general goals of ECOL. Literature on research questions was divided into three sections whereby the first section was related to challenges faced by LE students on essay-type questions, while the second section reviewed sources of such challenges .The third part outlined pedagogical implications of the challenges for teachers.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an outline of the methodology that was used during the data gathering process and analysis of data. The chapter presents the research paradigm and research design. A description of the participants who takes part in the study is included. The participant selection criterion that was utilized is discussed, followed by a description of the techniques that were used during data collection. Then, a description of the data analysis process is provided and finally, the ethical issues considered throughout the study are highlighted.

3.1 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The paradigm can be interpreted to refer to understanding about the nature of knowledge. The research process has three main assumptions, which are ontology, epistemology and methodology (Neuman, 2000; Cresswell, 2003). McGregor and Murnane (2010) describe paradigms as sets of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitute a manner in which one views reality for the community that shares them. This study therefore espoused the epistemological perspective of interpretive paradigm. McGregor and Murnane (2010) further state that epistemology is the nature of human knowledge and comprehension capable of being acquired through different types of inquiry and alternative methods of investigation. That being the case, the paradigm was of assistance to the researcher; it was used in order to understand how students and their LE teachers at JC perceive challenges on LE essay-type questions by using interactive data gathering tools such as focus group discussions which allow subjective discussions. From the cited body of scholarly knowledge, it can be drawn that the selection of a research paradigm demonstrates how the nature of the world is perceived as well as how investigation of the perceived reality should be; the researcher was therefore inclined to the epistemological perspective while carrying out this study (McGregor & Murnane, 2010).

Interpretivism was used to understand the personal experience of participants in order to understand their perception of students' challenges on essay-type questions in their habitual contexts, which in the case of this study are schools. The interpretive paradigm employs interactive data collection techniques such as interviews as well as analysis of existing texts (Bryman and Bell 2011). These techniques impelled interaction between the researcher and participants in order to collaboratively construct meaning of the phenomenon in this enquiry from the participants' viewpoints. Bryman and Bell (2011) further stress that in the interpretive paradigm, there are many truths and multiple realities. In view of the fact that participants came

from different schools, having different educational training and experience, they viewed students' challenges on essay-type questions differently as interpretive paradigm assumes multiple realities.

On the basis of the scholarly writings, the researcher opted for this paradigm since it involves a dialogue between the researcher and selected participants; the three parties (researcher, teachers and students) jointly discussed the JC students' challenges. Thus, the researcher interacted with participants and came up with a vivid picture of challenges faced (Thomas, 2010). The nature of this paradigm provides in-depth understandings of the teachers and students' experiences. Focus group discussions were important for this research to attain the information- rich data (Maree, 2016). In essence, precise picture of students' experience with JC essay-type questions was drawn from perspectives of teachers. It was therefore important to comprehend the challenges of JC students who have their own varying personal experiences with essay-type questions depending on their school type, background, and their personal view of the world as well as its interpretation. Subsection 3.2 below presents the research design of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design can either be quantitative or qualitative. This investigation is largely qualitative with a thin strand of quantitative design where errors from essay-type questions and their causes were quantified. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2009), a design is plan intended to find answers to be obtained from the research questions. Rossman and Rallis (2003) declare that qualitative studies are typically interactive and the researcher is involved with participants in person. On the contrary, MacMillan and Schumacher (2010) affirm that quantitative design involves numbers. This study aimed to establish the perceptions of both teachers and students on the phenomenon of this study to gather rich information surrounding their individual views through the use of quali-quantitative research. In accordance with Beizer, Berg, Scullard, Simha and Solomon (2001), systematically gathering enough information about the social setting, a certain person, or group of people permits the investigator to effectively comprehend the way it works. According to Maree (2016) , Marzano, Vegliante and De Angelis (2015), quali-quantitative research incorporates the qualitative and quantitative methodological and epistemological domains. By implication, data was quantified to authenticate qualitative revelations.

This study adopted a quali-quantitative design of multiple case studies. Noor (2008) advocates for case studies and states that although their scope is delimited in the context with their findings hardly ever generalised, they provide rich and significant insights into events and experience. Multiple case studies were found to be appropriate for this study as they used different data collection techniques and settings, allowing the researcher to triangulate data. The case study allowed the researcher to investigate the students' essay writing challenges using different cases at different sites and this flexibility in the triangulation of data collection produced either converging or diverging interpretations Duff (2008). Essentially, the researcher used this design in order to get insightful knowledge about the challenges faced by secondary students on writing LE essays in their respective schools.

In spite of various challenges of participants and the teaching and learning process of LE, the researcher intended to find significant similarities and dissimilarities in the three cases. As Duff (2008) notes, multiple case studies maximize diversity in the phenomenon in question. This investigation therefore involved three research sites, with diverse participants where Grade 10 teachers and students of LE per school took part in this study. Different books were chosen for student participants to write an essay-type test on in the three research sites and the students were supposed to choose just one of his or her choice. Evidently, in these three cases, there were individual age differences, different personalities and gender.

This study is predominantly qualitative for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was in line with Lichtman's (2014) position that the strength of a qualitative study is an inductive viewpoint that allows the researcher to make a deeper depiction of what is going on in a setting where the investigation takes place. Secondly, this investigation adopted a qualitative view of generalisability, so that the reader will be left to make up a decision on how far the findings of the study can yield the same results in a comparable setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Therefore the rationale behind the use of quali-quantitative design was centred on its merits. This study assisted the investigator to get to the root cause of the challenges faced by Grade 10 LE students on essay-type questions in the three selected junior high schools. Drawing from the foregoing scholarship, the researcher realised that the information found from quali-quantitative design could assist in identifying the needs of the target audience as well as obtaining deeper understanding of the purpose of the study.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection of participants is essential for any study as an investigator needs to guarantee that the participants are qualified to provide the credible data for the study (Turner, 2010). The investigator used purposive selection to select Grade 10 students and teachers with particular knowledge or experience of LE essay-type questions so as to achieve the objectives of this study. Purposeful selection guaranteed that selected participants met the criterion of the study in question. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) conceive of purposive sample as one made up of small groups of participants experienced with rich information about the phenomenon of interest and who produce acceptable facts. In the same vein, Flynn and Korcuska (2018) stress the importance of stating a rationale for selection procedures with the intention of ensuring that the study has credibility. The researcher adopted this selection criterion as it allows researchers to select individuals who can provide a generous amount of information on the target phenomenon (Cresswell, 2009). Grade 10 teachers and students of LE were, therefore, selected because that is the study's area of concentration. In line with this assertion is Cresswell (2003) who attests that purposive sampling enables researchers to choose the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of the researcher's judgment. These students appear to be more knowledgeable because they are expected to be ready for JC LE final examinations. Additionally, Grade 10 students and their LE teachers form the right participants for this study since they are the ones engaged in the actual teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions at JC. The researcher for this reason chose the participants in order to build up a reasonable size that is specific to the needs of the study. The researcher selected all Grade 10 teachers per school and School A had three teachers while School B and C had only two LE teachers. In totality, there were seven teachers. Ten students were purposively selected in each school which is a quarter of a normal class size in Lesotho; therefore thirty students formed participants of the study. This was in line with UNESCO (2010) which shows that an average class consists of a maximum of 40 students. According to Maree (2016), random sampling is one of the probability sampling techniques in which every sample has an equal opportunity of being chosen. This technique was therefore believed to be appropriate for this study as it is unbiased, meaning that it is a representation of the total population.

The researcher also took convenience into consideration when selecting the participants for the study in question. The researcher resides in Leribe; as a result, it was convenient for him to

collect data from participants who were easily accessible (Maree, 2016). This made it easier to organise the focus group discussions when it was convenient to the participants from the three selected junior high schools. Teachers were also included because the researcher wanted supplementary data to validate students' data. This was done based on Duff's (2008) caution that, multiple case studies should exploit variety of participants. The inclusion of supplementary participants which are teachers was deemed appropriate not only as a means of finding their views and conceptions around students' challenges in their respective schools but also to seek their subjective opinions regarding the pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. In order to make a distinction between the participants from the three schools, every participant was numbered with a reference to School A, School B or School C. The next subsection presents data generating tools for this study.

3.4 DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS
3.4.1 Overview

In this study, the data gathering techniques were inclined to quali-quantitative research. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Delpolt, and Strickland (2006) assert that the research designs as well as data gathering tools are strictly related. For the purpose of this study, the first section explicated how the researcher was the primary instrument. Also featuring in this inquiry is the presentation of how the researcher collected data through tests on essay-type questions and open-ended questionnaires for teachers. An outline of how focus group discussions with teachers were done is also highlighted. The forthcoming part presents how the researcher is an instrument for data gathering.

3.4.2 The researcher as an instrument

In this research, although it is not an action research, the researcher was considered as the key data gathering tool. Congruent to this position are Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland (2006) who claim that the investigator is the main instrument or medium through which the investigation is conducted. As it was earlier mentioned (vide 1.2), the interest in this research stems from my own experience of challenges on teaching LE essay-type questions. As the researcher, I therefore play the central role in generating and interpreting data. Thus, one who reads this study should consequently understand me as the key instrument (Annie Xu, 2012).

For the past seven years as the LE teacher, I realised that my Grade 10 junior high school students were struggling to answer essay-type questions. Every year, I encountered students who had challenges in writing essay-type questions based on the subject matter that they studied. I have noticed the evident gap between the short questions and essay-type questions in LE. For this reason, I seek to understand perspectives of other teachers' and students' challenges during the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions, including the measures they take to address these challenges.

My status helped to yield credible findings as the participants of this study were at ease, feeling free to share their experiences – they were not influenced. I am a Mosotho teacher coming from the similar background as the participants hence that put me on a comparatively equal status with the teachers who participated in this study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) affirm that credibility is the extent to which the results of a study are fairly accurate, real, trustworthy and reasonable. The participants therefore felt at ease answering the focus group discussion questions and were able to express their thoughts with honesty during data collection. The focus group discussions were conducted in both Sesotho and English. Code switching was allowed when the participants felt like expressing their views in Sesotho; the teachers were at liberty to use either English or Sesotho (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The use of the preferred language meant that participants were able to articulate their opinions without restraint; language was not a barrier. The next part expounds on the use of test for data collection.

3.4.2 Test

The qualitative data was augmented by content analysis of junior high school students' scripts. The study used past ECOL papers; they were found to be suitable for this research and likely to establish credible findings as they are standard papers. Credibility is the extent to which the outcomes of a study are believable, appropriate and present reality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Maree, 2016). This data generating tool was used for it was found to be essential and was anticipated to provide in-depth analysis of the content; this enabled the investigator to recognise the manner in which students perceived the LE essay-type questions. Tests on essay-type questions were issued to students in order to examine the characteristics and challenges of written materials (Ary et al., 2010). Therefore, an essay-type test was used to find out the LE essay writing challenges students face. All the Grade 10 students in the chosen schools were

given one test on essay-type questions extracted from LE JC past question papers for 2006, 2007 and 2010 respectively. The test was adopted from past Examinations Council of Lesotho paper 1 of English which was found to be suitable since the national examinations of Lesotho are standardised. The tests were issued in students' classrooms. This was done under my invigilation with the help of Grade 10 LE teachers. The tests comprised four essays from different text books for students to write a one and half page long essay. This was in conformity with the English (101/1) question paper which normally contains essay-type questions from a story, short story or novel. The test aimed at generating a qualitative data.

Parents were issued consent letters to seek for permission to use students in a case of minors. The printed letters were in Sesotho to guarantee that every parent comprehend it. A total number of thirty scripts were marked and only ten in each school were selected so that researcher could build up a sample that is satisfactory to specific needs of the investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The scripts were marked and the results were captured; errors derived from essays were quantified. In this study, this class (Grade10) was used for it is expected to be knowledgeable on essay-type questions challenges. To triangulate data collection tools, the researcher also formulated teachers' qualitative open-ended questionnaires followed by teachers' focus group discussions.

3.4.3 Teachers' questionnaire

The researcher used a questionnaire as a data collection technique, which allowed him to address research question 1, 2 and 3. The researcher designed questionnaires for teachers which comprised two sections whereby the first section included the contents on personal data while section two comprised questions reflecting the research questions of this study. This research tool was opted for due to the desire to gather subjective information of teachers on students' challenges on essay-type questions from participants.

While extracting the questionnaire, the researcher satisfied the trustworthiness standards. Questions inquired into teachers' experiences on challenges encountered during the instruction of LE essay-type questions, causes for such challenges and remedial suggestions for those challenges in general. The teachers were asked questions that referred them to their experiences. These questions were deliberately asked since the researcher took caution of Bryman's (2004) assertion that giving the participants a hint and directing them to their past experiences assist

them to capture specific incidents, thereby, extracting the comprehensive information. This questionnaire was used so as to generate the teachers' subjective views which addressed the three research questions of the study in question. Teachers were asked to fill the questionnaire without indicating their names. This questionnaire was formulated in congruence with Babbie's (2010) postulation that secrecy should be observed with anonymity of participants in order to allow them to feel free and uninfluenced when answering questions in the questionnaire.

The questionnaires were hand delivered to the participants, and a few number of participants took long time to respond. Some responses were ambiguous while some provided inadequate information. The researcher then realized that there was a need to conduct focus group discussions with the aim of elaborating more on the answers from questionnaires. Notably, there was the need for the supplementary data gathering tool as there were some questions that remained ambiguous in the questionnaires.

3.4.4 Focus group discussion

Focus group discussion refers to a group of people with the same backgrounds who are brought together to converse on a particular subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).The researcher brought all teachers together for a focus group discussion to explicate supplementary information for clarity on what they presented on the questionnaires. Since the focus group discussion was conducted during COVID-19 pandemic, all participants adhered to WHO cautionary measures and put their masks on. The researcher sanitized participants regularly when need arose. This tool was used as another supplementary data generation tool in order to validate the data collected from questionnaires and students' essays. It made it possible for the researcher to determine similarities and dissimilarities of provided data. Since the major focus was to get grounded augment from teachers on challenges faced by students in relation to LE essay-type questions, they were allowed to make detailed clarifications in order to compensate weaknesses of the questionnaire. The focus group guide constituted open ended questions to best suit the enquiry. The focus group discussion was audio recorded then later transcribed before data analysis and interpretation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The focus group discussion took place at times convenient to the participants (Grade 10 teachers), where they felt free to discuss their teaching experiences of essay-type questions challenges. As pointed out by Maree (2016) convenient sampling is chosen when participants are

easily and conveniently available. To set up a good relationship with the participants, the researcher spent some time before the beginning of the focus group discussion, explaining the nature of the study along with its purpose. The researcher then presented himself as the student who seeks to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon for which he did not have answers. Additionally, the researcher stated how happy he would be to learn from the participants in the field. From there, a general idea about the questions that they were to be asked to answer was presented for them. The participants were given the opportunity to choose between their first language or English language and Code switching was also allowed. Rationale for data collection techniques is presented next.

3.5 RATIONALE FOR DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

In this section, the researcher justifies and elaborates further on how the multiple data gathering techniques have resulted in a complete research through triangulation. Bryman and Bell (2011) points out that the researcher should to use multiple data gathering tools. This was also found to be relevant for this study because what emanated from students' essays as challenges was clarified further by teachers in their qualitative open-ended questionnaires while that was triangulated by the results from teachers' focus group discussion.

For the researcher to collect correct data, appropriate techniques should be used (Maree, 2016). This study adopted the three data gathering tools in order to make it possible to yield data from the social contexts of the participants of this research. The researcher deemed a questionnaire suitable to achieve the purpose of this study. It was employed for collecting data concerning the challenges facing students in the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. The qualitative questionnaire therefore helped the researcher to collect data from teachers without interfering with them.

The test on essay-type questions was used to collect data from learners in order to find out their knowledge as well as challenges on LE essay-type questions. The class test, in this research, was meant to measure students' ability to write essay-type questions of LE within the specified instructions.

Focus group discussions were found to be suitable for this study because they generated data on all three research questions, allowing the researcher to gather detailed information. In this study, the researcher's core aim was to gain information on students and teachers' experience of essay-

type question challenges; therefore questions eliciting their views and clarifications of these challenges were included in the focus group guide. Open ended questions were used in the focus group discussion guide as they permitted participants the free will to answer questions in as much detail and complexity as they wish (Liamputtong, 2011). The researcher was not influencing participants' answers in order to gain a better understanding of the challenges on essay-type questions from their own point of view. Data collection procedure follows this subsection.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Procedures mean how data collection techniques are used and steps taken by the researcher. Kombo and Tromp, (2006) postulate that data collection procedure means the way the researcher is gathering information to verify a number of facts. Arrangements were made with the schools to collect data .The National University of Lesotho gave the researcher a go-ahead to collect data from schools through head of department of LASED. The test was written under the invigilation of Grade 10 LE teachers and marked by the researcher. Focus group discussion with Grade 10 LE teachers then followed.

As can be noted in the previous section (vide.3.5), students' essays on LE, teachers' qualitative questionnaires and focus group discussions were chosen as data gathering tools. The first research tool that was used was the test which was written under my supervision with the assistance of LE Grade 10 teachers. The essay-type test was marked in accordance with the ECOL (2013) examination report. That helped the researcher to find out the challenges faced by students in the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions as well as their causes.

The teachers' qualitative questionnaires were hand delivered by the researcher to the teachers in the three selected schools. The open-ended questionnaire inquired the subjective views of teachers. They were also asked to take their time as much as they could as those questionnaires were collected upon completion. The questions were more subject-specific and consisted of the number of themes in relation to the research questions. Teachers' viewpoints on the phenomenon of the study were inclined to students' challenges, sources of students' challenges and what pedagogical implications call for in the teaching of LE essay-type questions.

The focus group discussions were supplementary tools; they compensated the weaknesses of the questionnaire and that is where teachers were asked to explain more on issues that needed further

clarification. This tool was used in order to find out how teachers construct their own meanings and note their perceptions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This implies that this tool gathered subjective data regarding the challenges that students face on LE essay-type questions. The researcher asked the participants for the permission to audio-record the focus group discussions and proceeded when granted the permission to do so. The participants were told to use either Sesotho or English while answering the questions. Upon collecting data, the researcher engaged with it by listening to audio-recordings repetitively. This was in line with Rossman and Rallis (2012) who attest that it is important for the researcher to undergo the process of immersion which is getting to know data related to the research questions better. The researcher then transcribed the recordings. The focus group discussions were found to be important for they offered the researcher an opportunity to immediately ask for clarification on the subject matter under discussion. While they interacted amongst themselves, the participants were at liberty to express their views as much as they could. Below is a part which illustrates how data was analysed.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was aligned to the design of the study hence collected data for the inquiry was predominantly analysed qualitatively and to a smaller extent quantitatively. The model for data analysis for the intended inquiry was a three-stage process: immersion, analysis and interpretation (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The researcher had to take heed of Rossman and Rallis's (2012) caution that not all data in hand is relevant, consequently, the initial step of analysis, which is immersion was getting to know data related to the research questions. The researcher's first step was to take notes of challenges that emerged from students' essays and questionnaires, then transcribed the recorded data from focus group discussions to make the information simple to follow. The researcher ultimately became familiar with the data and deleted unwanted information which was not aligned to the research questions.

The second step (analysis) was to organise each chunk of relevant data according to the aspect of the participants' perception. The collected data was separated and grouped into distinctive meaningful chunks. Determining the meaning and describing the acquired information in clear detail meant getting rid of repetitions that did not add the new information. This meant that the collected data was divided into several categories based on the research questions and the theory guiding this study. This stage was therefore theory-driven. Thus, data was deductively analyzed as pre-determined principles of Educational Productivity theory were used. Successive to

capturing in-depth comprehension of the utterances from focus group discussions, in the second stage of data analysis, the researcher then grouped similar utterances and categorized them. Lastly, the researcher had to bring meaning to those pieces of information in the third stage.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

Research studies have to employ the certain procedures to ensure believability of the study findings. Dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability ensure trustworthiness and are standards which guarantee legitimate findings of documented scholarship (Merriam, 2009). In the following section, these trustworthiness standards are expounded on. This section shows the measures and presents standards the researcher took to satisfy believability of findings.

Standards geared towards attaining credible findings were considered by the researcher. Credibility involves yielding the results that are believable from the participants' point of view. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) affirm that credibility is the extent to which the results of a study are fairly accurate, real, trustworthy and reasonable. Credibility can therefore be characterised by believable research findings. To ensure credibility, the researcher embarked on member checks; summary of results was presented to all participants of this research. The researcher also did not exert any impact on the participants in order to manipulate data to meet the researcher's interests (Padgett, 2008). Pertaining to this study, manipulation of data was avoided in so far as possible by avoiding leading statements when contacting the focus group discussions, even while probing.

Triangulation was also ensured for credibility of study findings. The researcher involved the use of different tools to gather data (Liamputtong, 2011). In this study different data gathering tools such as test, questionnaire and focus group discussions were used. In the same line of conception, Maree (2016) avows that another form of triangulation may involve the use of a wide range of participants. Several measures were taken at different stages of the study to ensure honesty and believability of main findings. The diversity of participants was maintained, in terms of positions at work, sex, and school types.

Dependability can be interpreted to mean using the same methods in a comparable context to yield similar outcomes. Dependability is ensured if the findings are constant when they are repeated (Kumar, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2011). In order to address dependability, the processes

within the research were reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results.

Conformability is ensured if the end results of an investigation are not biased (Creswell, 2014). To ensure this, raw data from focus group discussions were recorded and later transcribed. The researcher kept a record of all steps taken while collecting data in this study. Shenton (2004) attests that record keeping might help the next researcher to trace every step or procedure undertaken while collecting data. Measures involving ethical considerations are reported in the next section.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When carrying out research, one is required to be cognizant of ethics behind the research activity (Blackwell, 2013). The researcher was obliged to respect the participants by writing a consent letter seeking permission from them. The informed consent letter explicated the objective of the study, expectations and responsibilities of participants, as well as benefits of the study to participants. The letter also stated that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006).

Names of participants were confidential thus, they were not disclosed in anyway. Confidentiality was achieved as the researcher identified participant's responses but refrained from publicizing their identity (Creswell, 2003; Babbie, 2010). The identity of participants was hidden by assigning symbols of the participants. The school names were also not mentioned.

3.10 SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined in detail the methodology of this study. It began by explaining the aspects of the methodology employed and discussed features of the chosen paradigm. The design which was found appropriate for the study was also discussed. In addition, the chapter described my role as the researcher in this study. Data collection techniques including students' tests, qualitative questionnaire, and focus group discussions were explained. Again, the model befitting the analysis of qualitative studies was discussed. The trustworthiness standards for the study were also explained. It was also necessary to explicate the ethical considerations for this study inclusive of the ethical behaviour of the investigator. The next chapter presents the findings of the study, which were analyzed consistent with the pertinent literature review.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents data generated, its analysis and interpretation of the results. The data was generated from three Leribe junior high schools. The presentation of findings, analysis and interpretations were in accordance with the purpose of the study. The analysis of data entails transformation of raw data into patterns, themes and categories (Mathipa & Gumbo, 2015). In addition, Mhehe (2002) illuminates that data analysis involves organisation of what was observed, heard and read, to make sense of the generated data. In essence, this was done through evaluation and coding of the raw data in order to provide the underlying meaning. The study to a large extent employed qualitative approach and a small strand of quantitative data to quantify established challenges and participants who echoed similar assertions. Excerpts were randomly selected to authenticate findings. According to Maree (2016), random sampling is one of the probability sampling techniques in which every sample has an equal opportunity of being chosen. This technique is therefore deemed appropriate for this study as it is unbiased, thus, it is a representation of the total population. The findings of this study were discussed on the basis of the data generated from three selected schools.

Using Walberg's (1981) theory, the researcher provided the report outlining the emerging discoveries and grouped them in terms of students' attributes, pedagogical factors and psychological factors. These three sets helped to address the researcher's purpose of the investigation. The findings overlap to a certain extent; nonetheless, taken together, they provided a comprehensive summary of the researcher's interpretations and insightful summative perspectives. During the report, the researcher was mainly concerned with identifying issues pertinent to the research questions. There are three parts in this chapter namely: challenges faced by students in the teaching and learning of essay-type questions, possible causes of challenges facing the teaching and learning of essay-type questions and pedagogical implications of challenges for teachers of LE at JC. The upcoming subsection presents challenges faced by students in the teaching and learning of essay-type questions.

4.1 CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS

Data sought to answer the first research question *(What are the challenges encountered by junior high school students on essay-type questions?)* was generated through the following techniques: students' tests from essay-type questions, teachers' open-ended questionnaires and teachers' focus group discussions. Some essays which feature findings on students' writing challenges have been attached to the research as appendices, while questionnaire excerpts and teachers' utterances are quoted for justification.

4.1.1 Findings derived from students' essays and teachers' perspectives

Before analysing the questionnaires and focus group discussion data, the researcher analysed the students' written work to find out their challenges on essay-type questions. This was done with the purpose of familiarising the researcher with the marking standards of ECOL. Thus, the cautionary measures and requirements were standardised on the basis of the ECOL standard question paper as shown in Chapter 2 (2.2.3). Students were therefore given essay-type question tests adapted from the past ECOL question papers. Four questions were extracted from the prescribed books in three genres of LE (play, story and short story) and the students were instructed to choose one essay-type question; writing a one page long essay which contained thirteen points. To ensure believability of findings, the test was written under my supervision with the help of Grade 10 LE teachers. In line with this position are McMillan and Schumacher (2010) who affirm that believability of findings is ensured by credibility which is the extent to which the results of a study are fairly accurate, real, trustworthy and reasonable.

The predetermined themes of Educational Productivity theory (1981) were used as predictor variables for students' writing challenges. Since the theory benchmarked the researcher's grouping of the challenges under the three sets which are students' attributes, pedagogical factors and psychological factors as outlined by the proponent of the theory, (vide 3.7), findings drawn from marked students' essays were grouped under those sets (Walberg, 1981). Drawing from the principles of the theory, the interpretation was that student attributes are what they are capable to do or incapable of doing; pedagogical factors are attributes related to teaching while environmental factors are constituents around the student. The next section illustrates the themes that emerged.

4.1.1.1 Linguistic competence

The study established that linguistic competence has impact on LE students' essays. Linguistic competence is the knowledge and understanding of language aspects which are grammar rules, vocabulary, pronunciation or spelling (Matthew, 2014). Recurring challenges drawn from essays on this theme were grouped as per Walberg's (1981) caution of Educational Productivity variables. Findings from the tests of all 30 scripts of the students revealed the following challenges: incorrect spelling, grammatical errors, and inappropriate use of punctuation marks and incorrect and no use of conjunctions. The table below illustrates errors of the 30 scripts.

Table 1: Classification of students' errors

Errors			
<u>**Grammar**</u>	<u>**Spelling**</u>	<u>**Diction**</u>	<u>**Punctuation**</u>
She always go…	*Ligt*	*Her room was not **clan.***	***g**oggle…*
*Mum **does not** tells…*	*Swiche*	*…**hang** with pen.*	*She cheats **a**nand with his friend.*
*She **want**…*	*irrisponsible*	*Thandi is **week**…*	***Mum**…*
*Amanda **kill**…*	*writting*	*They **hat**…*	***Kittys** room…*
*Mum **take**…*	*resturant*	*She could **fill** the pain…*	*Amanda is **jealous manipulative** and spoiled*
*Mum **do** not…*	*manepulate*	*Mum was always **running** after Gerald…*	***g**erald…*
*She **did not** took…*	*pregnat*	*She **lid** to Haroun…*	*Mum did not reprimand Kitty**,** she got herself arrested.*
*She **feel**…*	*dieing*	*Amanda was **drying** to commit…*	*She wanted to be **Harouns** Boyfriend.*
*She **paying**…*	*waisted*	*She **thought** she was never born.*	*she kicked her boyfriend…*
*He could not **ran**…*	*dicided*	*…when Kitty spoke **everything** she liked.*	*She did not have time for her kids**,** she did not clean the house.*
*Amanda **like**…*	*wroten*	*Thandi listened because she was **blind**.*	***Amandas** wrong advice…*
*Mum **was not** take…*	*boyfrend*	*…outspoken to the **audience**.*	
*Amanda **cutted**…*	*arrives*	*…her **badroom**….*	
	parant		
	sellfish		
	abotion		
	univesity		

*Thandi **she** was…*		*She was a spoiled **rat**…* *She **forced** Thandi…* *She was extremely **painful**…* *…in her **heat**…* *In Amanda's **had**…*	
Total=14 errors	Total=17 errors	Total=18 errors	Total=11 errors

The above table displays errors that challenged students on essay-type questions in LE. 14 students committed errors of grammar, 17 students were challenged by spelling, 18 students' diction was improper while 11 students did not use punctuation marks properly. It is against the findings stipulated above that grammar, spelling, register choice and punctuation be given sufficient time during the constructivist approach of teaching English as a second language. It appears much understandable if these concepts are learnt in practice not mechanical. Three excerpts were randomly selected out of 30 scripts to authenticate the argument that linguistic competence is a challenge at JC. Random sampling was found to be suitable for selection of 30 scripts because every sample could have been chosen. In the same line of conception, Maree

(2016) attests that random sampling is the probability sampling technique in which every sample has an equal chance of being picked. *Student A, Student B and Student C* scripts had such errors.
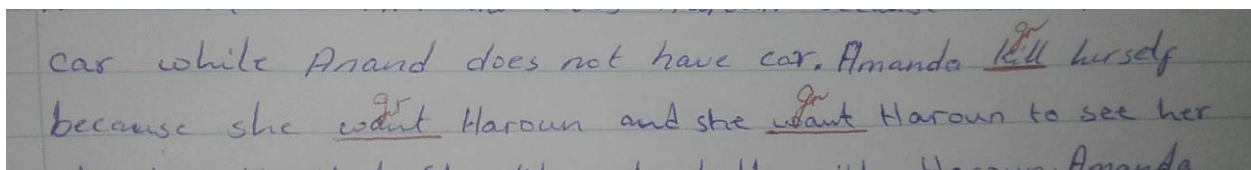
Student A
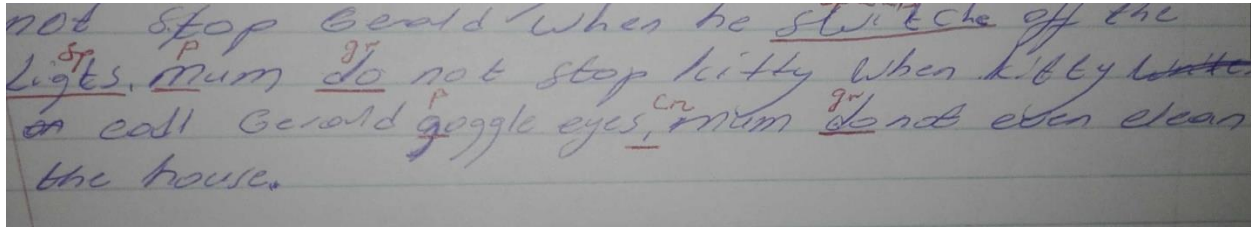
Drawing from the above excerpt, it appears that students are faced with challenges on linguistic competence. Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (Hymes, 1972). In the above excerpt, there is a challenge on spelling, for example, the word *"lights"* is misspelled as *"ligts"*. There is also a challenge on punctuation, for example, *"goggle eyes" and "mum"* are proper nouns yet they are written in small letters. Conjunctions also seem to challenge JC students; the last two sentences are joined with a comma, for example; *"...eyes, mum do not even clean the house"*. The last sentence also has a grammatical error because the student used *"do not"* instead of *"does not"*. The marking of tests was in congruence with LE (101/1) marking memo (2013) which endorsed that such errors should be judged as incorrect responses. This is attested to by ECOL (2013) which points out that students are awarded marks when they display knowledge on technical vocabulary required by the learning area, grammar, comprehension and writing skills required during the assessment. Justification of this finding can also be seen on the excerpts of *Student B and Student C*.
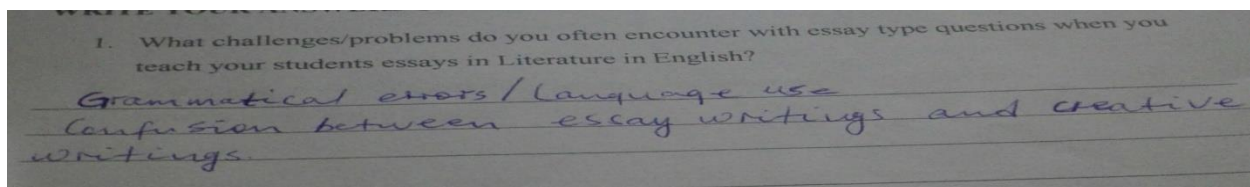
Student B

Student C

56
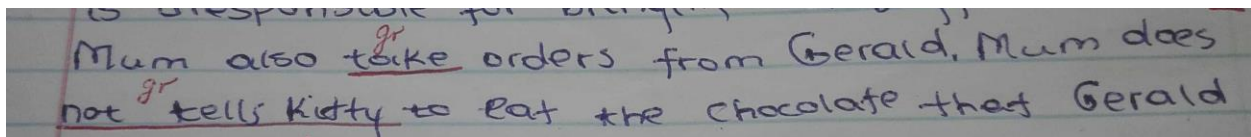
From the above excerpts, grammatical errors are noted. To exemplify, *Student B* wrote *"Mum also take..." and "Mum does not tells Kitty...."* This is consistent with Khati and Khati (2009) who claim that errors in students' written work result from mother tongue interference where students tend to overgeneralise rules of grammar in countries where English is taught as a second language. These errors of addition and omission of *"s"* could have resulted when students were taught that *"s"* can either be added or omitted in cases where there is a singular or plural subject (Mahmoud, 2005). The finding points to the need to stress the subject-verb-agreement during the teaching of essay writing .There were some overlaps in the findings of this study as teachers' questionnaires also reflected grammar as a challenge at JC. Substantiating this is the randomly sampled excerpt showing the response of *Teacher A* in the questionnaire below:

Teacher A
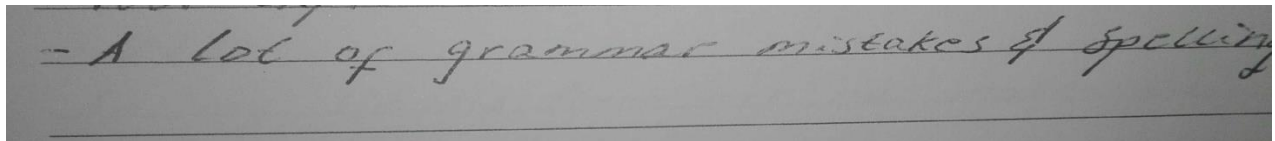
As can be noted above, *Teacher A* states that grammar is a challenge at JC. The finding aligns with the ECOL report for the year 2013 which elucidated that many students displayed low level of understanding on the subject matter, demonstrated poor wording, and use of wrong grammar and less knowledge in substantiating the argument. Students' difficulty to demonstrate linguistic competence is in line with Younes and Albalawi's (2015) confirmation that ESL students who demonstrate inadequacy in punctuation, spelling and grammar are likely to underperform in essay writing. This is also revealed in the study by Graham and Harris (2003) who contend that syntactical aspects are some of the challenges experienced in the learning of essay writing skills in the ESL perspective. This points to the need to facilitate the teaching and learning process of LE essay-type questions so that it can be geared towards attainment of adequate essay writing skills which are punctuation, vocabulary, conjunctions, spelling and grammar. Based on the above assertions, a conclusion can be drawn that punctuation marks, conjunctions, spellings and grammar are errors which challenge JC students. Students' challenge of linguistic competence is consistent with Nyangau's (2014) acknowledgement that less knowledge of punctuation, spelling and grammar leads to unsatisfactory performance of students in essay writing. Along the same

line, Batsone (1994) in Limengka, and Kuntjara, (2013) states that language without grammar would be chaotic and cause the same communication problem such as grammatical errors in writing and speaking. Therefore rather than being only rules for ordering words , grammar is indeed a resource for good communication (Halliday & Hasan, 1989 in Hyland, 2002). The next section unpacks the theme of linguistic competence revealed by teachers' questionnaires.
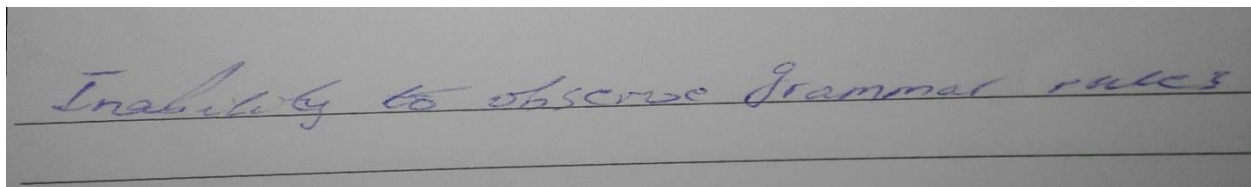
4.1.1.2 Linguistic competence: Teachers perspectives

Linguistic competence refers to the unconscious knowledge of grammar that allows a speaker to use and understand a language (Hymes, 1972). This understanding of linguistic competence implies that grammar and vocabulary should not be taught in isolation; instead, they should be introduced within themes and topics. The weakness calls for a functional approach to teaching language or the genre based approach because it addresses the specifics of context and situation (Hymes, 1972). The study has established that linguistic competence is a writing aspect that was found to be a challenge faced by students. It has been pronounced by 4 teachers out of 7 that students are challenged by the rules of grammar while writing LE essays. Presentation of data which justifies this finding is shown below and 2 different excerpts from other questionnaires reflecting the same lines of conception are used in other sections (vide 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.1.3).

Teacher D
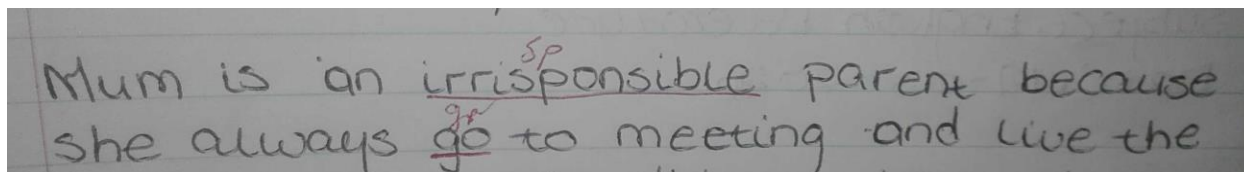
Teacher E

On the basis of the above excerpts, it appears that LE teachers understand that teaching LE also requires students to observe the rules of grammar. This finding is consistent with Cubukcu (2010) who lays emphasis on the teaching and learning of aspects of grammar. This also
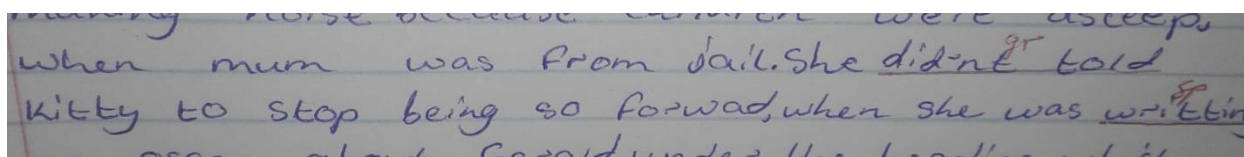
appeared as a challenge noted from the scripts of 30 students who earlier wrote essay-type question tests; three excerpts different from the ones in Section 4.1.1.1 were randomly selected and attached below.
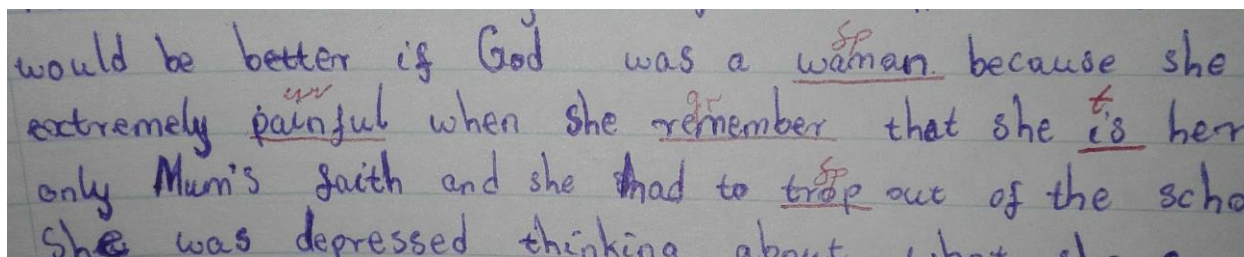
Student G

Student H

Student I

From the above excerpts, grammar mistakes are evident. *Student G* wrote *"she always go"* instead of *"she always goes".* In addition, there is spelling mistake "*irrisponsible*" which indicates a fractured foundation. The causes of such may be multiple, which one among many is mother tongue interference or weak spelling background. Further, *Student H* wrote *"she didn't told"* instead of *"she did not tell".* Grammar rules therefore appear to be a challenge as *Student I* also seem to be less knowledgeable or incognisant of the fact that 's' is added to the verb when there is the singular subject because this student wrote " *"she remember". Student I* also used "*was"* and *"is"* in one sentence. This is in line with Lebona's (2019) postulation that grammar mistakes surface as a result of improper tense shift. The sampled students' mistakes could mean that they were not taught principles of shift in tense in relation to grammar rules or they did not understand the content. *Student I* also made spelling mistakes; the student incorrectly wrote

"waman and *trop*" instead of "woman and *drop*". Mpoi (2014) illustrates that improper instruction by the teachers may be the reason behind the prevalence of these errors. By implication, this student's spelling mistakes could be attributable to their lack of knowledge or understanding of how words are spelt or to no training.

According to Perveen and Akram (2014)

> *In speaking, no one needs to be worried about the correct form of English while in writing, incorrect form even one single misspelled letter can change a word and alter the whole meaning of a text, so, writing should have correct form of English words and their correct spelling. In the popular view, correct spelling is a sign of education. On the other hand, bad spelling simply looks ill (Fagerberg, 2006). Cook (1997) also says that effective spelling is important for users of a second language because of its social overtones, if for no other reason. Yet the amount of attention given to it in research is minimal.*

This could mean that LE teachers should also teach grammar and spelling within poetry, stories, short stories or novels. Students' essays should display knowledge of grammar and spelling in essay writing (ECOL, 2016). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that essay writing skills are challenges faced by LE students at JC. Based on the principles of the theory guiding this study, this revelation will be coded as students' attributes since the Educational Productivity theory (1981) states that student attributes are what the student can or cannot do. The next part expounds on the linguistic competence theme derived from teachers' perspectives in the focus group discussion.

4.1.1.3 Linguistic competence as pronounced by teachers

Linguistic competence was also revealed as a challenge in teachers' focus group discussion. Linguistic competence means the knowledge of language rules and vocabulary (Hymes, 1972; Matthew, 2014). The study established that students are challenged by grammar and spelling. Manifestation of this finding is on *Teacher B, Teacher C, Teacher D* and *Teacher E*'s utterances. Since this issue also emerged from other data generation tools, excerpts randomly selected from *Student N's* test and *Teacher E*'s questionnaire are also included below.

Teacher B: "When I give them Literature in English task on essay questions, my students just write 13 points and ignore rules of grammar. It's as if those rules are only applicable to English Language essays."

Teacher C: "I always come across a lot of grammatical mistakes when I mark my students' essays."

Teacher D: "Spelling and subject-verb-agreement challenge my students."

Teacher E: "Grammar rules are not observed by my students while writing essays."

From the above utterances, it can be noted that students appear not to observe the rules of grammar or are not acquainted to them hence that would compromise their grades. As illustrated from the findings, Chen (2016) illuminates the effects of non-observance of grammar rules, cautioning that a text will be structurally poor or will have poorly written sentences without meaning because grammar is primarily concerned with the structure of a language and contributes in production of sentences. According to Skenderi and Ejupi (2018) students do not observe grammar rules because they are difficult parts of the language learning process characterised by complex form, meaning and relationship. This is in line with ECOL report (2017) which highlights that students are penalised for wrongly used grammar. Notably, this might be posed by the following challenges: lack of understanding, disregarding grammar rules or non-teaching of basic grammar rules from lower grades. The researcher believes that grammar should also be taught in LE since the subject is characterised by application of essay writing as well. An attachment from *Student D* with the similar challenge is shown below.

Student D
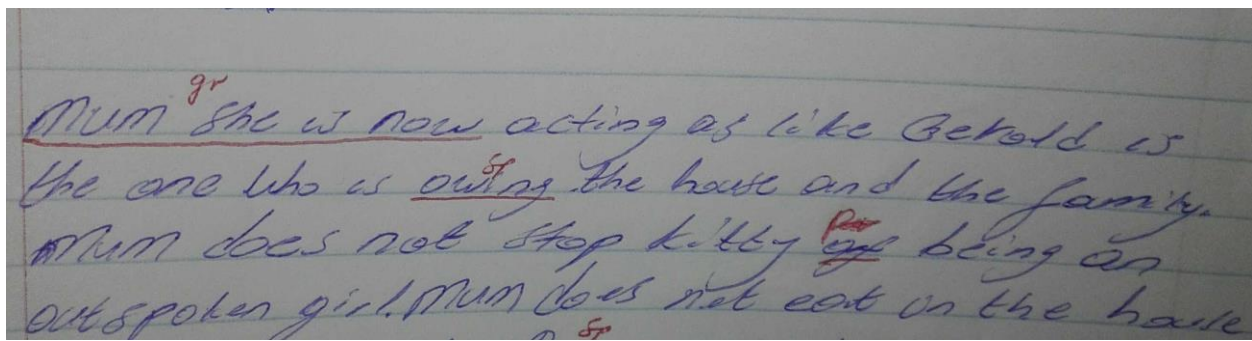
The above script of *Student D* reflects grammar mistakes. The student writes "*Mum she is now…*" instead of "*Mum is now…*" The student also misspells the word *"owning".* This contradicts Mutikiri's (2016) affirmation that an essay should entail among other things correct spelling and grammar. Errors resulting from grammar challenge students. Such errors emanate from deficiency in language proficiency hence frequent exercises on spelling, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation are a solution for such errors (Tlali, 2018). The implication could therefore be that a student who displays less knowledge of grammar and spelling would perform unsatisfactorily in essay sections consequently, teachers should stress them while teaching essay-type questions. The overlapping finding from another data gathering tool follows.

Teacher D
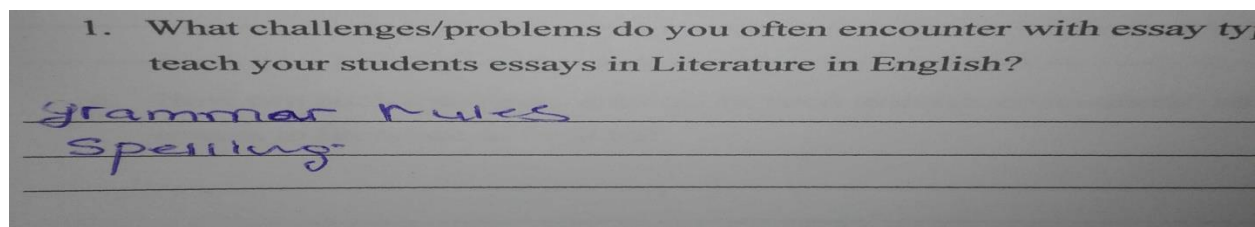
Teachers placed into perspective that the aspects related to rules of grammar and spelling challenge students while they teach LE. This resonates with Nyang'au's (2014) assertion that essay writing comprises conventions which concern the ability to use the rules of grammar as failure to do so yields unfavourable results. Additionally, Tabrizi and Fard (2016) posit that knowledge of what kind of spelling errors students commit can help teachers improve the spelling proficiency. As *Teacher D* pronounced that spelling is a challenge, it would be commendable to suggest that teachers should know the kind of spelling mistakes committed so that they address such. This may point to the need to have the adequate basis to understand the rules that students are expected to follow while writing LE essays. The next section illustrates how diction challenges students.

4.1.1.4 Diction
The study revealed that choice of words is a challenge faced by LE students on essay-type questions. As a result of the wrong word choice, the intended meaning is distorted.18 students had this challenge. The excerpt below from *Student B* among the 18 who used wrong diction is attached.

Student B
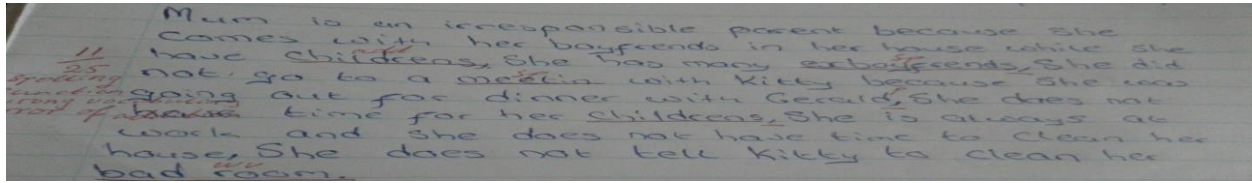
From the excerpt above, *Student B* wrote the *"bad room"* instead of *"bedroom"*; this would be interpreted as a room which has undesirable qualities not a room built specifically for sleeping. The use of the wrong word distorts the entire intended message. According to Ja'far (2008), the above errors denote homophones; words with similar pronunciation but different meaning. Further the author argues that such words may deceive the reader since a communicated meaning would be different. The findings are suggestive that if students use words with the same pronunciation but different meaning that may create vagueness in essays. Thus, regardless of the degree of students' competence in grammar and pronunciation, without sufficient vocabulary knowledge, they cannot have effective communication (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008). This is, in large part, because lexicon carries more of the meaning of a text than the grammar does. In fact, grammatical errors result in ungrammatical utterances whereas the inappropriate use of vocabulary affects the communicative act. That is, vocabulary is one of the linguistic components influencing the development of communicative competence and learners' language skills as well (Meara & Jones, 1990; Schmitt, 1998; Moir & Nation, 2002; Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008; Schmitt, Wun-Ching, & Garras, 2011). This resonates with Cubukcu's (2010) claim that prose poses a challenging cognitive task since it requires proper choice of words since without proper diction the intended meaning would be in vain. Given these conceptions, the conclusion can be drawn that without better knowledge or no knowledge of diction, students' performance in essay-type questions could be below average. The finding overlaps with what five teachers reflected in the questionnaires though verifying this are two randomly selected excerpts from *Teacher C* and *Teacher D*; three other teachers who echoed the similar sentiment are shown in the subsequent section (4.1.1.5).

 Teacher C

> Most students lack language that helps them to understand the demands of the question.
>
> ...niques do you use to help your students understand and write essays

Teacher D

> 1. What challenges/problems do you often encounter with essay type questions when you teach your students essays in Literature in English?
>
> Students' wrong choice of words is a major challenge in essay writing.

Drawing from these excerpts, it is evident that students lack expressions to write LE essays; this might limit their chances to perform better in LE essay-type questions. The findings concur with Alamirew's (2005) assertion that the students should put into practice the choice of words that would show the purpose of writing. This may imply that word choice in an essay highlights its purpose and makes it accessible and sensible to the teacher or reader while improper diction would convey the wrong message.
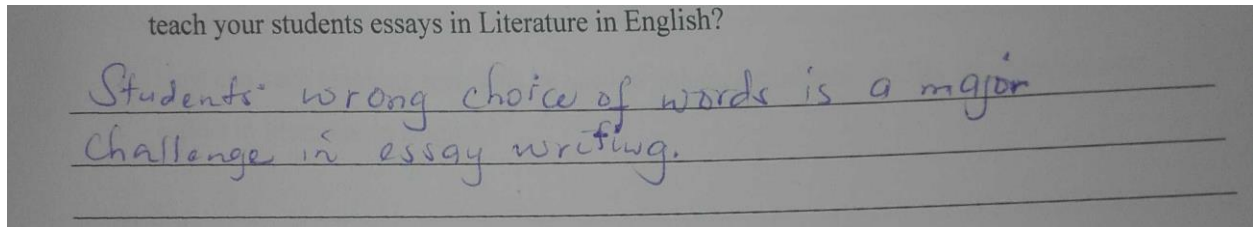
4.1.1.5 Diction: Teachers' perspectives

Diction also emerged as a challenge as revealed through teachers' questionnaires. Diction is a writer's or speaker's distinctive vocabulary choices and style of expression in a poem or story. It is a style of speaking or writing as dependent upon choice of words (Collins dictionary, 2012). Along the similar line, Wei and He (2006) assert that diction is the selection of appropriate expressions or words. There were 5 teachers who stated that dearth of expressions is a challenge faced by students; 2 excerpts are used in the above section (4.1.1.4) while 3 are used in this section. They are followed by the overlapping finding from written essays, exemplified with 3 excerpts which were also randomly selected out of 18 students' essays.
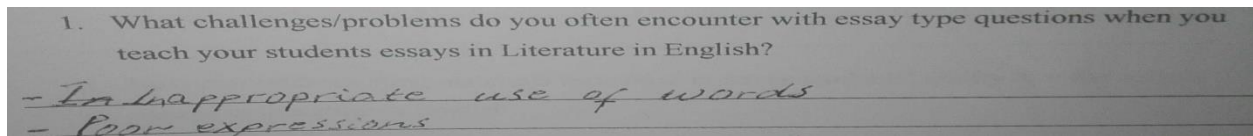
Teacher A

> teach your... ...Literature in English?
>
> Problem with their improper word choice

Teacher B

teach your students essays in Literature in English?

Students' wrong choice of words is a major
Challenge in essay writing.

Teacher C

1. What challenges/problems do you often encounter with essay type questions when you teach your students essays in Literature in English?
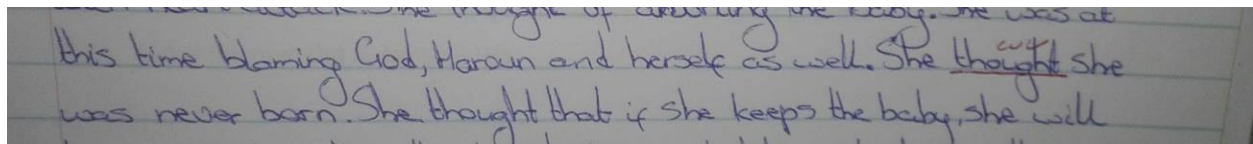
- Inappropriate use of words
- Poor expressions

Teachers reflected that students have a challenge of improper word choice when they write essays. This may be a result of limited vocabulary which is due to poor reading habits or lack of reading culture. Martins (2014) accords that word choice have an effect on the message to be conveyed. It could therefore be argued that teachers should teach and show students the importance of diction on essay-type questions to curb the existing challenges as Sardi, Atmowardoyo and Weda (2017) point out that without proper diction, communicated meaning may be compromised. Communicated message might be affected when the speaker is less careful because English language has a complex system; it has layers of sound, pattern and meaning of one word owing to influence of other languages (Perveen & Akram, 2014). This challenge also emerged from 18 students' scripts but only 3 were randomly selected. Random sampling gave each sample an equal opportunity of being chosen for presentation (Maree, 2016). The excerpts of *Student K, Student L* and *Student M* with errors resulting from word choice are attached below.

Student K

this time blaming God, Haroun and herself as well. She thought She
was never born. She thought that if she keeps the baby, she will

Student L

65

Snowballers who were drying to protect the pallanet.
Mum did not teach her children kitty and Jude
H

Student M

a dustbin, she also let kitty to be outspoken to
the audience, because kitty was talking every thing

From the above excerpts, it appears that *Student K, Student L* and *Student M* are challenged by word choice. For instance, *Student K* wrote *"she thought she was never born";* that was a wish not what the character was thinking thus, the use of *"was"* could convey the wrong message to the reader- the appropriate word is *"were". Student L* also made use of the wrong vocabulary because the student wrote *"drying"* not "*trying". Student M* wrongly used the word *"audience"* to denote other people. Extensive reading could help these students as Zuze and Reddy (2014) contend that proficiency in reading is essential for personal growth since there is a relationship between reading literacy and writing which create other scholastic opportunities such as good spelling, improved vocabulary and improved wellbeing. This is in harmony with Mafokwane (2017) who argues that if students have not understood or are not well equipped with the prerequisite reading skill, the probability for such a student to make spelling mistakes or have writing problems is high hence the achievement in the learning environment would be hindered. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that word choice can affect the intended message. The theme of students' capacity to reason is discussed next.

4.1.1.6 Substantiating an augment
The failure by students to state out facts that will sustain their argument was a weakness obtained from 13 essays. They lacked the argumentative skill. As a result they resorted to repeating the questions and rephrasing a point earlier mentioned in the essay. Below are 4 experts randomly selected out of 13 excerpts which feature this deficiency.

Student C

Student D

whether they do their school work good or they pass. Mum is an irresponsible parent because Gerald was the one who made sure that mum's kids

Student E

Mum is irresponsible because she did not tell kitty to clean her room, if she was responsible she cought

Student F

but not her family, mum goes, out with Gerald for a long time and leave the children alone, mum does not spent enough time with her family. mum always at geral's side but not kitty's ... different to her kids

Student C's script reflects less knowledge in sustaining the argument. The question is *"write 13 points showing that Mum is an irresponsible parent"*, the student's first point is that *"Mum is an irresponsible parent"*. There is repetition as line two illustrates that *"Mum left the kids with her boyfriend who is not even the husband"*. This challenge was also reflected in 3 other excerpts above inclusive of 10 others which are not attached. *Student D* starts every point with the

statement that "*Mum is an irresponsible parent*". *Student E* wrote *"Mum is irresponsible"* and went on to say "*if she was responsible*". *Student E* also wrote *"Mum spend long time"* and went on to say "*she does not spend enough time"*. The ECOL report (2016) states that the candidate needs to state points or reasons for the argument but the above students' essays had repetitive disconnected reasoning. This may be due to lack of consistent practice. If they were practising often, the errors may have been minimal. According to Alfaki (2015) practice enables students to perfect their writing skills thereby minimising grammatical and spelling errors. This finding falls under psychological environment as per Walberg's (1981) theory. In the next section, findings from teachers' open-ended questionnaires are discussed.

4.1.2 Findings from teachers' questionnaires and focus group discussion

Educational Productivity theory (1981) was used for analysis, presentation and interpretation of findings from teachers' questionnaires. The questionnaires consisting of open-ended questions were given to teachers and they were expected to illustrate their subjective experiences on the types of challenges LE students faced in relation to essay-type questions. The Educational Productivity theory (1981) was used to thematise recurring challenges and their causes from the teachers' qualitative questionnaires and focus group discussions. The researcher stated the purpose of the study before collecting data from the teachers' focus group discussions. Ethical issues were clarified to the participants hence they participated without being pressurised (Blackwell, 2013). Questions aimed at generating data for the first research question were included in the discussion and data was later analysed, discussed and interpreted as shown below.
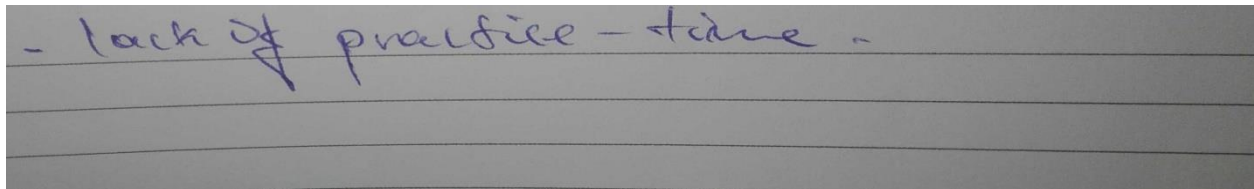
4.1.2.1 Writing Practice
The study revealed writing practice as a challenge faced by students. Responses from teachers' qualitative questionnaire revealed that there is a need for students' ability to write essays. The excerpt which justifies this finding is attached below.
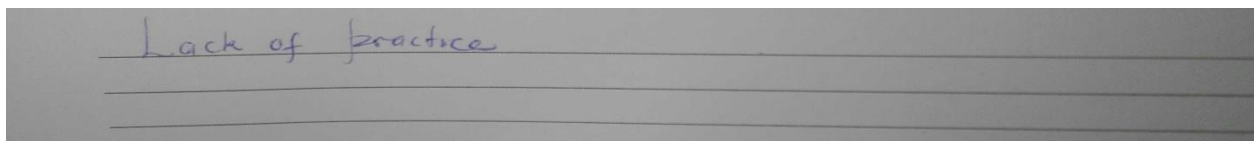
Teacher D
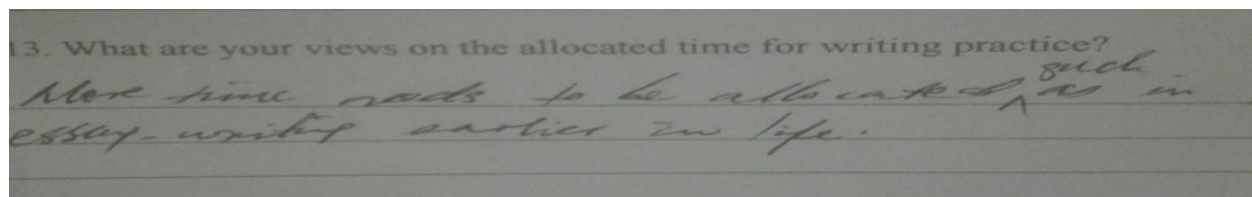
Teacher D highlighted that there is a need for additional time allocation for essay-type questions or students should engage in writing essays earlier in life. In the same vein, Alamirew (2005) proclaims that writing on a regular basis help students to enhance their competence. The researcher believes that this response results from the nature of LE. According to MEMD (2001), application of essay writing skills makes 50% of the paper. This position coils back to Tangpermpoon's (2008) assertion that production of a well written essay is challenging as it requires writers to have knowledge of subject-verb-agreement, coherence and cohesion. Justification of this finding is also endorsed by *Teacher E* and *Teacher F*as shown below.

Teacher E

Teacher F

Given the above response by *Teacher E* and *Teacher F*, it appears that lack of practice is a challenge faced by students on LE essay-type questions. This is consistent with Graham and Harris (2003) who affirm that essay writing needs practice since its requirements make it a complex process. By implication, the situation in Lesotho primary and secondary schools necessitates the explicit and frequent teaching of essay writing. In the succeeding part, lack of resources is articulated.

4.1.2.2 Lack of resources
Lack of resources emerged as a challenge revealed by teachers' questionnaires. According to Akamobi, (1998) instructional materials are those materials used in classroom or workshops for instruction or demonstration purpose by students and teachers. Ogaga, Wallace and Benson (2016) illuminate that choice of relevant instructional materials such as visual aids, audio aids, audio-visual aids and real object improves teaching hence the recommendation is that all schools should provide such instructional material at secondary school level. 4 teachers revealed that

there are inadequate text books and other additional teaching and learning resources. To authenticate this finding, excerpts pointing to this theme are attached below; another excerpt is attached in Section 4.1.3.2.

Teacher B
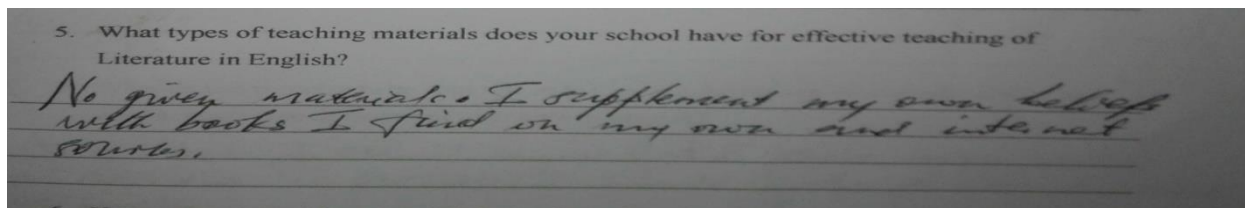
Teacher C
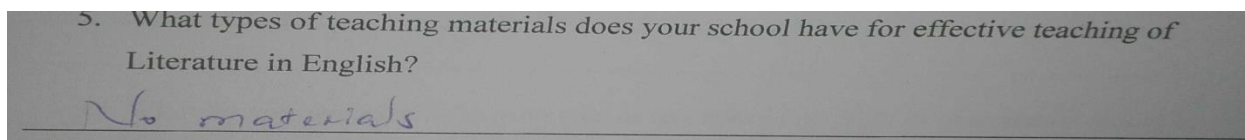
Teacher D

Based on the above responses, it could be assumed that unavailability of resources make the teaching of LE complicated. Cited in Ogaga, Wallace and Benson (2016), Adeyanju (1997) argues that presence of learning material reinforces learning because it stimulates, motivates and arrests students' attention for some time during the teaching process. Consonantal to this position is Akamobi (1998) who states that instructional materials are essential in classrooms or workshops as they are used for instruction or demonstration purpose by students and teachers. In line with this affirmation is the response from *Teacher B* who reflected that teachers had to resort to supplementing their own beliefs with books and some internet sources which they find useful for the teaching of LE essays. This coincides with Mubita and Mwanza (2020) who posit that scarcity of resources poses a challenge during the teaching and learning process. In consonance, Matimbe (2014) is of the opinion that lack of textbooks can negatively impact on teaching. Correspondingly, Chauha (1973) sees teaching materials as actual equipment used as "hands on" process by students in order to improve the degree of skills sought by the course of requirement. It appears that the non-availability of textbooks may force teachers to narrate stories to students

hence the whole process would become teacher centred. According to Raselimo and Mahao (2015) teacher centredness is ineffective and discouraged by MOET in its curriculum framework (2009) where it introduces the modern education reform. The framework marks the withdrawal from the subject and examination-driven curriculum to student centred teaching wherein curriculum echoes the everyday life challenges of students. Since this study codes themes on the basis of the Educational Productivity theory (1981) principles, this finding would fall under the psychological factors. These factors could be interpreted as the environment or constituents around the student which lead to the productive or non-productive education. The theme of lack of resources is discussed next as pronounced in the focus group discussion.

4.1.2.3 Lack of resources as pronounced by teachers

Lack of resources was also pronounced as a challenge in the focus group discussion. 4 teachers appeared to have similar conceptions on the notion that lack of resources is a challenge faced by LE students. Exhibition of this finding is justified by the following quotations:

> *Teacher A: "Due to shortage of text books, the teaching as well as students' activities is only carried out in classrooms during Literature in English lesson only."*
>
> *Teacher B: "We are forced to discuss during the lesson only and the scarcity of books makes it difficult to give students assignments."*
>
> *Teacher C: "class crowding is a challenge at my workplace."*
>
> *Teacher D: "We have a problem of big classes yet there are inadequate books in my school."*

All 4 teachers' assertions revealed in the focus group discussion highlighted insufficiency of resources in schools as one of the challenges faced by students on essay-type questions. In the three selected schools, it appeared that there are inadequate materials. This is in line with Mubita and Mwanza (2020) who state that lack of resources has negative impact on effective teaching. Attached below is the response from *Teacher A* which concurs with the notion of inadequate materials as indicated above and in section 4.1.1.1 by *Teacher B*, *Teacher C* and *Teacher D*.

Teacher A

5. What types of teaching materials does your school have for effective teaching of Literature in English?

No materials in my school

From the above overlapping questionnaire data, it is evident that the situation compromises the effective teaching of LE essay-type questions as students are forced to share textbooks. This is consonantal to Francisca (2012) who asserts that teaching and learning resources develop students' ability to comprehend the taught content or conceptual ideas since provision of adequate resources helps students with practical experiences. The researcher assumes that the teachers would be left with no other alternative but to employ lecture method while teaching LE essay-type questions as students cannot learn independently in the absence of learning materials. According to Selepe (2016) teacher centred methods such as lecturing, demonstration, memorisation or question and answer alienate concepts from reality as they are impractical; students are passive and rely on the information from the teacher. Additionally, Selepe (2016) stresses that teaching should be democratic and promote generative learning which is activity-centred as that help students to understand the subject matter. Student-centred ideology stems from the belief that students should be facilitated by guiding them to develop their skills since schools are democratic places, where they should be empowered to independently deal with the subject matter (Dewey, 1916; Schiro, 2008). It appears that teaching LE can be efficient if pedagogy shifts more towards student centred methods which develop students' inventiveness. Up next is the presentation of how high number of books is a challenge.

4.1.2.4 High number of books
An emerging issue was the high number of literature books to be dealt with in literature. *Teacher B* had this to say regarding the issue: "*We are supposed to cover approximately ten short stories plus about twenty poems as well as two other genres of Literature which are novel and play. This condition denies us a chance to test other required skills as stated in the syllabus*" According to *Teacher B*, overload of teachers may end up compromising the way they teach. In as much as this may be classified as overload, it is important to expose all students to various

genres for a balanced diet in literature. It is therefore ideal to increase the amount of time for the teaching of literature. Besides time, teachers need to be innovative because time may not be enough because other subjects need their share. On the same line of thought is Aoumeur's (2017) affirmation that the greater the work load the greater chances of teachers not addressing all the relevant concepts. From experience, overload of work may end up forcing the teacher to exercise teacher-centred learning at the expense of students learning .Student-centred pedagogy requires teachers to facilitate or monitor the progress of each student while teacher-centred methods are none participatory (Freire, 1976). They follow the material arrangement in the books as opposed to the student centred paradigms that require teachers to help students improve their skills and capabilities in finding out and connecting ideas through their discovery based on learner-centred undertakings (Harris & Rooks, 2010). In advocacy of student-centred teaching, Dewey (1916) avers that this way of teaching is effective as it is the manner of teaching characterised by promotion of democratic learning; where students make their own choices, interests, abilities, needs, educational goals and learning styles in order to construct meaning or understanding during the learning process. For example, literature requires discussions to make it relevant to life. This is because literature represents reality. This avowal concurs with the LE syllabus (101/1) as MEMD (2002) attests that Literature depicts the real life situation of students. Synthesis of findings from the first research question follows this section.

4.1.3 Synthesis of findings from research question one

The study has established that LE essay writing challenges that students face are due to three sets (student attributes, pedagogical and psychological factors) of Walberg's (1981) theory. Students' attributes are dominant predictor of variables revealed by the study. Unconscious knowledge of grammar, spelling mistakes, wrong vocabulary and diction emerged as the major findings in this study and they are coded under students' attributes. In that regard, Younes and Albalawi (2015) affirm that ESL students who demonstrate inadequacy in punctuation, spelling and grammar are likely to perform inadequately in essay writing. Recurrence of lack of writing practice places it under the main findings; it is categorised under the pedagogical factors. Lack of resources also appeared to be common in the participants' responses; the challenge is classified under psychological factors as per Walberg's (1981) theory. The major findings under the first research question, therefore, entail students' attributes, pedagogical factors and psychological factors.

Diagrammatic percentile presentation of these challenges under the themes of Walberg's (1981) theory of Educational Productivity is shown below.

Chart 1: Challenges with essay-type questions
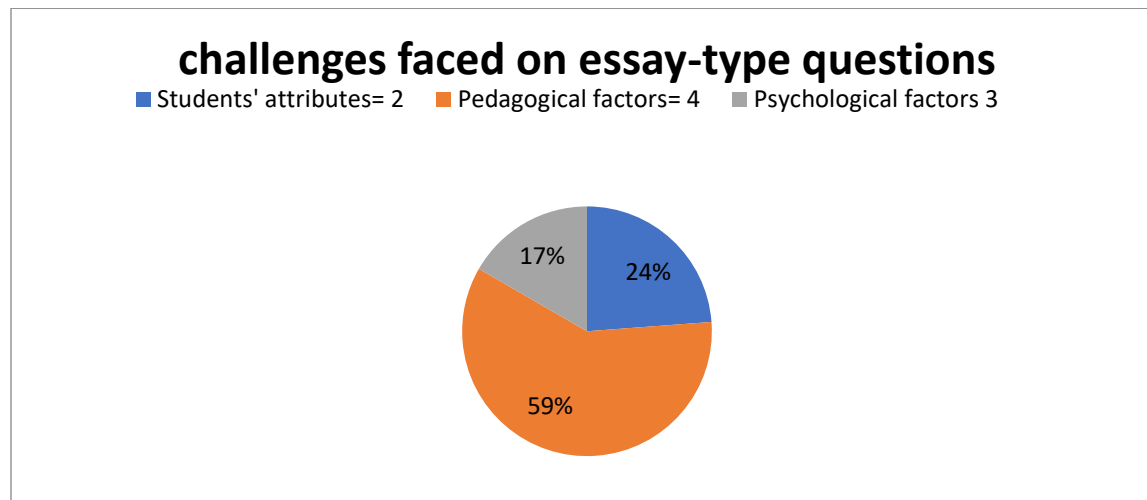
Based on the above presentation, the dominant theme that emerges from findings of this study is pedagogical factors which have 4 variables (inadequate resources, motivation, writing practice and academic style) which predict the productive education. It occupies 54 % against students' attributes of 27 % and 19 % of psychological factors. Diction and linguistic competence were grouped under the students' attributes while poor foundation, class size and subject matter were grouped under psychological factors. In the next section, causes of these challenges are shown. Given the abovementioned major findings in relation to what students' challenges are, it appeared important to establish their causes as well.

4.2 POSSIBLE CAUSES OF CHALLENGES FACING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS
4.2.1 Findings from students' essays and teachers' perspectives

Students wrote essays and they were marked according to the standards set by ECOL. Causes of the challenges which led to students' errors were found by the researcher. Derived from essays, academic writing style was found to be one of the causes of students' challenges. The main findings under the second research question *(What are the possible causes of challenges facing the teaching and learning of essay-type questions*?) from teachers' perspectives are: motivation,

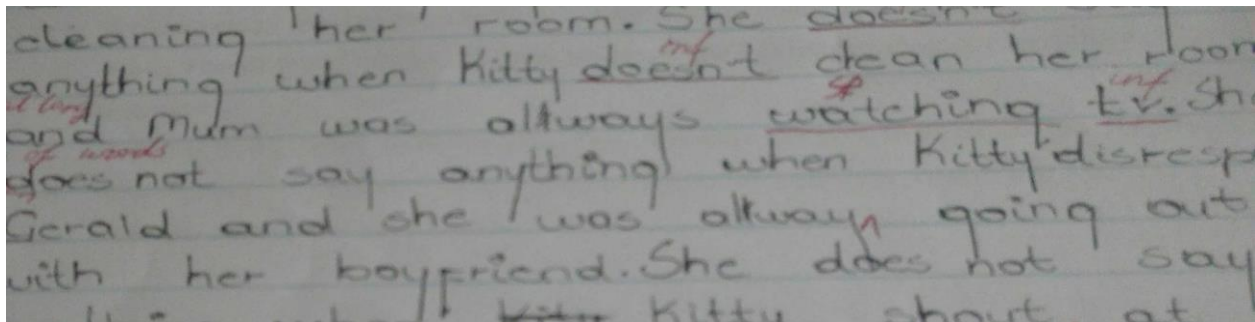time allocation and poor foundation. The thematisation of findings was done in accordance with the principles of the Educational Productivity theory (1981) as indicated below.

4.2.1.1 Academic writing style
Academic writing style is formal English whose rules, structure, and content for academic dialogue and text, and the communicative conventions allow students to meet the demands of school environments (Labaree, 2009). The study established that the improper use of academic English endorsed by MOET and ECOL is a cause of students' challenges. 11 students' essays revealed that students had writing challenges and they struggled to develop the suitable academic style. Below is the sample of an essay with such errors.

Student O

> cleaning 'her' room. She doesn't
> anything when Kitty doesn't clean her room
> and Mum was always watching t.v. She
> does not say anything when Kitty disresp
> Gerald and she was always going out
> with her boyfriend. She does not say
> ...... Kitty Kitty shout at

Student P

> She did n't teach kitty for the first time
> to tidy her bedroom and she did n't teach
> her to go to the meeting alone. She just

Student Q

> Clean her bedroom. Mum change the boyfriend,
> Like socks. She paying kitti kitty when
> digging the potatoes. She always have time

Student O was challenged by the required discourse patterns as it can be exhibited in the above script that the use of spoken informal English was evident. For instance, the student wrote *"TV"*

instead of *"television"* as well as *" doesn't"* instead of *" does not"* . *Student P* also used the contraction *"didn't"* while *Student Q* used the informal expression *"change like socks"*. Cummins (1979) cautions that contractions fall under Basic Interpersonal Skills -lan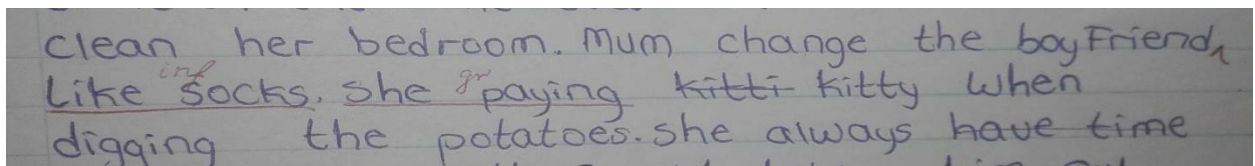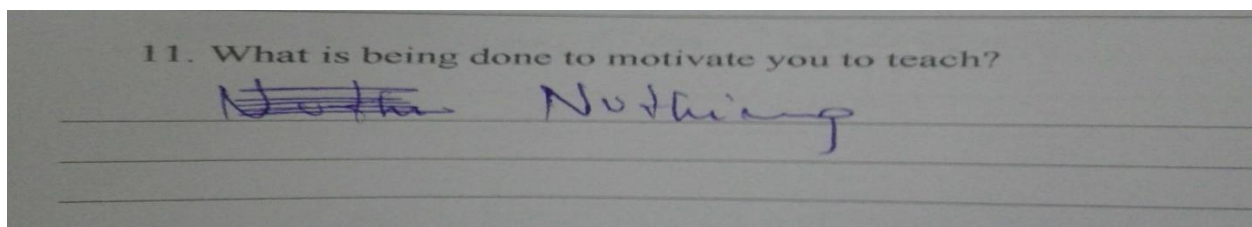guage used on a daily basis for social purposes. The author further emphasises that this is the informal non-academic language meant for informal settings only. In the same vein, Ibrahim (2018) postulates that the prevalence of informal language is as a result of technology that is keeping students glued to their gadgets where they cross barriers of formality since they spend most of their time using spoken language with their peers. Conversely, Jarvis (2014) contends that it is important to educate students that technology can be used for individual learning. Social sites such as facebook have educational content essential for learning. Noteworthy, Hesse (2010) argues that teachers should devote attention to style of writing and show distinctions between formal style versus informal style of writing since resorting to a certain style reflects writer's awareness of the audience and purpose; the use of informal language is penalised in essay writing because essays are formal. This appears to suggest that teachers should try as much as possible to discourage the use of informal language in formal writing such as LE essay-type questions as this is likely to negatively impact on their performance of LE essay-type questions. The next sub-section illustrates how motivation is a source of students' challenges.

4.2.1.2 Motivation

Lack of motivation was found to be one of the causes of students' challenges. According to Akey (2006), motivation is a driving factor that triggers dedication to do the work. Motivation is in two types namely intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is characterised as that which comes from within the individual. It inspires action even when there is no perceived external stimulus or reward. Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, provides incentive to engage in action which may not be inherently pleasing or engaging, but which may offer benefits in terms of perceived potential outcomes (Stirling, 2014, p. 2). Motivating students in the class is an integral part of teaching and must spill over to outside the precincts as well. The teaching of English needs to be made more appealing and attractive. Students can during the course of the year be encouraged to write essays on different topics and rate them then put them on display. Besides displays, there can be book prizes for the widely read person in the class or grade. Importantly, prize giving days can be organised and the best student per subject gets awards per subject. In these ways, students would be motivated. What will have started as extrinsic motivation may with the passage of time
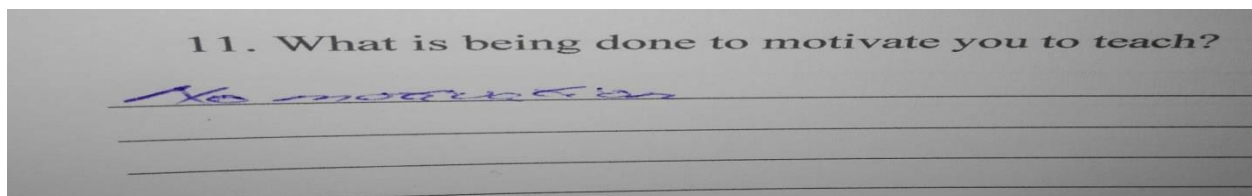
76

be intrinsic because of the long term goals. According to Mark (2015), teachers can be extrinsically motivated if they participate and have a voice on issues concerning day-to-day running of the school or are praised. They also thrive to earn respect from the principals. It is in line with the above that Corpus, McClintic-Gilbert and Hayenga (2009) state that intrinsic motivation could be triggered by emotional support. By implication, communication and working together with teachers extrinsically motivate them while helping and supporting them in times of depression keeps them intrinsically motivated. From the analysis of questionnaire results, 4 out of 7 teachers opined that they were not motivated to stimulate their teaching of LE essay-type questions. This is justified by the following responses:

Teacher A
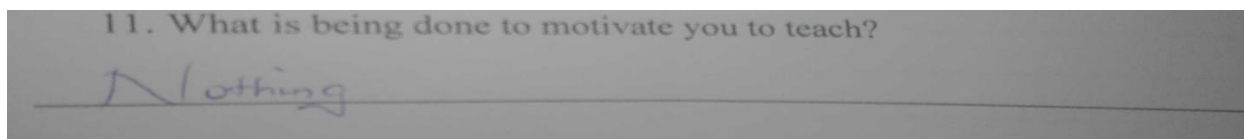
Teacher B

Teacher C

Teacher D

Teachers substantiated that there is no motivation hence results are poor. Performance of a school hinges on the teacher's motivation and if a teacher is unhappy on the job, emphasis will not be put into the teaching (Mark, 2015). In congruence with this affirmation, Roth and Eyal (2010) aver that lack of extrinsic motivation affects intrinsic motivation among teachers; stating that lack of intrinsic motivation can be exhibited in teacher reluctance to partake in school undertakings, unproductive or non-exciting teaching, poor class attendance and late coming. It 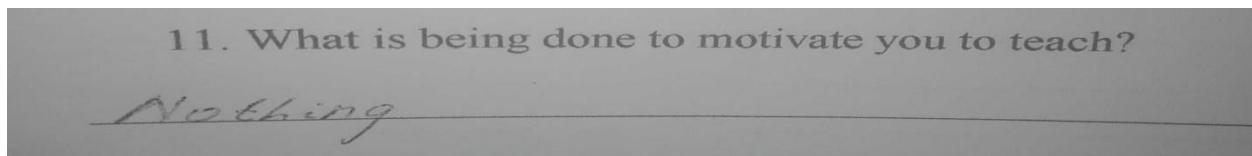could be inferred that teacher motivation entails influences on the system of each school; absence of external influences such as praise or respect could affect performance, also, resulting in stress and lessening classroom performance. In essence, this finding shows that teachers' motivation is important so as to improve performance of the responsibilities for teachers; failure to do so would impact students' performance of LE. Under the motivation, it can be assumed that teachers would teach LE essay-type questions well. Limited teaching time is presented and discussed in the next section.

4.2.1.3 Limited teaching time

The findings also revealed limited teaching time as a cause of students' challenges. 4 out of 7 teachers acknowledged that allocated time for teaching is limited. This was attested to in three excerpts attached below, another one was used in the subsequent section (vide 4.2.3.1).

Teacher G

13. What are your views on the allocated time for writing practice?
Literature in English as a subject is given little time, therefore time allocated for writing is very limited.
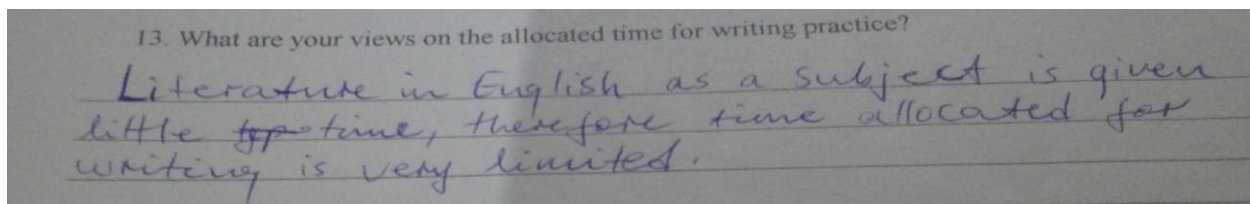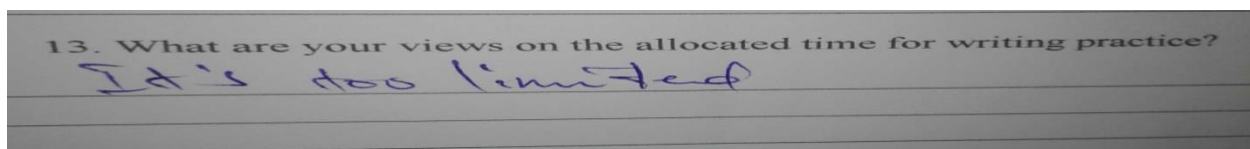
Teacher H

13. What are your views on the allocated time for writing practice?
It's too limited

Teacher I

Limited teaching time is said to be the cause of students' essay writing challenges. This negates Scheerens (2014)'s position that instructional time positively relates with students' performance; more teaching time breeds obtaining higher grades while less time yields obtaining lower grades. The situation in the selected schools seemingly affects LE essay-type questions performance negatively. This necessitates the need for more instructional time. In the next section, challenges brought by limited teaching time derived from the focus group discussion are discussed.

4.2.1.4 Limited teaching time as pronounced by teachers

Limited teaching time was pronounced as a source of students' challenges in the focus group discussion. The utterances of teachers confirmed that they were conscious of the significance of language and register, style, expression, purpose awareness, tone, task fulfillment structure and organisation and their importance for external examination (Mukitiri, 2016). They believed that in spite of the necessity of teaching those skills, they did not have adequate lessons for instruction of LE thereby compromising the writing practice. Quotations justifying the afore-mentioned issue coupled with the excerpt from the questionnaire are shown next.

> Teacher N: "I am mainly concerned about the syllabus demands and want to cover the content in all the prescribed textbooks''
>
> Teacher O: "I know that writing is important but I concentrate on other aspects because Literature is allocated only three lessons per week in my school"
>
> Teacher P: "Time factor does not allow me to give my students tests frequently"

As a result of the demands of the examination, 3 teachers opined that they were of the view that time for teaching LE is limited. The allocated time therefore limits the major task of the teacher which is to remove the psychological barrier between students and literature as well as participation (Shakfa, 2012). It appears that students sit for external examinations having undergone less training in LE due to limited time. This was also highlighted in the questionnaire as attested to by *Teacher P* below.

Teacher P

13. What are your views on the allocated time for writing practice?

LE is limited
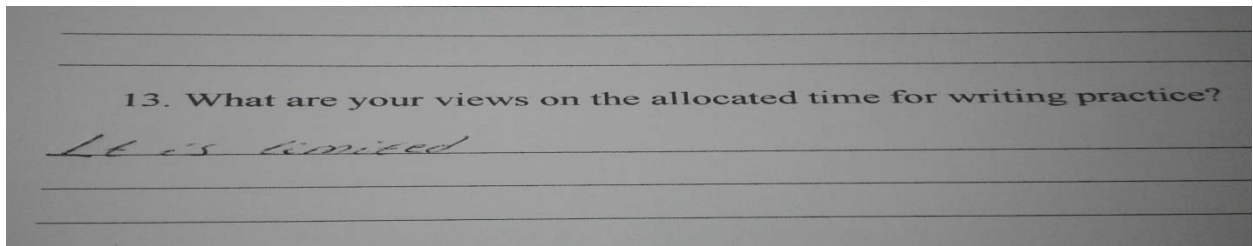
Teacher P concurred with *Teacher A* and *Teacher B's* utterance on the notion of limited time which is shown as a cause of students' challenges. Along the same line, Rivkin and Schiman (2015) point out that additional teaching time leads to quality teaching of the content though resources and environment are added advantages. This may suggest that the teaching of LE is compromised due to the time factor hence the need for giving students home work. The next section discusses how poor educational background hinders the teaching and learning of LE.

4.2.1.5 Poor foundation

Poor foundation surfaced as a cause of students' challenges. 5out of 7 teachers in the three cases have shown that one of the sources of LE challenges was lack of basic writing, spelling, punctuation, reading and listening skills (poor foundation) of the students. Attached below are 4 excerpts highlighting this cause, another one is attached in the next section (4.3.3.3).
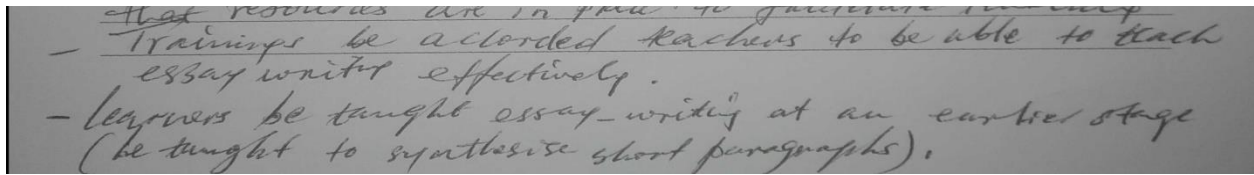
Teacher J
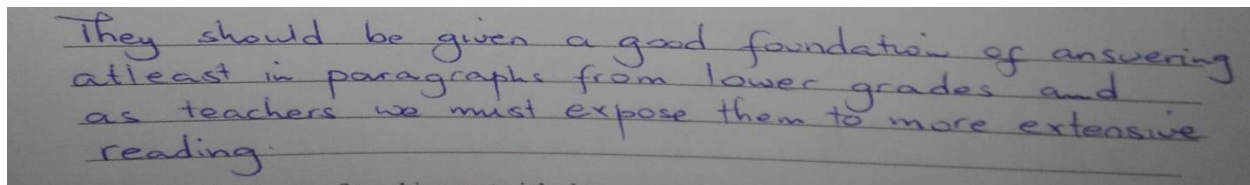
They should be given a good foundation of answering atleast in paragraphs from lower grades and as teachers we must expose them to more extensive reading.
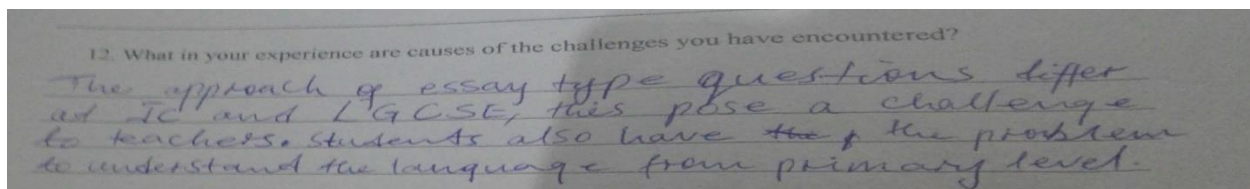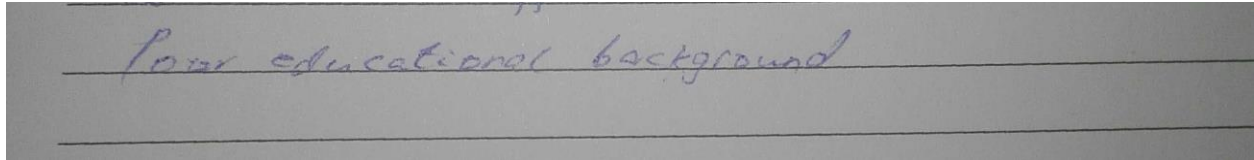
Teacher K

12. What in your experience are causes of the challenges you have encountered?

The approach of essay type questions differ at IG and IGCSE, this pose a challenge to teachers. Students also have the p the problem to understand the language from primary level.

Teacher L

80

Teacher M

Drawing from these affirmations of teachers, it can be noted that poor foundation of students is the source of their challenges on LE essay-type questions. Teachers stated that students should be taught writing at earlier stages so that they can develop academically accepted writing skills. Khawaldeh, Bani-Khair and Al-Edwan (2016) report that ESL learners find it difficult to produce quality texts distinguished by coherence and flow due to poor L2 foundation. Further, Mpoi (2014) is of the view that lack of cohesion affects students' performance and advocates for the teaching of cohesive devices from lower grades as they shape essay writing, giving it a good flow for understanding. This is consistent with what the English (101/1) syllabus endorses in MEMD (2002) as Grade 8 students are assumed to be able to write paragraphs. In accordance with both documented scholarship and the above finding, conclusion can be drawn that the educational background of students has effect on the teaching of LE essay-type questions. The advocacy for early foundation is also witnessed in the study of Bekman, Aksu-Koc and Erguvanli-Taylan (2011) who posit that early foundational education helps students to master writing in general later since there is proof of the worth of preschool enrichment classes on writing. The theme of poor foundation was also pronounced by teachers in the focus group discussions as shown below.

4.2.1.6 Poor foundation as pronounced by teachers

Poor foundation also transpired as a cause of students' challenges in the focus group discussion. Austin (2006) asserts that poor foundation is the poor previous educational experience of the students. Teachers raised the issue of poor foundation during the focus group discussion. It appears that students lack foundation on basic writing, punctuation, spelling, reading and

listening skills from primary schools. Below is an example of an utterance emphasising this cause of students' challenges and the questionnaire excerpt:

Teacher A: "My students do not know grammar rules and their spelling is horrible. At this level, they are expected to write a lot but they don't as I ought to teach them what they are assumed already to know."

Teacher B

> 12. What in your experience are causes of the challenges you have encountered?
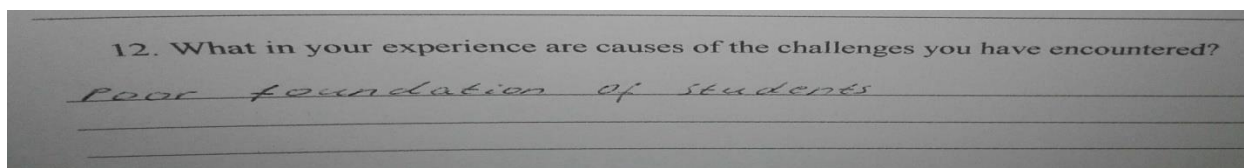>
> *Poor foundation of students*

The foregoing utterance and the overlapping finding from another data generating tool implies that students display deficiency in writing. They find it difficult to display knowledge of basic writing principles such as grammar rules; thereby failing LE essay-type questions. This is in line with Alami's (2016) claim that poor foundation affects students' learning in the later stage. Holding the similar viewpoint are Nag , Chiat , Torgerson and Snowling (2014) who maintain that the teaching of literacy in childhood stage is a preparatory point for a child's proficiency in language which guarantees a solid language foundation since the results of improper basis affect students in upper levels of education. It is, therefore, vital to ensure that students are taught all mechanics of writing such as word formation, sentence formation, spelling, grammar and punctuation in lower classes. The next sub-section unpacks how setting limits English speaking practice and presents how home work can be used to help students interact with English outside the school context.

4.2.1.7 Language outside school

Language used out of the school which is Sesotho appeared as one of the causes of students' challenges. Teachers were asked to explain whether students were exposed to English outside the classrooms. The intention of the question was to find out whether students had the opportunity to practise speaking English outside the classrooms since LE essay-type questions are asked in English. They echoed that Sesotho is the only language used at home since students live among Basotho only. This setting appears to limit English speaking practice as English seems to be the language for school environment only. Some examples of utterances illustrating the foregoing issue are shown below:

Teacher C: "Our Students are always speaking Sesotho at home with their parents since most of them are illiterate; lack of practice reflected in the writing of Literature in English essays."

Teacher D: "These kids are having the limited opportunity to speaking English."

On the basis of these utterances, it appears that the nature of students living environment denies them the chance to improve their English speaking and writing skills when they are not in LE or EL lessons. Abd-Kadir and Hardman (2007) purport that exposure to more than one language leads to reliance on one of them or code switching which leads to minimal exposure to English. It is against such limiting backgrounds that teachers should promote a reading culture. Extensive reading promotes language development. This is in line with Adejimola and Ojuolape's (2013) position that students' performance can be enhanced by Literature; they recommend teachers to motivate students to read as that can stimulate their desire to read for knowledge, pleasure or relaxation. Therefore the absence of a community that speaks English cannot be taken as an excuse. The learners need to be motivated to read extensively. There are successful people who are eloquent speakers of English not because they lived in a community of English speakers but they read extensively. Using the principles of Educational Productivity theory (1981), this study established that this finding could be interpreted to be the psychological one. The succeeding part presents a chart illustrating causes of students' challenges.

Chart 2: Causes of student challenges

83
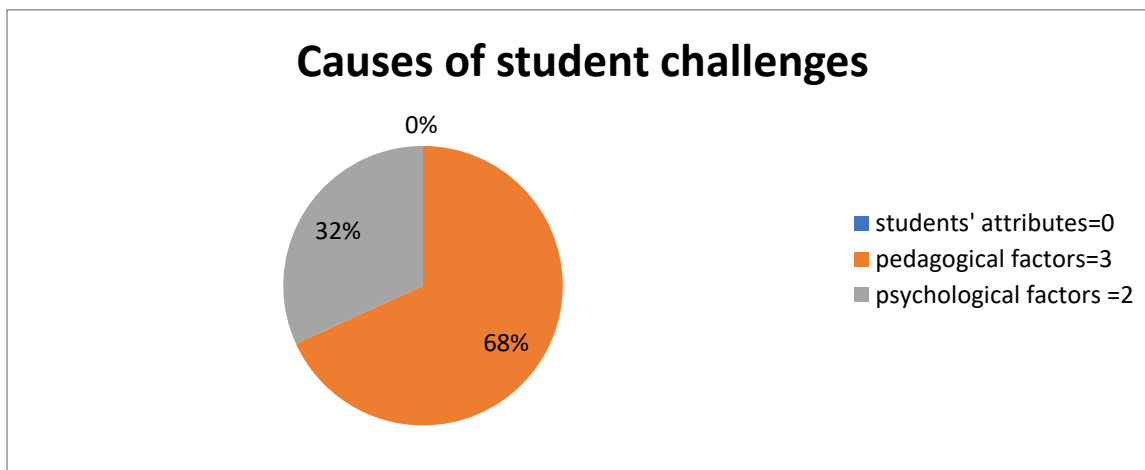
4.2.1.8 Synthesis of findings from research question two

There were some overlaps of findings within the data generation techniques and manifestation of this assertion as reflected with excerpts and quotation of utterances from teachers. As can be noted on the chart, motivation, writing practice, poor foundation, limited time and language out of school surfaced as the main findings under this research question. On that basis, Alami (2016) affirms that the educational background of students affects students' learning in the later stage. In the same vein, Akey (2006) avers that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play an integral part in learning as productive learning depends on them. It is therefore befitting to group motivation and poor foundation under causes of challenges faced by students. What these issues necessitate for teachers of LE is illustrated next.

4.3 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS OF LITERATURE IN ENGLISH AT JUNIOR CERTIFICATE
4.3.1 Findings from teachers' qualitative questionnaires

This section discusses the findings that may enhance the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. Teachers were asked to answer the qualitative open-ended questionnaires. They were requested to explain the pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of essay-type questions in LE. The recurring issues under this research question were: writing proficiency, knowledge of the content, pedagogical approaches and use of technology. The section below shows the analysis, presentation and interpretation of the data.

4.3.1.1 Writing proficiency

Drawing from the responses of teachers' qualitative questionnaires, several implications for teaching LE essay-type questions surfaced. The outcomes of this study revealed that students' academic writing proficiency develops in due course, and needs regular practice coupled with assessment. Below is a questionnaire justifying that frequent tasks develop writing proficiency.

Teacher Q

> 15. What activities can be done to better help you teach essay type questions?
> More time can be allocated for Literature less
> to allow regular tests
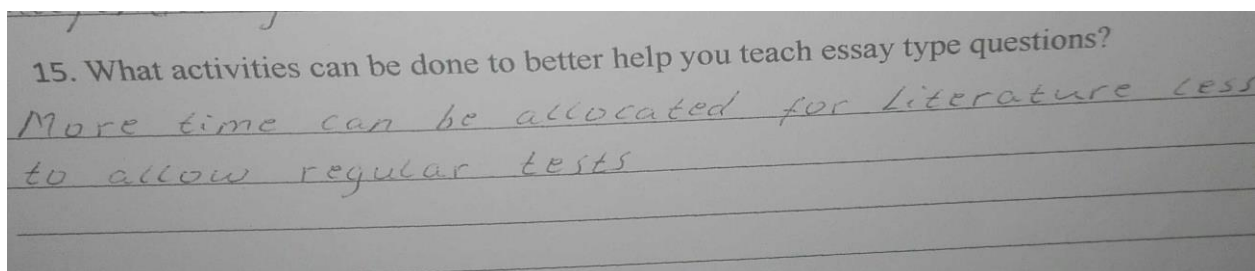
From the above excerpt, it appears that frequent testing of students helps them to develop. This harmonises with Curtis's (2017) position that students' skills are enhanced by regular practice through the use of teaching resources such as cellular phones or computers which students enjoy using on daily basis. This might suggest that students should be given class work, homework or assignments regularly. The theme of knowledge of the content is unpacked below.

4.3.1.2 Knowledge of the content
The theme of knowledge of content emerged from the questionnaires. This is justified by the excerpt below.

Teacher R
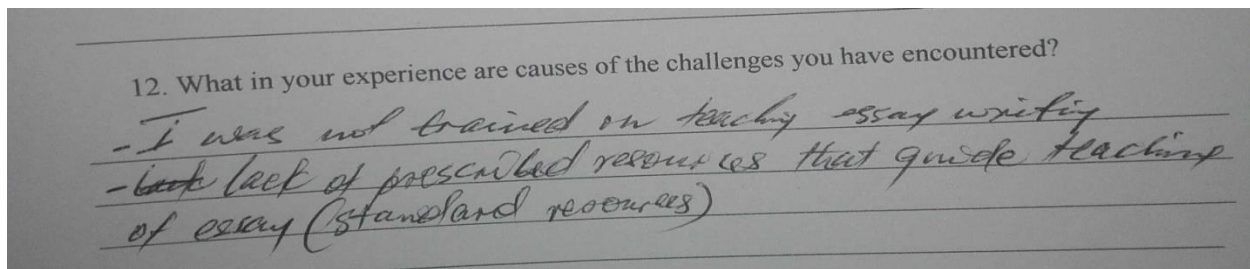
From the above sample, *Teacher R* also acknowledged that they do not have adequate knowledge as they do not have teaching resources that guide the teaching process. This could be a result of negative attitudes since teachers are expected to be creative and willing to learn (MOET, 2009). Martinez-Flor and Usó Juan (2006) point out that the negative attitude stems from the fact that students or teachers are incompetent in the English Language as a result, that prevents them from actively taking part in learning or teaching activities. By implication, this would mean that teaching LE is ineffective in classes. This is in line with the assertion of Njuguna (2012) who states that it is important to know the subject matter of the course. What surfaced from questionnaires could mean that insufficient knowledge of the subject is likely to cause students to deviate from the question as a result of improper training. Based on Walberg's (1981) theory, this finding could be categorised under pedagogical factors. The subsequent section presents what teaching methods call for in the teaching and learning of LE.

4.3.1.3 Pedagogical approaches

The study established that learner-centred teaching methods are proposed by teachers as remedial strategies to curb students' challenges. Authenticating this finding are 3 out 7 excerpts randomly selected for illustration from teachers below.

Teacher S

> We should use more of learner-centred approaches, they help students to be interactive and helps us teachers discover 'new things' from our students. We should also employ 'Preparation and Delivery' strategies, help them write points accurately in an essay and deliver it in class.

 Teacher T

> Discussions - especially of essays where students share their piece, that way they will learn from one another.

Teacher U

> Group method

From the above excerpts, it is evident that there should be focus on the teaching methods. Teachers propose the strategies that can be used to overcome the students essay writing challenges and student-centred method is among them. In the similar line of conception, Marulcu and Akbiyik (2014) accord that in a situation whereby teachers are the only sources of information and teaching is one way and not giving students a chance to contribute ideas; learning is less efficient. This opposes the Sociocultural theory which advocates for learning through interaction with peers (Vygosky, 1978). Again, Vygosky adds that unlike teacher centred learning where students are just passive; this method places the students as active participants responsible for their own learning. This might mean that student centred teaching is

less efficient for LE. The next section still on the same research question illustrates issues that arose from the focus group discussion.

4.3.1.4 Pedagogical approaches as pronounced by teachers

The theme of teaching methods resurfaced from the focus group discussion. The second question of the focus group guide was aimed at eliciting teachers' views on the teaching approaches that they used and why. 4 teachers in the three selected schools showed that students should learn independently while teachers should facilitate their teaching. Below are some examples of their utterances:

Teacher R: "Students understand concepts better when they learn independently"

Teacher S: "21st century skills advocate for active involvement of students in their own learning so, teaching should be learner centered"

Teacher T: "Students' learning is effective in a case whereby they learn on their own."

Teacher U: "Letting students find information on their own helps them a lot"

From the above declarations, it can be deduced that student-centred learning is effective. Li (2011) notes that the teaching and learning in the learner centred perspective cater for learners' needs and priorities. Again, Grey (1995) asserts that a productive constructivist classroom will therefore be learner centred and actively involve learners in the learning process. There is more problem solving and discovery learning. Similarly, Vygosky (1978) advocates for joint or social learning, rather than teacher centred learning where there is one-way communication and an individual activity coupled with passive students. Students learn best when working in a collegial setting where there is teamwork as it is through such collaborative activities with skilled personnel that students learn and internalise new ideas and skills (Vygosky, 1978). The researcher proposes that LE should be taught in student-centred approaches in order for students to construct their own understanding of LE essay-type questions. The subsequent part unpacks themes which emerged from the focus group discussion.

4.3.2 Themes emerging from the focus group discussion

The focus group discussion was held and this is where teachers brought out what pedagogical implications are and what they call for in the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. A number of those teachers were suggestive that learner-centred teaching approaches and

classroom size reduction could curb pedagogically-oriented challenges. These issues were also raised in the open-ended teachers' questionnaires. Below is the elaboration of how teachers responded:

4.3.2.1 Number of classrooms

Teachers proposed that there must be adequate number of classrooms. According to the teachers, schools do not have adequate classrooms and student-teacher ratio is not observed. They opined that schools were understaffed hence classes were congested. Examples of utterances from *Teacher A* and *Teacher B* are quoted below.

Teacher A: "Students are congested in the class rooms; we have a shortage of classrooms."

Teacher B: "There are more than 50 students in class rooms; these classrooms are too big."

This implies that the teachers are not happy with large class sizes. The big sizes of class minimises whole class participation, leading to poor quality instruction and individual attention (Pearson, 2017). 4 teachers agreed that their attention could not be on each student due to big classes hence assessment of the taught content is not thorough. UNESCO (2010) states that an average class consists of a maximum of 40 students as the bigger number hinders the effective teaching. In the same line of thought, Freire (1987) argues that bigger classes impede smooth teaching and learning because they make it difficult for a teacher to focus on every student; as a result, they force them to spend a small amount of time when assessing each student's work; also forcing teachers to teach basics of a subject only. It appears that small classes give students ample time to interact with the teacher, allowing a teacher to monitor progress of each student. The implication could be that class sizes in the three selected schools predict whether education is productive or not. Educational Productivity theory (1981) categorises this issue under psychological factors as it is a challenge arising as a result of the surroundings of the students; it impacts the mind of the students. In the next section, importance of using technology is discussed.

4.3.2.2 Use of technology

Technology is a sum of methods or skills involving scientific inventions for production (Brian, 2009). During the focus group discussion with teachers, watching videos of the prescribed textbooks was raised as a way which can be the remedy for unsatisfactory performance of LE students on essay-type questions. Teachers in the focus group discussion stated that giving

students tasks after watching videos then explaining what they watched in class can be fruitful and improve analytical skills. Below are examples of their utterances:

Teacher A: "Video tapes help students to understand the book better"

Teacher B: "The use of technological devices makes teaching and learning interesting hence motivating students to learn. This approach to teaching Literature in English can make students to fall in love with it"

The above utterances of teachers proposed the move from traditional teaching to modern way of teaching. Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) also indicate that audio-visual materials like tapes allow students to be creative and stimulate them; they focus students' attention on the writing skills to be learnt. The use of video tapes increases students' learning engagement with sensual experiences as pictures can be seen while sound can be heard; they can also be available for students to watch any time (Cakir, 2006). It is logical therefore to conclude that if students can be exposed to video tapes or teaching through technology, they may improve their performance on essay-type questions. Students with hearing problems are likely to benefit from this way of teaching because being able to see the speaker's face will help them to lip-read and see facial expressions of actors; this will also assist them in speed and accuracy of grasping the content as opposed to auditory-only recognition (Altieri &Townsend, 2011). What emerged from this research question is synthesised next.

4.3.2.3 Synthesis of findings from research question three

Pedagogical factors appear to be education predictor variables as per Walberg's (1981) theory of Educational Productivity. What pedagogical factors call for point to the need to take caution of instructional factors as their deficiency highlighted as the main finding on the above section lead to infective teaching. The teaching inclined to student-centredness where there are learning resources such as computers, gadgets or audio-visuals could improve the performance of LE essay-type questions at JC because they increase learning commitment. Furthermore, students enjoy using them (Cakir, 2006). The next section discusses the summative perspectives drawn from synthesis of findings in this research.

4.4 SUMMATIVE PERSPECTIVES
4.4.1 Summative perspectives on the first research question

Data gathered from teachers and students' test revealed that although linguistic competence is a challenge, LE can contribute to increasing students' proficiency in English Language as LE essay-type questions test ability to use appropriate vocabulary, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Tangpermpoon (2008) notes that less knowledge of spelling, grammar and vocabulary yield unsatisfactory results. Under the students' attributes, the research established that diction and linguistic competence fall under student attributes; writing practice, motivation, inadequate resources, and poor foundation are pedagogical factors while sound reasoning, subject matter and class size fall under psychological factors (Walberg 1981). Rossman and Rallis's (2012) model of data analysis (vide 3.7) was used to analyse, present and interpret data.

4.4.2 Summative perspectives on the second research question

The study revealed that students' challenges are attributable to the school environments and home environments of students. Academic style, limited teaching time and poor foundation fall under pedagogical factors while high number of books, language out of school and motivation fall under psychological factors (Walberg, 1981).

4.4.3 Summative perspectives on the third research question

Pedagogical factors appear to be education predictor variables as per Walberg's (1981) theory of Educational Productivity. What the challenges and causes call for in the teaching of LE is proposed. Propositions are that the teaching should be inclined to student-centredness where there are available resources such as computers or smart phones; this could promote self-teaching and improve the performance of LE essay-type questions at JC (Vygosky, 1978; Curtis, 2017).

4.5 SUMMARY
The preceding challenges were categorised under students attributes because they are associated with the capabilities of students in relation to LE essay-type questions (Walberg, 1981). Those that originate from the teaching process are pedagogical. Teachers also showed that some challenges emanate from the environment within the students hence such challenges are environmental. This may be suggestive that teachers are of the view that LE essay-type questions

emerge as a result of the students' ability, the teaching approaches as well as the setting. These three sets of the theory that benchmark this study appear to be predicting the success or failure of students' learning of LE essay-type questions.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

After the data was collected and analysed quali-quantitatively, the researcher drew conclusions from the major findings of the study. The researcher finally made pertinent recommendations in line with what the study established. As indicated earlier (vide 3.4), three tools for data generation were used and these were students' test, teachers' qualitative questionnaire and teachers' focus group discussion to achieve the objectives of the study. Below are conclusions drawn from major findings of the study.

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

This study has presented findings from the three cases and its main purpose was to inquire into challenges faced by LE students on essay-type questions. Three research questions directed the process of data generation; the researcher ensured that information provided by participants was related to all three research questions which were formulated for this investigation. Up next are the pertinent conclusions of this investigation.

5.1.1 Challenges faced by students in the teaching and learning of essay-type questions

This part presents conclusions drawn from the first research question of the study. This research question aimed at examining the challenges faced by students in the teaching and learning of essay-type questions. Below are the conclusions per this research question.

Linguistic competence is the main finding which was reflected as the major challenge that students face in the process of teaching and learning LE essay-type questions. The results of this inquiry showed that students struggle to answer LE essay-type questions as a result of less knowledge of grammar, spelling, conjunctions, punctuation and choice of words. Students' incapability in writing limited their chances of passing at JC as Raselimo and Mahao (2015) note that this curriculum places English as the passing subject at secondary level of education. From the students' scripts, the revelation was that all 30 students displayed deficiency in the aspects of linguistics such as grammar, incorrect spelling and inappropriate use of punctuation marks. This was the case in all the three selected schools. The issue was also raised in the two other data gathering tools. The conclusion can therefore be drawn that linguistic competence is a challenge

faced by LE junior high school students. Conclusions based on the theme diction are illustrated below.

Diction management emerged as the challenge in students' written essays in LE. The choice of words is an evident challenge reflected on the scripts of students and teachers' questionnaires. As a result of the wrong word choice, the intended meaning gets distorted Martins (2014). This was the case in all three selected schools. A conclusion, can therefore, be drawn that improper use of diction is likely to affect the performance of LE JC students. These findings are suggestive of students' incognisance of the fact that wrongly used words have effect upon meaning hence teachers should train students to be communicatively competent. Conclusions on challenges brought about by inadequate number of books are drawn next.

Inadequate number of the text books and other teaching resources also surfaced as challenges. This seems to hamper the teaching of LE. This postulation is in congruence with Francisca (2012) who asserts that teaching and learning resources are needed as they develop students' ability to comprehend the subject matter or conceptual ideas since provision of adequate resources helps students with practical experiences. As a result of scarcity of text books, analysis of the poems, story or short story might not be critical in classrooms. However, teachers should not make that an excuse because they can still be creative and supplement them with take-home activities since LE mirrors what happens in the society. Seemingly, students' learning abilities are compromised and the teaching process is teacher-centred. It can, therefore, be concluded that although there is a shortage of resources, the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions can still be effective. The next part draws conclusions on the theme of work overload.

Teachers pronounced that they are overloaded with work as they are expected to teach various genres of Literature. It appears that overload of teachers may end up compromising the way they teach. Although teachers affirmed that they are overloaded with work, they appear to fail seeing the importance of exposing students to different genres for a balanced diet in literature. The situation necessitates teachers' creativity because ECOL demands should be met when students sit for their final external examinations. Aoumeur (2017) cautions that when there is the greater work load, greater chances are that teachers would not address all the relevant concepts. From experience, overload of work may end up forcing the teacher to use teacher centred learning approaches at the expense of students learning. These methods are discouraged by MOET (2009)

and Freire (1976), since teacher centred approaches make passive students as they are none participatory. On the basis of this, it can be concluded that teachers should promote student-centred teaching irrespective of the heavy work load. Summation of the conclusions of this study follows this section.

Drawing from the above conclusions which were made in the light of the main findings, the objectives of the study in relation to the first research question were achieved. The Educational Productivity theory (1981) which benchmarked this research appeared to be appropriate for the inquiry as it helped to code the findings. As indicated earlier (vide 37), three sets of Walberg (1981) were found to be the variables which determine productive education. The succeeding section illustrates sources of students' challenges on LE essay-type questions.

5.1.2 Possible causes of challenges facing the teaching and learning of essay-type questions

Based on the findings and research appraised knowledge presented in Chapter two (vide 2.2.3), this section draws conclusions and illustrates what the role of motivation is in teaching. The teacher is expected to inspire all the students so that they would be motivated to learn LE essay-type questions. Stirling (2014) points out that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation yield positive outcomes as they actively engage teachers and students to teaching and learning. Every LE teacher is therefore required to be a moderator whose teaching should be coupled with an ability to motivate students. In line with this conclusion, Shakfa (2012) notes that one of the major tasks of teachers is the removal of the mental barrier between students and Literature in English as well as participation. It can therefore be concluded that the teachers should play the role of motivators in classes. The challenges faced by students in the learning of LE can be attributed to the lack of awareness of teachers' roles and practical knowledge, inclusive of the disinclination of the teacher to execute the anticipated roles. Up next are conclusions drawn based on how limited teaching time challenges students.

The study established that LE lessons are few and instruction time is limited. Findings derived from this theme reveal that there is a need for students' supplementary engagement with essay-type questions. Teachers pronounced that lack of practice is a challenge faced by students on LE essay-type questions; this challenge was found to be attributable to limited time among other factors. This negates Graham and Harris's (2003) affirmation that essay writing needs practice since its requirements make it a complex process. Notably, findings of this study backed by

documented scholarship spell the need for additional activities which could be carried out for students' practice. Scheerens (2014) posits that instructional time positively relates with students' performance because more teaching time breeds obtaining higher grades while less time breeds obtaining lower grades. Therefore, it can be concluded that the situation in Lesotho primary and secondary schools necessitates the explicit and frequent teaching of essay-type questions. The succeeding part expounds on conclusions in relation to the theme of poor students' foundation.

This study found out that the poor foundation that students had in the EL influenced their performance in LE essay-type questions where they have to display knowledge of mechanics of language. As a result of poor educational background, students face challenges on essay-type questions. This coincides with Khawaldeh, Bani-Khair and Al-Edwan (2016)'s report that ESL students find it difficult to produce quality texts distinguished by coherence and flow due to poor L2 foundation. Holding the similar perspective are Nag , Chiat , Torgerson and Snowling (2014) who maintain that the teaching of literacy at childhood stage is a preparatory point for a child's proficiency in language which guarantees a solid language foundation since the results of improper basis affect students in upper levels of education. A conclusion can therefore be drawn that if both individual and collaborative writing assignments coupled with extensive reading could be monitored at primary, then, a good foundation may be laid for LE in the process avoiding syntactical errors that students make later at other levels of education due to their poor foundation. A summary of conclusions is made in the next paragraph.

In summary, the main findings drawn from this research question fall under pedagogical and environmental factors per Walberg's (1981) Educational Productivity theory. This verifies that challenges are a result of students' teaching and learning environment. The second research question has achieved its objective of identifying causes of the challenges faced during the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. The upcoming section presents what the pedagogical implications are for teachers of LE.

5.1.3 Pedagogical implications of challenges for teachers of literature in English at Junior Certificate

There are a number of implications for teaching LE essay-type questions that come up from the findings discussed earlier. There is also a need for teachers to exert more effort to teaching students essay writing skills where they would engage in a lot of writing (Akey, 2006). The findings point to the fact that continuous writing is a skill that develops with time; it entails regular practice and guidance from teachers. Therefore the findings suggest the need to lengthen the teaching duration of such questions or provide homework. Enough practice will be of assistance to students who would master the dynamics of writing LE essays. In the next paragraph, measures to be taken in relation to class size are discussed.

From teachers' assertions, it is noteworthy that class crowding is a challenge which needs attention. This implies that the teachers are unhappy with large class sizes. Pearson (2017) opines that big class sizes minimises whole class participation, leading to poor quality instruction and individual attention. The actual situation in three sampled schools negates UNESCO's (2010) suggestion that an average class should consist of a maximum of 40 students. In the same vein, Freire (1987) argues that bigger classes impede smooth teaching and learning because they make it difficult for a teacher to focus on every student. They force teachers to spend a small amount of time when assessing each student's work; also forcing teachers to teach basics of a subject only. By implication, class reduction should be done to ease the teaching process and meet the set student-teacher ratio. Seemingly, this would allow teachers to thoroughly go through each student's work. The upcoming part shows what role pedagogy plays during the teaching of LE.

The discoveries made from various data gathering techniques employed in the study in question have implications for teachers. This inquiry has provided an understanding of how student-centred teaching that be employed in classrooms to curb challenges faced by students. It appears that teacher centred teaching strategies impact students' learning of LE essay-type questions. By employing the proposed teacher-centred approaches in their actual teaching, teachers would produce societal members of the communities (MOET, 2009). Implementation of the proposed teaching approaches would, therefore, mean shifting from one-way teacher-centredness to a

facilitation of LE learning in general. The section below shows summation of conclusions of this study.

5.2 SUMMATIVE PERSPECTIVES

In sum, the three sets of Educational Productivity theory (1981) which are students' attributes, pedagogical factors and psychological factors should be looked at while teaching Literature in English essay-type questions as they predict productive education. The main findings which led to conclusions of this study fall under all these variables. Essentially, the teaching and learning processes should involve proper instruction of essay-type questioning skills as that enhances students' capabilities. The school system should entail factors enhancing three sets of variables which are students' attributes, pedagogical factors and psychological factors for education to be productive (Walberg, 1981). It appears that educative constituents around the students have an effect in the manner in which students grow. The research questions achieved objectives of the study by revealing challenges faced by LE students on essay-type questions. The next section puts forth recommendations of the study.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are made in relation to the above research question based conclusions. Findings from three data generating tools revealed linguistic competence as a challenge faced by JC LE students. Incorrect spelling, diction, grammatical errors, inappropriate use of punctuation marks and incorrect and no use of conjunctions emerged in all research tools of this study. It is therefore recommended that LE teachers should teach these grammar aspects as they appear to play an integral part in students' work. This is recommended in congruence with Younes and Albalawi's (2015) confirmation that ESL students who demonstrate inadequacy in punctuation, spelling and grammar are likely to underperform in essay writing. Teachers should focus on writing skills in order to bridge the gap between the two subjects (LE and EL). The next segment shows additional recommendations in relation to resources.

In the view of the revelations of the current study, several recommendations are made to lessen the challenges faced by students in the learning of LE essay-type questions. The findings of this study resonate with Walberg's (1981) theory in that essay-type questions challenges in LE were

found to be attributable to teaching environment and tools. Since shortage of books surfaced as the major challenge, the researcher recommends that the schools' governing bodies should provide adequate books. In cases where there are many students or shortage of books, the schools can buy prescribed text books and offer them to students through rental schemes. Ensuring that there are adequate teaching facilities could improve the performance of students on essay-type questions. Technology as one of the required instructional tools was also found to be a challenge and for this reason, infusing the teaching of computer education in LE could be beneficial and could help the nation to acquire its aspirations of producing work-related competences. This is strengthened by (MOET, 2009) as knowledge of computer is the key requirement when employing someone currently. The application of undesired teaching approaches is shown below.

Based on the assertions pronounced by teachers, lecture method seemed to be dominant in the process of teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. LE teachers dealt with this course as theoretically and it was alienated from students' daily lives and without practice. This finding goes against MOET (2009) which changed from subject-oriented curriculum to an integrated skill-based one where teachers are facilitators while teaching is learner-driven. Therefore, this discovery calls for application of alternative teaching methods such as role-play, discussion or any other desired learner-centred methods. Varying the teaching methods might stimulate and generate a sense of enthusiasm in LE essay-type question lessons. The issue of pedagogical shift is discussed next.

Another recommendation is that the teachers' should shift their focus from textbooks to contexualising emerging themes of textbooks to everyday lives of students. LE would help Lesotho to progress and play the role of improving the country by creating prospective focused and critical leaders. Along the similar line of conception, Zuze and Reddy (2014) assert that independent reading is essential for personal growth since there is a relationship between reading literacy and writing which create other scholastic opportunities such as good spelling, improved vocabulary and improved wellbeing. Teachers should change their philosophy and allow students to actively take part in their learning; allow them to use their previous experiences in order to increase the love for LE. The section below expounds on suggestions for further research.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Taking into consideration that there seem to be dearth in documented scholarship on LE teaching and learning challenges, the researcher suggests the following for future research. An investigation focused on curriculum development and MOET as that would be helpful to lay the basis for revision of the existing curriculum. Rooted in the results of such an inquiry, proper selection or decisions about LE textbooks and teaching manuals can be made. Additionally, the similar ethnographic study might contribute to an in-depth comprehension of students' challenges on LE.

In sum, this quali-quantitative case study involved a smaller number of participants which may not be possible to generalize the main findings of this study. This inquiry could be replicated in future; using the different design and involving a large number of participants. Additionally, it remains unknown if the findings will be as effective in a different location. It also remains unclear as to what challenges could be discovered if the focus is on other genres of LE. Among other issues, research in future can focus on the following areas:

- **ESL students' writing challenges and needs in Literature in English essays.**
- **Teachers' perceptions on the responsiveness of junior high school Literature in English textbooks to societal issues.**
- **Investigation of problems experienced in the teaching of Literature in English.**

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted to establish challenges faced by junior high school students on essay-type questions. There were the methodological limitations in this research. Among others, the limitation was the small number of participants. This study was limited to only three junior high schools owing to time and financial constraints. The findings from this investigation can therefore not be generalised. The study was conducted in three accessible urban schools in Leribe district where I reside. Rural and out-of-town schools were excluded. Since this was the self-sponsored study, these schools were within my reach. The land scape of schools in rural regions in Lesotho often makes them difficult to access. Including them would mean extra expenses on the part of the researcher. It therefore makes academic sense to suppose that

teachers' views in rural schools might be different from those in Leribe urban areas as a result of different settings or experiences. Notably, the study with a wider scope could put into surface additional or different revelations. This study was to a larger extent qualitative in nature; with a relatively smaller element of quantitative slant hence carrying out a survey might be necessary as it involves more participants.

The researcher had to travel to teachers' homes in order to hand deliver the questionnaires. This also made conducting the focus group discussion difficult as the agreed upon time coincided with personal commitments of some teachers, causing delay in collecting data. Due to outbreak of the Coivid-19 pandemic, schools were closed. Consequently, participants were not easily accessible. Additionally, the researcher anticipated conducting focus group discussions with seven teachers but only four participated. Since participation was voluntary, the researcher could not force the three other participants who did not show up to participate.

As indicated earlier, another limitation to this study was time constraint; focus group discussions were temporarily brought to halt as a result of the national lock-down which restricted the movement of people from one place to the other. Despite these limitations, the study provides a helpful starting point; revealing three sets of factors attributable to challenges faced by students in the teaching and learning of essay type questions in Literature in English. It also adds literature from students' and teachers' perspectives on the challenges faced during the teaching and learning of LE essay-type questions. The section below shows reflections of the research after carrying out this study.

5.6 SELF-REFLECTION

Self-reflection can be conceived as a process giving students chances to be reflective about the learning that has taken place (Davies, Herbst, & Busick, 2013). Although this study is not an action research, I personally discovered my own deficiencies and this research widened my horizons in terms of how I should teach versus how I was teaching Literature in English essay-type questions. I carried out this research as a result of documented scholarship and my own experiences. I am among the teachers who realised that the performance of Literature in English essay-type is unsatisfactory though I did not know the root causes and challenges faced by students. While collecting data, I realised that my experience is similar to that of other teachers

in other schools. This inquiry, therefore, helped me grow as it changed my ideology; it made me a critical thinker who looks at issues from all possible angles before drawing a conclusion. Documented scholarship that I engaged with shed light on how essay-type questions should be taught. I realised that the curriculum and assessment policy marked pedagogical departure from teacher-centred teaching to learner-centred teaching and I began to reflect on my teaching approaches. As a result of scarcity of resources, I resorted to teacher-centred approaches but carrying out this study made me realise that I was not innovative and not promoting inventive learning. Thus, my viewpoint about how I ought to teach LE subsequently changed after I started to work on this investigation as I gained understanding of how scholars in other regions teach LE. This study also helped me in making me aware of demands of MOET endorsed in curriculum and assessment policy. In essence, this study changed my approaches to teaching LE irrespective of what environmental challenges are in my school. Due to this investigation, I am an informed teacher whose teaching is geared towards attainment of MOET aspirations.

As a researcher, I learned to be a facilitator, gaining that experience from focus group discussion with teachers. That skill spilled over to my teaching as my role is that of a facilitator in class. I had to direct our discussion and prepared the focus group guide which guaranteed that our discussion was in line with my objectives. That role played an integral part in my teaching as I had to engage all the participants; that is a skill which I thereafter applied in my LE class. The consciousness of students' challenges and their sources helped me deal with them cautiously. The upcoming section ends this chapter with a summary.

5.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the major findings were discussed and conclusions drawn. These conclusions were drawn from the main discoveries of this investigation. Such conclusions were made on the basis of each research question of this study. Recommendations made in relation to the conclusions were also given followed by limitations of the study. Self-reflection was entailed in the chapter; followed by summary of this chapter.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUALITATIVE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I am Nchabeng Simon Nchabeng, a master's student at the National University of Lesotho. May you kindly help me by filling this questionnaire which is intended to examine and collect data on **challenges secondary students face in the teaching of literature in English essay type questions**. You are therefore, asked to answer the questions below correctly, without any fear because your answers will not be exposed to anyone. You need not write your names.

SECTION A

Place a tick in the appropriate bracket

Male   [ ]

Female   [ ]

Age: 20-30 [ ]

     31-40 [ ]

     41-50 [ ]

     51+ [ ]

SECTION B

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ON THE PROVIDED SPACES.

1. What challenges/problems do you often encounter with essay type questions when you teach your students essays in Literature in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What in your opinion make these questions challenging?

_____

_____

_____

3. What teaching techniques do you use to help your students understand and write essays as required?

_____

_____

_____

4. What in your opinion should be done to enable students to avoid challenges with essay type questions in Literature in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What types of teaching materials does your school have for effective teaching of Literature in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. How can such teaching materials be used to enhance students' ability to write correct essays in literature in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What other strategies besides teaching materials are often used to develop students' ability to answer essay type questions in Literature in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. If the teaching materials and other strategies you have mentioned are lacking in your school, what challenges are posed by such a shortage regarding students' ability to answer essay-type questions in Literature in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. What do you perceive to be your role as teachers in facilitation of students' ability to answer essay type questions in Literature in English?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Based on your above responses, how can the challenges you have noted be avoided by other teachers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. What is being done to motivate you to teach?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. What in your experience are causes of the challenges you have encountered?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. What are your views on the allocated time for writing practice?

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. What should be the role of students in the learning of essay type questions?

_____

_____

_____

15. What activities can be done to better help you teach essay type questions?

_____

_____

_____

_____

16. What teaching strategies do you think can be used to overcome essay writing challenges?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

GRADE 10 STUDENTS' TEST

INSTRUCTIONS:

- **Choose one of the following essay-type questions**
- **Your essay should be at least one page long**
- **Your essay should contain 13 points**

1. Write an essay showing that Mum is an irresponsible parent.
2. Write an essay proving that Amanda is a spoiled and manipulative girl.
3. When Thandi realised that she was pregnant, she had many thoughts regarding her pregnancy. Write an essay showing what those thoughts were, and steps she took.
4. 'The waste land' was very dangerous, show how the gangsters tried to kill a man and what the man did to save his life.

APPENDIX C

TEACHERS' FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. How long have you been teaching at Literature in English at JC?

2. What is the average number of students in the classes you teach?

3. What qualifications do you have?

4. In your opinion is there a relationship between qualifications and teaching? Explain?

5. What in your experience are students' challenges with essay-type questions?

6. What are the causes of those challenges?

7. How do you deal with such challenges?

8. What can be done to get rid of those challenges?

9. What in your opinion can be measures to enhance the teaching of Literature in English essay-type questions?

APPENDIX D

Sebothoane

P/Bag   C0022

Leribe 300

25 May 2020

DEM

Education office Leribe

Leribe 300

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN YOUR REGION

I hereby write to ask for authorisation to conduct my study in three selected junior secondary schools in Leribe. I am a final year student of Master of Education in NUL, Literature in English being my specialisation. My study will espouse the quali-quantitative research design entitled: **Essay-type questions in Literature in English: what are the challenges for junior high school students?**

I have chosen this scope specifically because I reside in Leribe and have noticed that a number of students fail Literature in English essay-type questions. This study is significant for it will generate information on challenges faced by students. The findings of this study might be useful to MOET, teachers, and students. The foregoing beneficiaries would have documented scholarship on challenges faced at JC and their causes.

I will employ test, questionnaires and focus group discussion to generate data from Grade 10 students and teachers as participants of this inquiry. The data generated from participants will be treated confidentially. When your permission has been granted, a letter requesting authorisation from principals of the schools and teachers as participants in the study will be sent to schools.

The study is planned to start off from the June 2020 to the July 2020. I would be very thankful if my request would be considered.

Yours faithfully

_____

Nchabeng Simon Nchabeng

APPENDIX E

Sebothoane

P/Bag C0022

Leribe 300

28 May 2020

Dear Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am a Masters student at the National University of Lesotho interested in conducting research entitled **" ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS IN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS?''**

The aim of this study is to investigate the challenges faced by junior high school students on essay-type questions. The study will use a quali-quantitative design and case study method. I will use a test, questionnaire and focus group discussion to generate data. I would like to be granted permission to work with all Grade 10 teachers and students your school.

The study might be beneficial as it will make known the challenges facing the teaching and learning of essay-type questions. There would be member checks where I will give the feedback to the participants. I will also submit findings and recommendations of my dissertation. Furthermore, I will share some of my experiences during the study.

I promise to abide by the ethics of research, WHO (Covid-19) and adhere to anonymity and confidentiality.

Yours Faithfully

Nchabeng Nchabeng Simon

Cell: +266 5899 2321

APPENDIX F: PARENTAL AUTHORISATION IN SESOTHO

(Lengolo la kopo ea tumello ho motsoali kapa Mohlokomeli)

Ke nna Nchabeng Simon Nchabeng, ke moithuti sekolong se seholo sa sechaba, National University of Lesotho. Ke etsa boithoto ka *"Mathata ao bana ba kopanang le ona haba ngola meqoqo ea libuka tsa Senyesemane".* Ke kopa tumello ea hore ngoana a nke karolo boithutong baka. Ha ngoana a ithaopa ho kenela ho nka karolo, o tla fuoa thlalosetso le sepheo sa boithuto.

Ha ngoana a fuoa tumello ea ho nka karolo ke kopa u itekene mona.

Foromo ea tumello

Nna......................................……….motsoali kapa mohlokomeli ke lumella ngoana ea bitsoang... ....ho nka karolo boithutong ba Nchabeng N.S.

Motekeno

....