

**LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES ON WRITING SKILLS IN SEPEDI HOME LANGUAGE  
IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KOLOTI CIRCUIT IN LIMPOPO  
PROVINCE.**

By

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## DECLARATION

I, Refiloe Shai, confirm that:

- (a) The work done in this thesis is my own, except where proper acknowledgement has been made.
- (b) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any institution of higher learning.
- (c) I managed to appropriately reference any material or data taken from other sources.
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- (e) No data including diagrams, figures or charts has been copied from online sources without proper acknowledgement.

Researcher : 

Date: January 2026

## DEDICATION

- Firstly, I want to thank God Almighty, for giving me the strength, wisdom and courage to pursue this Master's degree.
- This thesis is dedicated to everyone who supported and believed in me.
- A special dedication to my family, my little sister (Maite) and my son for their unwavering support, encouragement and being pillars of my strength.
- To my son, Tshepiso. Thank you for being my greatest source of motivation and love throughout this journey.
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## ABSTRACT

Despite Sepedi home language being widely used as a language of communication, reading and writing in most secondary schools, Limpopo province, many learners struggle to achieve the required level of proficiency in writing. This study investigated Grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language in selected secondary schools in the Koloti Circuit, Limpopo Province. Although majority of learners uses Sepedi as a home language, they continue to experience challenges in writing, particularly in essays and transactional texts. The study was guided by socio-cultural theory, which highlights the role of social interaction and context in learning, and focused on learners' personal, primary, and secondary experiences of writing. An interpretivist qualitative approach was adopted, using a case study design.

The sample consisted of 20 Grade 11 learners selected through purposive and convenience sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis of learners' written essays and analysed thematically. The findings showed that learners' writing skills were influenced by several factors, including dialectal interference, code-switching, limited vocabulary, grammatical and spelling errors, large class sizes, and lack of teacher feedback. Learners relied mainly on personal and primary experiences, while secondary experiences such as explicit instruction and guided feedback were limited. These challenges negatively affected learners' confidence and attitudes towards writing in Sepedi. The study concludes that improving writing skills in Sepedi Home Language requires effective teaching of the writing process, regular formative feedback, and greater teacher support. The findings contribute to improving the teaching and learning of African Home Languages and support the goal of quality education in South Africa. Moreover, the study recommends that both teachers and learners should draw on secondary experiences (CAPS, ATPS, language policies) to facilitate the proper acquisition of writing skills.

**KEY WORDS:** Writing skills, Sepedi Home Language, Learners' experiences, Socio-cultural theory, Language learning and writing challenges.

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# Contents

DECLARATION .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	v
ACRONYMS .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER 1 .....	7
OVERVIEW, CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES .....	7
1.1. INTRODUCTION .....	7
1.2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY .....	8
1.3. BACKGROUND.....	9
1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY.....	10
1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.....	11
1.6. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
1.6.1. Defining Curriculum .....	11
1.6.2. Importance of Home Language .....	12
1.6.3. Writing as a skill.....	12
1.6.4. Learner’s Experiences in writing skills.....	13
1.6.5. Categories of writing skills.....	15
1.6.5.1. Narrative writing skills .....	15
1.6.5.2. Descriptive Writing Skills .....	15
1.6.5.3. Creative and Journal Writing .....	16
1.7. PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	16
1.8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	17
1.9. AIM OF THE STUDY.....	17
1.9.1 Objectives.....	17
1.10. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	18
1.10.1. Research Paradigm: Interpretive Paradigm.....	18
1.10.2. Research Approach: Qualitative Research .....	18

1.10.3. Research Design: A case study.....	19
1.10.4. RESEARCH METHODS .....	20
1.10.4.1. Selection of participants .....	20
1.10.4.2. Sampling .....	20
1.11. DATA GENERATION METHODS .....	21
1.11.1. Semi-Structured Interviews.....	21
1.11.2. Document Analysis.....	22
1.12. Data Analysis .....	22
1.13. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY.....	23
1.13.1. Credibility .....	23
1.13.2. Transferability.....	23
1.13.3. Dependability.....	24
1.13.4. Confirmability .....	24
1.14. Ethical Considerations .....	24
1.14.1. Informed Consent.....	25
1.14.2. Research Permission .....	25
1.14.3. Anonymity and Confidentiality .....	25
1.15. Possible Limitations of the Study.....	25
1.16. Chapter Division .....	25
1.16.1. Chapter 1: Introduction.....	26
1.16.2. Chapter 2: Literature review .....	26
1.16.3. Chapter 3: Research methodology .....	26
1.16.4. Chapter 4: Data presentation and discussions .....	26
1.16.5. Chapter 5: Findings and recommendations.....	26
1.17. Chapter Summary .....	26
CHAPTER 2 .....	28
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	28
2.1. Introduction.....	29
2.2. Learner’s Experiences .....	29

2.2.1.	Primary experiences (physical and social environment).....	32
2.2.2.	Personal Experiences (Individual Experiences).....	33
2.2.3.	Secondary Experiences (Knowledge and Content).....	35
2.3.	RECENT DIALOGUES ON LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES.....	36
2.4.	What are writing skills? .....	38
2.5.	Categories of Writing skills .....	41
2.5.1.	Narrative writing skills.....	41
2.5.2.	Descriptive writing skills .....	41
2.5.3.	Creative and journal writing.....	42
2.6.	Context.....	42
2.6.1.	International context.....	42
2.6.2.	African context .....	43
2.6.3.	South African Context on writing skills .....	44
2.7.	The importance of home language .....	45
2.8.	Discussion on the discipline 'Curriculum'.....	46
2.8.1.	Levels of Curriculum.....	47
2.8.2.	Three representations of Curriculum .....	48
2.8.2.1.	Intended Curriculum .....	48
2.8.2.2.	Implemented Curriculum .....	49
2.8.2.3.	Attained Curriculum.....	50
2.8.3.	Types of curriculum and Issues .....	50
2.8.3.1.	The Hidden Curriculum (Personal experience).....	50
2.8.3.2.	The Null curriculum (Primary experience).....	51
2.8.3.3.	Explicit Curriculum (Secondary experiences) .....	52
2.8.4.	Curriculum Concepts .....	52
2.8.4.1.	Assessment .....	52
2.8.4.2.	Goals (Aims, Objectives, Outcomes).....	53
2.8.4.3.	Learning and teaching Environment .....	54
2.8.4.4.	Teachers role .....	55

2.8.4.5. Content .....	56
2.9. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY .....	56
2.9.1. Mediation (Primary experiences) .....	58
2.9.2. Regulation (Secondary experiences).....	59
2.9.3. The Zone of Proximal Development (Primary experiences) .....	60
2.9.4. Scaffolding (Primary experiences) .....	62
2.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	62
CHAPTER 3 .....	64
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	64
3.1. Introduction .....	65
3.2. Brief Definition of Methodology and Research Design .....	65
3.3. Research Paradigm .....	66
3.4. Research Approach .....	68
3.5. Research Design: Case Study .....	71
3.6. Sampling .....	73
3.6.1. Purposive Sampling .....	73
3.6.2. Convenience Sampling .....	74
3.7. Data Generation Method .....	76
3.7.1. One-on-one semi-structured interviews .....	76
3.7.2. Document Analysis.....	77
3.8. Data Analysis .....	78
3.9. Ethical Issues.....	79
3.9.1. Consent Forms.....	79
3.9.2. The research permission letter .....	80
3.9.3. Anonymity .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.10. Trustworthiness.....	81
3.10.1. Credibility .....	81
3.10.2. Dependability.....	82
3.10.3. Transferability.....	82

3.10.4. Confirmability .....	83
3.11. Possible Limitations of the study .....	83
3.12. Chapter Summary .....	84
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....	85
4.1. INTRODUCTION .....	86
4.2. Data Presentations .....	86
4.2.1. THEME 1: HOME LANGUAGE USAGE .....	86
4.2.2. THEME 2: CONTENT .....	89
4.2.3. THEME 3: GRAMMATICAL AND COMMON ERRORS .....	92
4.2.4. Theme 4: CODE-SWITCHING .....	96
4.2.5. Theme 5 :Lack of constructive feedback .....	98
4.2.6. THEME 6: WRITING CHALLENGES .....	101
4.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	103
CHAPTER 5 .....	104
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	104
5.1. Introduction .....	105
5.2. Summary of Chapters .....	105
5.2.1 Chapter One.....	105
5.2.2 Chapter Two: Literature and Theoretical Framework.....	105
5.2.3 Chapter Three: Research design and methodology.....	106
5.2.4 Chapter Four: Research findings and discussion .....	106
5.2.5 Home language usage .....	107
5.2.6 Content.....	108
5.2.7 Grammatical and common errors.....	108
5.2.8 Code switching.....	109
5.2.9 Lack of constructive feedback.....	109
5.3. Addressing research questions .....	111
5.4. Limitations of the study .....	113
5.5. Conclusion .....	113

REFERENCE LIST .....	115
ANNEXURES .....	114

### TABLES OF FIGURES

Figure 1 : .....	Chapter 2 (Flow chat)
Figure 2 : .....	levels of experiences
Figure 3:.....	Components of socio-cultural theory
Figure 4 : .....	Chapter 3 (Flow Chat)
Figure 5:.....	Participants Profiles
Figure 6:.....	Chapter 4 (Flow Chat)
Figure 7:.....	Chapter 5 (Flow Chat)

### LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participants Profiles.....	75-76.
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### LIST OF ABBREVIATION

- APA – American Psychological Association
- ATP – Annual Teaching Plan
- CAPS – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
- COVID-19 – Coronavirus Disease 2019
- DBE – Department of Basic Education
- HL – Home Language
- MEd – Master of Education
- MKO – More Knowledgeable Other
- SDG 4 – Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)
- SASA – South African Schools Act
- UNISA – University of South Africa
- ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

## CHAPTER 1

### OVERVIEW, CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is regarded as one of the most important language skills alongside speaking, reading, and listening in Sepedi Home Language. Exploring learners' experiences of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language is considered a valuable contribution toward the broader global goal of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) by 2030, which emphasise inclusive and quality education for all. Schools are traditional spaces where learners accumulated experiences that shaped their attitudes, aspirations, and intentions Dewey (1986). These experiences are understood to influence how learners engaged with writing tasks in the classroom.

Dewey's (1938) theory of experience highlights two key principles, namely continuity and interaction. Continuity refers to how past experiences influenced present and future experiences, while interaction referred to the relationship between the individual and the environment. Similarly, Sugerman (2000) describes experience as a product of continuous interaction between humans and their environment. Within this context, learners' writing experiences are shaped by social settings, environmental conditions, and personal characteristics.

Learners are exposed to diverse writing experiences in their daily lives, and these experiences are manifested differently in their writing performance. Some learners experience difficulties in writing due to social and environmental factors, while others are affected by personal and linguistic backgrounds. Aedo (2002) argues that writing instruction should be designed in ways that allowed learners to build effectively on what they already knew. However, many Sepedi Home Language learners perceive writing as difficult, stressful, and demotivating.

Writing skills in Sepedi Home Language are categorised into different types, each serving a specific purpose. These categories included descriptive, narrative, creative, and journal writing. In alignment with the United Nations (2018), SDG 4 focuses on ensuring inclusive

and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This study therefore focuses on learners' primary and secondary experiences of writing. Primary experiences refer to learners' direct interactions with their physical and social environments, while secondary experiences involved reflective and contemplative engagements with those interactions (Sugerman, 2000).

Grade 11 learners often described writing as the most challenging aspect of language acquisition (Dhanya & Alamelu, 2019). This difficulty is largely attributable to learners' social environments and previous negative experiences related to writing in Sepedi Home Language. In the context of this study, Sepedi is seldom used formally within the broader school community, including by parents, learners, teachers, and other stakeholders. Learners predominantly communicate using the Moletji Sepedi dialect, which differs from standard Sepedi used in formal writing. As a result, learners struggled to express themselves accurately in written Sepedi.

As a language educator, the researcher observed the need for effective strategies to support learners in developing competent writing skills. The United Nations (2018) emphasises that individuals required a broad set of competencies, including writing and reading skills, to participate meaningfully in socio-economic, cultural, and civic life. Learners display varied and often negative experiences regarding their writing abilities, and this study therefore sought to explore Grade 11 learners' experiences of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.

## **1.2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The rationale for this study emerged from the researcher's experiences as a secondary school educator with three years of teaching experience. During this period, it is observed that learners' writing experiences are influenced by large class sizes, the use of dialectal language, and learners' attitudes toward Home Language subjects. Makgai (2022) revealed that many Grade 10 learners lack the skills required to write meaningful essays and rarely used figures of speech, idioms, or proverbs in their writing. Similarly, Khetoa (2019), notes that Home Languages are often perceived as less valuable, resulting in limited use and reduced motivation among learners.

There is a noticeable lack of studies focusing specifically on learners' experiences of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language. This study therefore sought to address this gap by exploring Grade 11 learners' writing experiences in depth. The findings are expected to assist policymakers, curriculum specialists, and educators in developing strategies to empower learners' writing skills and to support South Africa's contribution to the achievement of SDG 4.

### **1.3. BACKGROUND**

The Basic Education Rights Handbook (2017) defined Home Language as the language a learner knew best and was most comfortable using in reading, writing, and speaking. It was widely accepted that proficiency in a learner's Home Language facilitates the acquisition of additional languages. The handbook further emphasised that learners' skills in their Home Language ought to be strengthened to support overall academic development.

In school contexts, learners who experienced difficulties in writing often struggled to comprehend subjects such as Mathematics and Science. Research United Nations (2018) indicates that learners with weak literacy skills were more likely to encounter broader academic and life challenges. Writing is described as a key mode of communication through which individuals conveyed ideas and emotions (Songxaba & Sincuba, 2019). Consequently, learners' inability to write effectively hindered both academic success and social communication.

Previous studies, such as those by Nchabeleng (2025) and Ramothwala et al. (2021), highlighted persistent writing challenges among learners, particularly those from dialect-speaking backgrounds. These challenges are evident in learners' essay writing and transactional texts, where orthographic and grammatical errors were prevalent. Such difficulties reflected learners' negative writing experiences and underscored the need for focused research on writing in Sepedi Home Language.

#### 1.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY

Grant and Osanloo (2014) define a theoretical framework as the foundation of a research study, as it provides structure and justification for the research process. Maxwell (2012) explains that a conceptual framework consisted of concepts, belief systems, and theories that guided the study and clarified the research focus. Similarly, Kivunja (2018) argues that a theoretical framework draws on established theories within a field to support data analysis and interpretation. As such, the theoretical framework underpinned the problem statement, purpose, research questions, and significance of the study (Abulibdeh et al., 2024). This study was guided by socio-cultural theory, which was considered appropriate for exploring learners' experiences of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.

Socio-cultural theory originated from the work of Vygotsky (1978) and was later developed by scholars such as Leont'ev and Wertsch. The theory emphasises that learning and cognitive development occurred through social interaction and are mediated by cultural and social tools (Abdullah et al., 2022; Rahmatirad, 2020). Knowledge is therefore understood as being constructed through interaction between individuals and their social and cultural environments (Panhwar et al., 2016). In the context of this study, socio-cultural theory proves relevant because learners' writing skills are shaped by both their social experiences (interaction with teachers and peers) and personal experiences (individual reflection and practice). Learners' cultural backgrounds influence how they thought, learned, and expressed themselves in writing, particularly in the Sepedi Home Language classroom. Learning was viewed as a social process in which meaning was constructed through language use within specific cultural contexts (Abdullah et al., 2022).

Key concepts of socio-cultural theory that informed this study included **mediation, regulation, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), internalization, and scaffolding**. These concepts explain how learners developed writing skills using cultural tools such as language, interaction with more knowledgeable others, guided support from teachers, and gradual movement towards independent writing. Through classroom activities such as essay writing, group discussions, and presentations, learners engaged

in social practices that supported the development of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.

Overall, socio-cultural theory provided an appropriate lens for examining how learners' writing experiences were influenced by social interaction, cultural context, and instructional support within the school environment.

## **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of this study lays in its potential to provide insight into Grade 11 learners' experiences of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language. By understanding learners' experiences, the study contributed to the development of strategies aimed at improving writing instruction and learner support. In line with the United Nations (2018), the study supported the goal of inclusive and quality education by addressing the needs of learners from diverse linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds. The findings are expected to inform educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in their efforts to strengthen writing skills and improve learner outcomes in Sepedi Home Language.

## **1.6. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.6.1. Defining Curriculum**

Curriculum is understood as a broad and complex concept that shaped learners' educational experiences and outcomes, particularly in the development of writing skills. Choppin et al. (2022) define curriculum as the integration of prescribed subjects, content, learning activities, and organizational strategies that guide the teaching and learning process. Similarly, Oglu et al. (2023) described curriculum as a carrier of educational standards, values, and competencies required for effective learning.

Within the context of Sepedi Home Language, the curriculum functioned as a framework through which writing skills are developed and assessed. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) outline specific learning outcomes that learners were expected to achieve, including competence in various forms of writing. However, studies indicate a misalignment between learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and

curriculum expectations often hindered effective skill development (Abulibdeh et al., 2024). This study therefore examined the way in which the curriculum influenced learners' writing experiences, and how it could be adapted to accommodate culturally responsive teaching practices.

### **1.6.2. Importance of Home Language**

South Africa recognises eleven official languages, including Sepedi, as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1994). Cele (2021) argues that, although African languages have been granted equal official status, they remain underdeveloped as languages of learning and teaching, particularly in academic contexts. This imbalance affects learners' engagement and performance in Home Language subjects.

Home Language is defined as the language a learner knew best and used most comfortably for communication, reading, and writing Hestiana and Anita (2022). Sepedi is predominantly spoken in parts of Limpopo Province and serves as a Home Language in many public secondary schools. According to (Botha, 2022), language education policies aim to promote multilingualism and address disparities arising from mismatches between learners' Home Languages and languages of learning and teaching.

Achievement in Home Languages was critical for learner progression, as learners were required to pass at least one official language at Home Language level to advance to the next grade. Despite this requirement, several studies report that learners often undervalue Home Language subjects, resulting in reduced motivation and limited use of the language in academic contexts (Reno, 2024). These challenges underscored the importance of strengthening writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.

### **1.6.3. Writing as a skill**

Writing is identified as one of the four core language skills, alongside listening, speaking, and reading. Sari et al. (2021) described writing as a complex skill that required extended time to develop proficiency, accuracy, and fluency. Zhu and Li (2025) further defines writing as a cognitive tool that enabled learners to organise their thinking and communicate effectively.

Research indicates that strong writing skills in a learner's Home Language facilitated the acquisition of additional languages (Hapak & Patrícia, 2023). Despite English being the primary Language of Teaching and Learning (LOLT) in many South African schools, learners continue to experience difficulties in writing across subjects. Sarwat et al. (2021) note that teaching writing skills poses significant challenges for educators, while Wijaya and Setiawan (2021) reports that learners often perceived writing as difficult and demotivating.

Durst (1987) emphasis that writing is a cognitively demanding process involving grammar, vocabulary, coherence, and critical thinking. Learners' negative experiences of writing were often associated with inadequate instructional strategies, limited feedback, and insufficient opportunities for practice (Botha, 2022). These findings highlight the need for effective teaching approaches to support learners' writing development in Sepedi Home Language.

#### **1.6.4. Learner's Experiences in writing skills**

##### **Phenomenon (Experience)**

Lee et al. (2022) define experience as the result of continuous interaction between humans and their environment. Similarly, Dewey (1986) argues that experience was shaped by ongoing transactions between individuals and their surroundings at a given time. In this study, two categories of experience were adopted to guide the analysis of the research questions, namely primary and secondary experiences. According to (Lee et al., 2022), primary experience refers to direct material interaction with the social and physical environment. In contrast, secondary experience was described as a reflective process through which the environment and its objects became subjects of knowledge and contemplation. (Will et al., 2025) further maintains that primary experience represented everyday engagement with the world, while secondary experience involved intellectual reflection upon those engagements.

Zhu and Li (2025) emphasis that capturing the diversity of learners' experiences was essential, as it provided learners with a voice in educational research. Exploring learners'

experiences of writing skills is therefore considered crucial, particularly given that much existing research focused predominantly on the perspectives of teachers and tutors. Bergmark (2023) supports this view by highlighting a notable lack of sufficient research centered on learners' perspectives, with most studies being designed and interpreted from the viewpoints of educators or course designers.

Wijaya and Setiawan (2021) meanwhile reports that learners' average or poor academic performance is often linked to their inability to express ideas clearly in their Home Language, indicating negative writing experiences. This challenge is evident in Sepedi Home Language, where learners frequently performed poorly in Paper 3, due to underdeveloped writing skills. In addition, learners experienced inconsistency in the feedback provided by educators on their written work. Adebayo et al. (2024) suggests that regular correction of learners' written tasks was essential, as it enabled learners to reflect on their writing errors, grammar usage, and overall language proficiency.

Secondary school learners are also found to have negative writing experiences, due to frequent spelling errors in essays and transactional texts. Stiggins (1999) notes that such errors are costly, as learners are penalised during assessment, resulting in decreased performance and lowered pass rates in Sepedi Home Language. Many learners further experienced linguistic challenges arising from dialectal differences, particularly the use of Moletji spoken language in formal writing. Common errors included vowel omission and incorrect word forms, such as using "o" instead of "go" and "gedimo" instead of "godimo".

Spelling is identified as a critical component of writing in any language (Ramuedzisi, 2022). Learners tended to spell words as they were spoken, reflecting limited vocabulary development in standard Sepedi and the influence of dialectal speech such as Khelobedu. As a result, learners often perceived writing as difficult and uninteresting, due to limited motivation and inadequate instructional support. Kennedy and Park (1994) asserted that the development of writing skills is strongly influenced by learner motivation and the quality of teacher-learner relationships. Furthermore, overcrowded classrooms are identified as a significant challenge that hindered effective writing instruction. Zhu and Li (2025) argue that a positive and engaging learning environment was essential for

writing development; however, in many secondary schools, overcrowding limited teachers' ability to provide individualised support and effective feedback.

### **1.6.5. Categories of writing skills**

#### **1.6.5.1. Narrative writing skills**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2021), defined narrative writing as the presentation of events in a meaningful and logical sequence. Rezai et al. (2022) indicate narrative writing to have been one of the most common forms of writing taught in schools. Within the CAPS framework, narrative writing formed part of the prescribed assessment of writing and presenting skills in language subjects. Rezai et al. (2022) further emphasise that learners' overall writing competence could be enhanced through the development of narrative writing skills. However, narrative writing also involves complex sub-skills that many learners find challenging to master. Learners' written narratives often reveal weaknesses in grammar usage and limited vocabulary. Several factors contributed to these challenges, including ineffective teaching strategies, limited learner interest, inadequate instructional methods, insufficient teaching materials, time constraints, and unsupportive learning environments (Cele, 2021).

#### **1.6.5.2. Descriptive Writing Skills**

Nystrand (2023) defines descriptive writing as a form of writing that enabled readers to understand and visualise a specific object, person, or event described by the writer. Descriptive writing is regarded as both functional and aesthetic, as it required writers to convey information while creating vivid imagery (Ramuedzisi, 2022). Research indicates that secondary school learners often struggled to write coherent descriptive texts due to limited vocabulary and difficulties in expressing ideas clearly. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011) guidelines, learners were expected to use sensory language related to sight, sound, touch, taste, and hearing when composing descriptive texts. In essence, descriptive writing required learners to "paint a picture" with words. Botha (2022) supports this view by emphasising that vocabulary development was central to effective descriptive writing, as writers needed to evoke emotions and present clear

mental images for readers. Furthermore, the *Mind the Gap* Grade 12 English guidelines highlighted that descriptive writing frequently drew on learners' personal experiences. Reno (2024) stresses in this regard that continuous review and feedback on learners' descriptive texts were essential for improving writing proficiency.

### **1.6.5.3. Creative and Journal Writing**

Creative and journal writing is described as approaches that fostered the habit of expressing thoughts, emotions, and reflections in written form (D'Souza et al., 2021). Nystrand (2023) asserts that creative writing ought to be explicitly taught, as it plays a crucial role in developing learners' confidence and expressive abilities. Learners often demonstrate positive attitudes towards creative and journal writing, as these forms allow them to write at their own pace, and within a personal space. D'Souza et al. (2021) further argues that, while formal writing activities could induce anxiety, journal writing helped to reduce the distance between learners and teachers by creating a more relaxed and reflective learning environment. A regular review of learners' journal writing enabled teachers to provide meaningful feedback, thereby motivating learners and enhancing their writing skills. MacDonald et al. (2016) supported this perspective by emphasising that exposure to appropriate reading materials and consistent teacher support were critical factors in the development of effective creative writing skills.

## **1.7. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Grade 11 learners who are doing Sepedi as a home language subjects continued to experience challenges in developing effective writing skills. According to the Department of Basic Education (2011), learners were required to obtain at least 40% in their Home Language to progress to the next grade. However, studies showed that learners struggled to write Sepedi Home Language, they made spelling mistakes, had limited vocabulary and struggled with writing conventions (Ramothwala et al,2021). This means that learners continued to meet the required expected pass mark.

The inability to write proficiently in Sepedi negatively affected learners' overall performance. This is supported by the study conducted by Ramothwala et al (2021)

alluding that learner's performance was 14,59% less than the national average (100% in all home language subjects), posing a serious concern over Greater Tzaneen Municipality district. These challenges were exacerbated by factors such as dialectal interference, limited vocabulary, inadequate exposure to standard Sepedi, and the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Existing research largely focused on teachers' perspectives, with limited attention given to learners lived experiences of writing in their Home Language. However, Studies showed that mastering writing skills remained a challenge for many learners in secondary level (Makgai,2022). Therefore, this study addressed this gap by exploring Grade 11 learners' experiences of developing writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.

## **1.8. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **Main research question**

How do Grade 11 learners experience the development of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language, and what factors influence these experiences?

### **Sub-questions**

- 1.What informs the grade 11 learners writing skills in Sepedi Home Language?
- 2.What are the aspects that influence grade 11 learners' experiences in developing writing skills in Sepedi home language.

## **1.9. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to explore learners' experiences in developing writing abilities in Sepedi Home Language by concentrating on classifying influencing aspects and possible approaches for improvement.

### **1.9.1 Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- 1.To understand the reasons that inform learners' experiences on writing skills.

2.To explain the aspects that influence learners' experiences in developing writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.

## **1.10. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Creswell (2009) asserted that research methodology is important for exploring and understanding the meaning of a social or human problem individuals ascribe. Kothari (2004) adds that research methodology is a way of systematically solving the research design. Phenomenological research is applied using the qualitative approach. The central approach taken in this research is a review of the available evidence around the experiences of Grade 11 learners on writing skills in Sepedi Home language.

### **1.10.1. Research Paradigm: Interpretive Paradigm**

Maxwell (2012) defines a research paradigm as a set of general philosophical assumptions about ontology, epistemology, and assumptions that tend to be shared by researchers working in a specific field. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) add that a paradigm is a basic understanding reality around us. This study employed an interpretive paradigm. According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016) interpretivism considers in socially constructed realities. The latter added that the goal of this paradigm is to understand the interpretations of individuals about the social phenomena with which they interact. In this study, only Grade 11 learners were selected as participants, because the main aim of this study is to explore the experiences on writing skills in their Sepedi Home Language subject.

### **1.10.2. Research Approach: Qualitative Research**

This study employed a qualitative research approach. Kothari (2004) defines qualitative research as concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e. phenomena relating to or involving quality and kind. This means that a qualitative approach was fit for various purposes in this study. Creswell (2009) notes that qualitative research explores emerging questions, methods, collecting data from participant's natural environment and analysing data from specific themes. On the other hand, Makgai (2022) adds that qualitative methods of research are employed in many different academic disciplines, since their aim

is to provide an in-depth understanding of human behaviors and reasons that govern that behavior. Therefore, this approach assisted in this study to explore and collect thorough evidence on Grade 11 learner's experiences in the school context when they engage in writing activities in their Sepedi Home language.

### **1.10.3. Research Design: A case study**

A qualitative case study was adopted as a research design. Cohen et al. (2002) define a research design as a strategy that is made up of organising the study, and making it practicable, for research questions to be answered based on the evidence of the study. Creswell and Poth (2016) defines case study research as a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system(case), through detailed data collection that involves multiple data collection.

Sharing the same sentiments, Cohen et al. (2002) view case study design as a unique study providing examples of real people, in real context that allowed readers to understand the ideas more clearly than presenting them with principles or abstract theories. Creswell (2009) further states that "case studies are strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a phenomenon, event, activity or individuals." This means that this research design allowed a thorough investigation of the issue addressed in this study.

A case study is an in-depth investigation concerning individuals, event, a group of people or a phenomenon (Coombs, 2022; Gustafsson, 2017). This study researched case studies of Grade 11 learners from two different South African Secondary schools. There are different types of case studies, namely: single (Instrumental), collective (multiple) and intrinsic case study (Coombs, 2022). Therefore, this study deployed a single case study. This is because, according to Yin (2009), a single case study is analogous to a single experiment and many of the same conditions that justify a single experiment also justify a single case study. Moreover, Gustafsson (2017), adds that a single case study allowed the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the exploring subject. In this case, the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences that

secondary school learners had during their learning of Sepedi Home Language writing skills.

#### **1.10.4. RESEARCH METHODS**

##### **1.10.4.1. Selection of participants**

Selection of participants research depended on the purpose and rely on the researcher's carefulness (Creswell, 2009). This means that the researcher made a good choice with purpose in mind when sampling participants.

##### **1.10.4.2. Sampling**

According to Cresswell (2013), sampling refers to the selected groups of organisation, groups and individuals to participate in a research study. The latter further indicates that a decision needs to be made about who, why, and what should be sampled, what form of sampling will be and how many people need to be sampled. Qualitative research has three common forms of sampling, namely: purposive, quota, and convenience sampling. This study employed purposive and convenient sampling because they are both purposeful. I used these two samples to sample a manageable size of population in two different schools in Koloti Circuit under the Capricorn North District. Therefore, in this study I purposefully select 20 Grade 11 learners from each school. This is supported by Tongco (2007), who prove that purposive sampling is a kind of non-probability sampling that is useful when one needs to learn about a certain topic or domain with knowledgeable experts within.

Thompson (2012) add that purposive sampling assists the researcher to select participants who are rich in information that would assist answer the research objectives. Moreover, according to Yin (2009) convenience sampling involves selecting data collection units due to their readily availability. This means that this sampling method allowed the research to select participants who are accessible and convenient to the study. The study population takes place in two secondary schools in Koloti Circuit, Capricorn North District. These are public schools, located in Moletji Moshate Village in Limpopo Province. The schools consisted of the smallest and most manageable number

of teachers and learners from the surrounding rural area. The 20 participants were manageable, to read and mark their written work, as I did the document analysis in the study.

This research chose two Secondary Schools located in the Koloti Circuit as the main research site. This school was selected due to its accessibility, its geographic context and its configuration with the research's concentration on Sepedi as the home language of teaching. Choosing 20 Grade 11 learners were involved in the process of attaining their willingness to partake, level of performance in Sepedi Home Language assessments, and gender demonstration to guarantee varied viewpoints. Grade 11 learners are targeted because they were in a serious stage of the Further Education and Training syllabus, where progressive writing abilities are anticipated to be established. This concentration will present valued perceptions about the aspects influencing their writing abilities and possible approaches of improvement.

### **1.11. DATA GENERATION METHODS**

Nchabeleng (2025) defines data collection as a systematic process that enabled the researcher to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes in order to obtain comprehensive data. Data collection involves the gathering of evidence from research participants or relevant data sources. In this study, two primary data collection methods were utilised, namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

#### **1.11.1. Semi-Structured Interviews**

Luo and Wildemuth (2009) indicate that interviews are associated with principles of confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent. Nchabeleng (2025) explains meanwhile that semi-structured interviews are flexible and non-formal in nature, allowing participants to introduce new ideas based on their lived experiences. Creswell and Poth (2016) notes that interviews constituted a form of guided dialogue in which data were generated and interpreted according to the researcher's focus and objectives. Semi-structured

interviews can be conducted in various settings, including physical, or electronic environments (Nchabeleng, 2025).

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face on the school premises. Interview questions were compiled in advance, and a selected number of learners participated in the data collection process. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were arranged with participants over a period of four days. Five learners were interviewed per day at each school. Each interview lasted approximately five minutes and was conducted in a quiet and convenient space provided by the school. This approach enabled the researcher to gain deeper insights into learners' perceptions and experiences of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.

#### **1.11.2. Document Analysis**

Nchabeleng (2025), describes document analysis as the systematic examination of documents to identify themes, codes, and meanings related to a research phenomenon. This method enabled the researcher to gain deeper insight into learners' writing experiences. In this study, learners were provided with an essay topic to write in Sepedi Home Language. The written scripts were analysed and reviewed to identify patterns, challenges, and recurring features in learners' writing.

Creswell (2009), emphasises that document analysis allowed researchers to obtain participants' authentic language and expressions. The learners' essays were therefore marked and analysed to assess common writing skills challenges. In addition, secondary sources such as journal articles, theses, and previous studies were consulted to enrich the analysis and support the interpretation of findings.

#### **1.12. Data Analysis**

Maguire and Delahunt (2017), assert that data analysis is central to the credibility of qualitative research. Data analysis involved identifying patterns, themes, and holistic characteristics to explain human behavior (Wickham, 2016). Qualitative data were collected through interviews and document analysis and were analysed using thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis is defined as a process of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Moreover, Dawadi (2020), describes thematic analysis as a systematic qualitative method used to structure and examine complex data sets. This method enabled the researcher to break down textual data into codes and themes, thereby facilitating meaningful interpretation (Rasairo, 2023). Thematic analysis was considered appropriate for this study because the themes generated from the data directly addressed learners' experiences of writing skills.

Dawadi (2020), further indicates that both deductive and inductive approaches could be employed to enhance analytical depth. The deductive approach involved analysing data using pre-existing themes derived from literature, while the inductive approach allowed themes to emerge directly from the data. In this study, a deductive approach to thematic content analysis was adopted. Common themes and codes were extracted from learners' experiences to identify challenges and propose ways to improve writing skills and inform future research.

### **1.13. TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

#### **1.13.1. Credibility**

Patton (1999) describes credibility as the extent to which research findings accurately represented participants' realities. Credibility in this study is ensured through triangulation, using both interviews and document analysis. Audio recordings, interview transcripts, and learners' written scripts were securely stored to allow for auditing and verification.

#### **1.13.2. Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings could be applied to similar contexts (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010). Detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and

procedures were provided to enable readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other secondary schools within the Koloti Circuit and Limpopo Province.

### **1.13.3. Dependability**

Dependability is defined as the consistency of findings in relation to the research context (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010). To ensure dependability, data were collected until no new themes emerged. A clear account of the research design, data collection procedures, and analysis methods were provided. Avizienis et al. (2001) emphasised that sufficient documentation enabled studies to be examined and replicated. Categories and themes were therefore clearly explained and systematically derived from the data.

### **1.13.4. Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent to which findings reflected participants' experiences rather than researcher bias (Thompson, 2012). In this study, participants' responses were reported accurately without distortion. An audit trail consisting of raw data, field notes, transcripts, and analysis records was maintained. Lincoln and Guba (1982), highlights the importance of confirmability in qualitative research, through thorough documentation, enabling future researchers to replicate the study using the same references and procedures.

## **1.14. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were prioritised throughout the study (Taherdoost, 2022), where all information provided by participants was treated as confidential. Arifin (2018) noted that participants' willingness to participate depended on respect for their privacy and rights. Three ethical principles guided the study, namely: autonomy, beneficence, and justice. Autonomy involves obtaining informed consent; beneficence ensured that participants were protected from harm; and justice ensured fairness and equality throughout the research process (Arifin, 2018).

### **1.14.1. Informed Consent**

Nijhawan et al. (2013) defines informed consent as voluntary agreement based on clear understanding of the research requirements. Creswell and Poth (2016) emphasised that participation should be voluntary and risk-free. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, title, and procedures, and were advised of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Parental consent was obtained for learners under the age of 18.

### **1.14.2. Research Permission**

Creswell and Poth (2016), states that ethical clearance ought to be obtained prior to data collection. Ethical approval is obtained from the University of South Africa (UNISA), and permission to conduct the study was granted by the school principals.

### **1.14.3. Anonymity and Confidentiality**

Nijhawan et al. (2013) emphasises the importance of protecting participants' identities. Pseudonyms and codes were used in place of real names, and all data were kept confidential to safeguard participants' privacy.

### **1.15. Possible Limitations of the Study**

The study experienced several limitations. Learners' availability for interviews was sometimes affected by academic commitments such as assessments and curriculum coverage. To mitigate this, arrangements were made to conduct interviews during weekends with parental consent. Limited access to online academic resources posed another challenge; this was addressed by using the research clearance certificate and institutional access. Lastly, some learners experienced difficulties completing written tasks during class time and producing legible handwriting. To overcome this, writing tasks were administered during study periods, and learners were encouraged to write neatly to ensure reliable data analysis.

### **1.16. Chapter Division**

This study was divided into five chapters.

### **1.16.1. Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter presented the background and motivation against which this study is conducted. It introduces the rationale, problem statement, aims of this study and significance of this study.

### **1.16.2. Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter presented the literature review on learner's experiences on writing skills, categories of writing, the importance of home language and other studies.

### **1.16.3. Chapter 3: Research methodology**

This chapter presented the methodology, qualitative research approach, phenomenology research style, paradigm, the data collection tools and analysis methods. It also outlines the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of this study.

### **1.16.4. Chapter 4: Data presentation and discussions**

This chapter presented the evidence and information collected through documentation analysis and semi-structured interviews. This information is categorised into themes and conclusions are drawn.

### **1.16.5. Chapter 5: Findings and recommendations**

This chapter presented the final major findings of the study. The findings are analysed and categorised, and recommendations will be made for learners, teachers, policy makers and the department of education.

### **1.17. Chapter Summary**

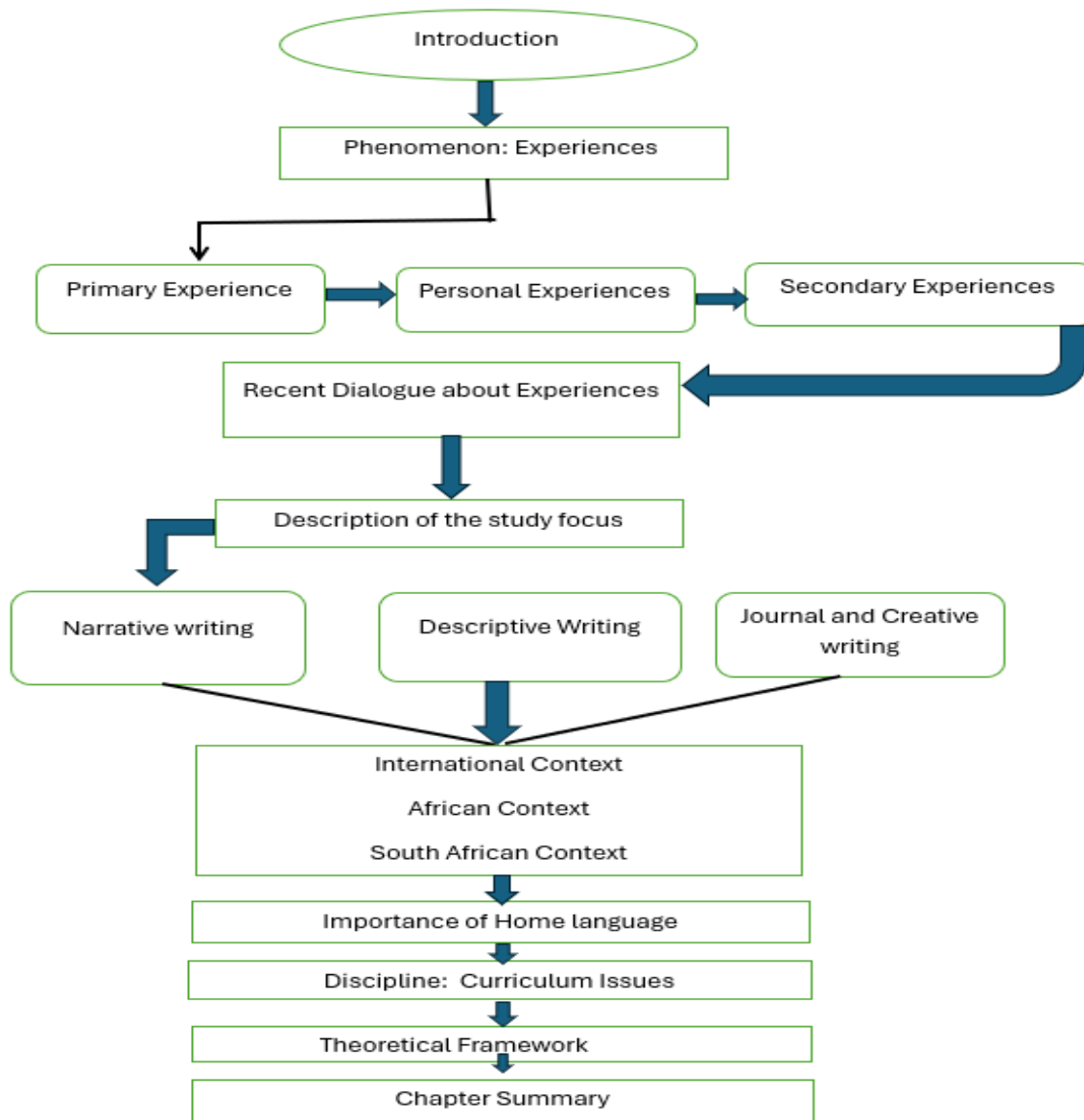
This Chapter introduced the study by outlining an overview of the study background, rationale and the research problem statement on Grade 11 learners' experiences of writing skills in Sepedi Home Language. Moreover, the chapter provided the study's objectives, aims and the research questions. This chapter outlined the theoretical framework namely: Socio-Cultural theory which sees learning as a socially mediated

process taking place through interactions, culture and context. Lastly, it covered the methodology used, indicating the use of interpretivism, a qualitative approach, a case study research design and limitations of the study and ethical considerations. The next chapter gives a brief detailed review of the literature related to this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW, CURRICULUM ISSUES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Figure 1: Chapter 2 (Flow Chat)



## **2.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter (Chapter One), I introduced the study, detailing the rationale, background and the relevant theoretical framework. Chapter One further presented the research questions and sub-questions, an overview significance of the study, preliminary literature review, which highlighted the important sub-topics to be covered in this study and the research problem statement, its aims, research methodologies to be applied during the collection of data, and lastly the different methods of generating data. This chapter explores a deeper understanding of different literature related to learners' experiences with writing skills in the Sepedi Home Language.

This chapter outlines the literature from different sources related to experiences viz. the phenomenon of the study, the key concepts and theories supporting this study. It provides a clear description of the phenomenon, its levels, and the primary and secondary experiences. Furthermore, this chapter explores the recent dialogues about learners' experiences, the deeper description of the study (writing skills) and its different categories, international, African and local context debates around the topic of learners' experiences, writing skills, and language learning. The discipline of this study, namely curriculum, and its issues, are discussed later in this chapter, after which conclusions will be drawn from all the discussions in this chapter.

## **2.2. Learner's Experiences**

Experience plays a critical role in the learning of a curriculum. Experience is a concept which was first used by an ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, who used the Greek term '*empeira*' referring to 'experience'. This phenomenon 'experience' concept is defined by Kant in the Critique of Pure Reasons as understanding experience as the fundamental aspect of human knowledge and perception'. From a phenomenological perspective Husserl used the concept of experience Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology, which focused on the structure of conscious experience, and subsequently, Dewey theorised the concept of experience in relation to education, focusing on the importance of experience in education.

According to Park and Kim (2022), the concept of 'experience' is not clearly defined and can be utilised in different fields of study such as sociology, education and management. The latter add that 'experience' originated from certain kinds of personal awareness such as sensation and perception, which provide an individual with the awareness of being present. In the scientific context, Aristotle (384-322 BCE) defines experience as a mental framework, which in turn gives rise to scientific and artistic inquiry. According to the 'father' of this concept in education, Dewey (1986) defines experience as a phenomenon that arises from the dynamic interaction between an individual and their environment, which influences and informs their understanding of the world around them.

In my way of thinking, experience constitutes an element that fosters growth and development in our daily lives. Hence, an experience is always what it is because of a proceeding taking place between humans, at the time and constitute their environment (Dewey, 1986). This is supported by Boaz (2010) who adds that an experience is a means of shaping our reflective awareness and enabling individuals to navigate and make sense of the world. There are two principles of experience, namely: continuity which is described as the experience relating to the individual; and interaction, relating to the environment (Dewey, 1986). As such, Park and Kim (2022) further classify the individual experiences as: personal experience acquired through interaction, and sensory and experience of the physical space in which a person is located.

In the same vein, Boaz (2010)), in his study '*Dewey's concept of experience*', outlines the two principles of experience: firstly, subjective space (personal experience), which are the kinds of experiences that include the internal, mental and intrinsic elements between the person and the environment. Secondly, the objective space (professional experiences) which include the external, professional, and measures of an individual. This suggests that the setting and the individual are important for experience to be had.

In the study of Park and Kim (2022), there are three classes of experience: firstly, the sensual thread of experience (sensory experiences). These are experiences that can be acquired through human senses, such as sight, smell and others. In other words, these kinds of experiences respond to external stimulus. Boaz (2010), agrees with Park and Kim (2022) that these kinds of experiences include the physical presence, the social

presence and the self-presence. Secondly, the judgmental thread of experience, which involves the individual's interaction with the internal judgement and the external environment. This includes the intrinsic and extrinsic locus of causality (LoC). Lastly, the compositional thread of experience, which includes components that comprise an experience. For instance, when learners read their books together in the classroom, the books are the element of this kind of experience.

On the other hand, Dewey (1986) emphasises that learners in traditional schools do have experience. The latter author adds that, in education, to attain its goal both for the individual learner and the society must be based upon experience. In other words, experience is an important component of education, because experience contributes to the growth, intellect, and learning of the learners. According to Acampado (2019), maintains that education would lead to development of experience. The latter study further identifies educative and mis-educative experiences; educative experiences must be engaging and immediate, leading to other experiences and mis-educative experiences 'distorts' and 'arrests'. This means that experiences that are not educational may hinder the growth and progress of the learners in school.

As a result, this study explores the educative experiences that Grade 11 learners go through in their everyday lives, which are engaging, leading from past to future experiences in their writing skills. Ermolaos (2012) differentiates the two classes of experience in Dewey study of understanding experience, where the study defines primary experiences as composing of material interaction with the physical and social environment. Secondary experience is a contemplative experience that makes the environment and its objects of reflection and knowledge. This study outlines three categories of experiences when answering the research question. Namely, personal, primary, and secondary experiences, as represented in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Levels of Experience**

### **2.2.1. Primary experiences (physical and social environment)**

Park and Kim (2022) define the primary experience category as a criterion of an experience that is made of material interaction with the social and physical setting. Further to this Dewey (1938) maintains that the primary experience can be understood as a everyday experience with the world around us. In the study conducted by Ralston (2009) about the ebb and flow of the primary and secondary experiences, the findings of the study emphasise that, according to Dewey, most human experience is not a *knowing* event, but it is a *having* event. In addition to that, the latter study defines primary experiences as a criterion of experience that is had without much conscious reflection or consideration. This means that this kind of experience takes place raw and unexamined. For instance, in this study, the primary experiences would include the learners' writing challenges, learning strategies, and the school environment. As such, Ermolaos (2012) maintains that primary experiences make up the foundation of our everyday life. On the other hand, these kinds of experiences are our firsthand and reality.

The term 'social presence' (primary experiences) involves creating an inclusive and supportive surrounding where learners feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experience a sense of belonging (Ngubane & Makua, 2021). For instance, classrooms and the school environment are the aspects of primary experience for secondary school learners. This is supported by Ramothwala et al. (2021) by outlining that these experiences involve direct immediate interaction with the social and physical world. By the same sentiments, Ngubane and Makua (2021), agrees that such a setting would be able to assist the learners with skills needed to address societal needs. Meaning that,

these types of experiences shape learners' experiences, understanding of the environment and how to engage with the world around them in a school context. Park and Kim (2022), conducted a study to identify the world types in the metaverse to deliver a gameful experience to users, the study employed a bottom-up approach based on the real cases where the study findings comprised from experience which were examined from the basis of their three-experience thread.

One of the threads outlined named 'judgement thread of experience' outlined as an experience that takes place when judgements are made by an individual and affects their internal and external environment. In the context of this study, this means that learners draw their experiences from their surroundings or the type of environment in which they find themselves. Hence, Ramothwala et al. (2021), show that the differences in Sepedi and Khelobedu dialects are wide and has a negative influence on the learners' writing skills. It can be inferred that capturing the diversity of learners' experiences is important (Zhu & Li, 2025). This means that looking into learners' experiences regarding their writing skills becomes crucial as it will give learners voice. More importantly, learners fail Sepedi Home Language (Paper 3- Essay and transactional texts) due to their lack of writing skills. This is supported by (Ramothwala et al., 2021), who notes that the errors that learners commit in Sepedi writing are worse because teachers penalise them, and it negatively affects their performance.

### **2.2.2. Personal Experiences (Individual Experiences)**

Park and Kim (2022) classify individual experiences as: personal experience acquired through interaction, and sensory and experience of the physical space in which a person is located. Continuity, as one of the criteria of experience, describes the aspects of it as relating to an individual (Kolb, 2014). This suggests that personal experiences have to do with how individuals see, think and relate to what they are going through (situation) which may influence their attitudes and thoughts. This is supported by Dewey (1938) alluding that experience influences the formation of actions, purpose, and like or dislikes. Similarly, Kolb (2014) adds that, in continuity, the characteristics focus on the individual learner viewed as their key design element. In reference to this study, personal experiences may include learners' own perceptions about writing skills, attitudes towards home language,

learning strategies, and the influence of dialect languages. As such, according to Kureel (2025), a psychological understanding of experience relates to mental processes, including memory, creativity, thinking and logical reasoning and belief system. Furthermore, Boaz (2012) categorises personal experiences as 'subjective space', which refers to the kind of experiences that are internal, inherent, and mental.

This view is further supported by Park and Kim(2022), who agree that these experiences are associated with what they named 'self-presence', which allows an individual to experience their presence in a specific environment or situation. This means that the environment where the individual performs an 'action' or experiences something is essential to their personal growth. Similarly, this is supported by Dewey (1986) alluding that every experience ought to do something in individuals to prepare them for a deeper and more quality experience. This means that both bad and good experiences are important in the development of individuals.

The personal level of experience, according to Ngubane and Makua (2021) is referred to as 'cognitive presence', which implies that the emphasis of cognitive or personal experience is to assist learners to know and understand one's identity based on one's needs. This suggests that majority of learners go through experiences differently, for instance, one may experience writing skills based on what he/she knows and the other may see it based on how he/she was taught in class. This means that learners have a more internal conscious intelligence to learn than external influence has on their intelligence. For this reason, Boaz (2012) maintains that this experience stresses the relationship between the subjective (personal) and objective (external factors). Learners' experiences of and reaction towards the objective factors are driven by their beliefs, love, passion, past knowledge, emotions and habits (Kureel, 2025). Moreover, personal experiences are shaped by self-interpretation, thinking and emotions. In this study, looking into personal experiences of secondary school learners may provide insightful information. Some of the learners' lack of vocabulary and basic writing skills were influenced by the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning. Some learners' negative writing skills are influenced by their geographical locations. This is supported by (Ramothwala et al., 2021) emphasising that the learners' cultural differences may create

barriers that limit their ability to engage with new information on a cognitive and emotional level. This means that cultural and geographical background can create difficulties in learning and that learners who have had bad social and personal experience in learning writing skills, due to how they were taught negatively impact their knowledge and content experience.

### **2.2.3. Secondary Experiences (Knowledge and Content)**

Secondary experience, as a reflective criterion that makes the setting and its things as objects of knowledge and reflection Park and Kim (2022). Furthermore, Ganeson and Ehrich (2009), adds that secondary experience reflects primary experience and is intellectually oriented. The secondary level of experience, according to Ngubane and Makua (2021), defines it as 'teaching presence', which is a criterion that focuses on the importance of effective pedagogy that shapes the learning experience and seeks to create a learning environment that is inclusive of all the learners' needs. In other words, these are the kinds of experiences that learners indirectly engage with the content or knowledge presented to them in class. This means that learners stick to school and subject policies in all their learning experiences.

Ralston(2009) posits that, in secondary experiences (content and knowledge), inquiry objectives are met, leading to the development of new knowledge that informs everyday experiences, with the content compiled by the teacher such as study material, textbook, lessons and more. Park and Kim (2022) concur with Ngubane and Makua (2021) that these experiences are 'compositional thread of experience', which refers to elements that make up the experience. For example, a teacher who is conducting a lesson in the classroom and learners are the elements of this experience. According to Ngubane and Makua (2021), this type of experience is assorted with 'teaching presence' as it focuses on setting a climate and choosing content to be prescribed to learners. This means that, for knowledge experience to happen, teaching and learning must happen in the classroom. Sepedi Home Language curriculum in South Africa is prescribed as part of CAPS. The prescription includes Language skills development, language structures and conventions, Literature and Assessments (DBE, 2011).

### **2.3. Recent dialogues on learners' experiences.**

The recent dialogues pertaining learners' experiences emphasise the connection of the primary, secondary, and personal aspects in shaping the outcomes in the education system. According to Kureel (2025), learners' perceptions are influenced by various factors, such as the habits of the person with whom they are in contact, the influences of the school environment, and the subject matter in the current educational aims and goals. This is true because the experience of learners on subject matter is mostly linked with secondary experiences and the school environment, which are primary experiences, and lastly, who they interact with may influence their own personal experiences. Moreover, Dewey (1938) emphasises that every experience influences and shapes to some degree the context in which future experiences occur. In support of this assertion, Kureel (2025) emphasises that experiences are temporally complex, interconnected and leave a lasting impact those that come afterwards.

Learners require past experiences from families and communities (personal) to link to new experiences in academic situations (Primary and Secondary experiences), and these experiences encourage learners to learn (Park & Kim, 2022). This suggests that secondary school learners may have negative experience with writing skills due to the misspellings found in their essays and transactional text. Ramothwala et al. (2021) supports this by stating that errors that learners make in Sepedi writing can be costly because teachers penalise them, where their performance is affected negatively, and most school pass percentages drop due to failure in Sepedi HL results. This is supported by Nondabula and Nomlomo (2023), who state that learners' experiences language-related challenges. For instance, many learners also experience language differences where they speak and write their Moletji spoken language, for example: omission of vowels, they use "O" instead of "go" and "gedimo" instead of "godimo", to mention a few. As such, learners who obtain low average marks in their final examination as a result of existing of extra linguistic and language factors experienced by learners throughout their academic years (Khetoa, 2019). As such, factors affecting learners' writing skills may be sustained by their primary, personal, and secondary experiences.

In contrast, Ermolaos (2012) argues that it is not easy to see how philosophical and scientific experience is possible or even how learners' school activities could generate experiences. Dewi (2021) argues that learners' experiences affect their motivation, attitudes, behaviour and response in the learning process. Moreover, Ngubane and Khetoa (2019) maintain that, when learners know and understand their identities, they can draw from social (primary) and professional (secondary) actions in presenting their needs. The latter study demonstrates that in their study, cognitive presence helps learners with visual impairment to find their identities (personal experiences) and learn from their strength. This means that, through personal experiences learners can share their sentiments, ideas, express their contradictions and acknowledge affirmations from friends and teachers. Ermolaos (2012) support this by asserting that behaviour to be described or clarified is the analysis of personal experiences. Therefore, this means that learners' learning experiences can be analysed through their behaviour around the school, their subject content and peers. (Park and Kim, 2022) agree with Ermolaos (2012) where they demonstrate that the learning experience is expanded by encouraging interaction between learners and educational environment, learners and teachers and between learners.

Avci and Kalelioğlu (2019), share the same sentiment with Boyarchuk et al. (2019) and Wood (2019) by maintaining that the experiences of learners and their academic experience are reflected in their professional lives later. This is supported by several other scholars (see for example Acampado (2019); (Kureel, 2025)), who argue that habits from past experiences affect future experiences. For example, the impact of Covid-19 had a negative impact on teaching and learning thus leading to content gaps, where learners fail to master their writing skills at lower levels. Dube (2020) and Sengai et al. (2022) support this by stating that the move to online learning and teaching as opposed to the traditional method to education was unavoidable, many learners in rural context find themselves excluded from schooling due to lack of infrastructure, unavailability of gadgets and electricity during Covid-19. In the study of Avci and Cabı and Kalelioglu (2019) exploring learners' experiences, the finding indicated there are quality problems in the education sector. For instance, learners showed that they did not get feedback about projects from their instructors. This means that learners experience inconsistency of

feedback from educators regarding their written text and this had a negative impact on their studies.

Therefore, this means that learners develop negative attitudes towards writing skills, as they are not regularly given constructive feedback. Adebayo et al. (2024) share the same sentiments and suggest that teachers ought to do regular corrections of the written work given to learners so that learners are able to reflect on their writing mistakes, grammar, and language usage. This study therefore explores learners' experiences looking at their personal, primary, and secondary errors. Furthermore, the literature argues that the experiences are intertwined to contribute to learning experiences. Mashhadizadeh and Rezvani (2015) conducted the study to explore the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes, and the findings of the study indicated that learners' experiences towards using the WBLL approach for assistance, apart from personal English writings were positive.

Moreover, Moletsane et al. (2014) conducted a study regarding learners' experiences of learning support in selected Western Cape schools. The study found that learners' fear of asking for help from their teachers and the teachers negative response leads to negative attitudes and mistrust of learners. This means that learners' experiences may be negative or positive while learning a home language. The average and poor learner performance reflected in the findings of Ramothwala et al. (2021) study, shows that learners cannot express their ideas clearly in Sepedi Home Language, suggesting a negative learner writing experience (secondary experience). This means that school learners draw their experiences from the content or subject matter at school.

#### **2.4. What are writing skills?**

Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the categories applied to language skills. Therefore, according to Yadav et al. (2020), writing is considered as a very important skill among all the other skills. The latter study further explains that it may take many years to develop writing skills and to be accurate, proficient, and fluent in these skills. As such, Dhanya and Alamelu (2019) define writing as a tool that equips learners to enable their thinking and craft their communication effectively. A learner's writing skills in home language ought to be developed and strengthened, because the learner must be able to

consolidate his/her home language skills, and will then easily be able to acquire skills in other languages (Veriava, 2017).

Zhu and Li (2025) refer to writing skills as 'writing performance', which they outline that it is not only related to the sentence structures and vocabulary that learners usually learn, but involves content richness, which is related to the learner's experience and perception of context. Composing (writing) is a process whereby opinions are put into text (written form), the text in an essay is different depending on the content of the writer (Chandra& verma, 2024). English is the LOLT (Language of Teaching and Learning) is used to teach in all the subjects in schools. As much as English is used, learners are still struggling to showcase their writing skills. Adam et al. (2021), prove this when they assert that one of the issues that arise in English classroom and confront teachers is teaching English writing skills. In other words, this means that teachers draw their teachings from secondary experiences which they need to teach according to the curriculum outlined.

Dhanya and Alamelu (2019), observe that learners encounter abundant difficulties while writing. This means that learners can draw their personal experiences when engaging in writing activities. These difficulties can cause learners to have negative experiences on writing (Yadav et al., 2020). Writing skills need to be completely understood, because they form a strong foundation for creative writing especially in a secondary school context (Makgai, 2022). In other words, learners must be competent in their writing skills when they enter Secondary school. Dhanya and Alamelu (2019) add that there are a lot of factors that affect writing for both learners and teachers. This means that learners may perceive writing as boring, and teachers think teaching writing is a waste of time. Yadav et al. (2020) adds that writing skill is very complex and difficult to learn. Learners find it difficult to learn how to enhance their writing skills. Adebayo et al. (2024), argue that social interaction proves important to the development of writing. This means that learners can draw primary experiences by doing group work activities with their peers in their classrooms. This means that if learners are given more group work aligned with their curriculum (secondary experience), this may have a positive impact on the cognitive development (primary experience) of writing skills.

Ramothwala et al. (2021), in their study of exploring the writing experiences of Xhosa speaking learners in Sepedi HL, alludes that the learner's cultural awareness might hinder them from making emotional and cognitive links. This means that learners' experience of linguistic variations in class and of their cultural background might hinder learner's writing skills. According to Adam et al. (2021), in Indonesia, one of the challenges that arise in English classroom and confronts teachers in teaching English is teaching English writing skills. Dewey (1986) agrees with Adam et al. (2021) by stating that in Indonesian writing class, the learners learned to express their ideas in the form of written language, where most of them have challenges expressing the ideas in written foreign language. In other words, learners struggling to write down their ideas on paper, because they lack personal/secondary or primary experience. This is supported by Zhu and Li (2025), who state that learners do not have the chance to have a deeper understanding of the context of the topic.

Spelling proves to be an important aspect of writing in any language (Ramothwala et al., 2021). The latter adds that learners spell as they speak, showing that learners have limited vocabulary in Sepedi and consequently end up using Xhosa in Sepedi HL writing. Learners' experience writing skills as difficult and boring, due to a lack of motivation from teachers. Most learners in Indonesian schools are influenced by many factors, such as a lack of approaches and writing strategies, lack of learner's inability to translate words into context, lack of vocabulary, and learners' low motivation (Dewi, 2021). Moreover, Zhu and Li (2025) adds that learners usually have very limited expression in the writing process. This is supported by Dhanya and Alamelu (2019), who assert that the acquisition of writing skills is based on motivation of the learners and a healthy teacher-learner relationship. Overcrowded classes are some of the challenges that can hinder teaching writing skills effectively. Dhanya and Alamelu (2019), argue that a positive and engaging environment conducive for writing is needed. Therefore, in secondary school, learners find themselves being taught in overcrowded classes where teachers fail to teach effectively, and this has a negative impact on their learning. This means that learners need to draw their primary experiences by engaging in a conducive environment in order for learning and teaching to be effective.

## **2.5. Categories of Writing skills**

### **2.5.1. Narrative writing skills**

Veriava (2017) define narrative writing as a presentation of events in a meaningful sequence. Rezai et al. (2022), add that narrative writing involves the common type of writing found in elementary schools. In other words, this writing skills is part of the learning assessment prescribed by the languages CAPS document under the skills of writing and presenting. As such, Setiani et al. (2025) agrees with Rezai et al. (2022), who emphasise that writing skills can be improved when narrative text writing skills are improved in schools. The latter further shows that narrative writing also demonstrates skills that are challenging for learners to master. Learners' narrative texts show that they lack grammar and vocabulary when writing narrative texts. This suggests that learners are driven by their personal experiences when writing narrative texts. There are many challenges for learners in mastering these skills, including: the inability of teachers to teach, learners' interest, strategies and methods, teaching materials, duration and learning environment (Cele et al., 2025).

### **2.5.2. Descriptive writing skills**

Nystrand (2023) provides definition of descriptive writing as a way of writing whereby the reader can get the message about a specific object written by the writer in descriptive text. Descriptive writing is both decorative and practical (Ramuedzisi, 2022). Secondary school learners struggle to write coherently when given a descriptive text to write and this is because they lack vocabulary usage and cannot express their ideas correctly. In the Department of Basic Education (2011) document it shows that in descriptive writing, learners must be able to use pictures of insight, sound, touch and taste, hearing using words. In other words, descriptive writing requires learners to paint a picture with words.

Botha (2022) supports this by stating that vocabulary is a very important part of descriptive writing. The latter further adds that the writer must create feelings, and a clear view of the object described so that the reader can imagine, feel and understand the object clearly. According to Department of Basic Education (2020), descriptive writing requires the writer

to write about their own experience. It is essential to review the learner's descriptive text to improve their writing skills (Reno, 2024). This is evident in the study conducted by the study of Mashhadizadeh and Rezvani (2015) exploring Iranian Learners' attitudes in writing, therefore the findings reflected that learners make meaningful and noticeable improvement in their writing skills in learning to use correct grammar and use vocabulary correctly. This suggests that learners ought to draw from their primary experiences (e.g being able to describe their surroundings (the smell of rainy school day), and personal experiences (using sensory experiences to describe) in order to be able to write descriptively.

### **2.5.3. Creative and journal writing**

D'Souza et al. (2021), defines journal and creative writing as a way of developing the habit of writing one's thoughts on paper. Nystrand (2023) adds that creative writing ought to be taught, as it constitutes one of the most important writing skills. A positive secondary experience and attitudes (personal experience) are drawn from learners' text as they feel confident writing in their own space and pace. This is supported by D'Souza et al. (2021), who argues that in classes, writing activities are associated with making learners nervous, where journal writing decreases the distance between the learners and teachers. In other words, teachers need to review learners' journal writing skills in such a way that might enable them to motivate and improve learners' writing skills in class. This suggests that learners need to draw from their personal and secondary experiences to acquire good writing skills in journaling. Desimone et al. (2025), support this notion by stating that what assists in achieving good creative writing skills is by reading appropriate texts and support from teachers.

## **2.6. Context**

### **2.6.1. International context**

On the international level, academic writing is predominantly carried out in English as it is the language of communication. According to Rezai et al. (2022), in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the need to write in English as an international language has accumulated more attention

due to globalisation and technological advances. Similarly, Luo et al (2022) defines writing skills in Chinese as a second language referring to the ability of the process of reproducing knowledge, experiences of thoughts, insights and emotions into Chinese characters to convey a message to others. This means that, across the globe, writing skills require learners to convey their thoughts and emotions on paper to make meaning to the reader. Chandra and Verma (2024), adds that, in the Chinese language, the Chinese characters include tone, meaning and form, where they ought to be taught as a unit rather than separate parts. Chinese learners commit grammatical errors when they write essays, articles and journals (Luo et al, 2022). This is because, according to Dewey (1986) many aspects influence learners' ability to translate words in context, come up with common vocabulary, lack of writing approaches and low motivation on written tasks.

Another important point made by Zhou (2023), shows that learners do not have the opportunity to create a sense of meaning of the context of the topic. For instance, in most cases, learners choose essay topics that they do not even understand or have no glue on what the topic requires from them. Dewi (2021) conducted a study to explore Indonesian learners' experiences on writing skills, the findings showed that indeed learners do not decide on the topic before engaging in writing activities or write an outline, no editing and proofreading of their work. In comparison, the study of Rezai et al. (2022) conducted to determine how self-assessment reports improve in Iranian High school learners writing skills, the findings showed a great improvement in the learners' writing skills in terms of language, content and organisation. This means that learners draw their experiences from primary experiences as they learn from their self-assessment. Moreover, lack of grammatical knowledge, not being familiar with the Chinese language expressions and lack of basic knowledge may affect learners writing skills (Luo et al, 2022).

### **2.6.2. African context**

Adebayo et al. (2024) outlines that in the English language curriculum, particularly within the Nigerian education context, more focus is on the importance of writing skills. The latter authors define writing as a core language skill that allows learners to coherently express their ideas, enhance critical thinking, and communicate proficiently. This is why, Msanjila

(2005) emphasises that the Tanzanian Kiswahili syllabus requires learners to be taught writing skills from the first two years of secondary education.

This means that learners learn writing skills effectively, where they should be taught in early grades. In an academic setting, writing skills prove important for learners to excel in their lessons (Majyambere et al, 2024). This means that learners need to draw from their secondary experiences from the contact lessons they have in classroom. On the contrary, Majyambere et al. (2024) outline that one of the challenges in Rwanda is the limited access to education for learners. This means that this may hinder the learning development and lead to illiterate learners. Many learners struggle to develop writing skills due to aspects such as inadequate classroom activities, traditional teaching and lack of strategies (Adebayo et al., 2024). In Tanzania, according to Msanjila (2005), many learners do not know how to differentiate writing as an activity and writing as a skill.

### **2.6.3. South African Context on writing skills**

In South Africa, the teaching of writing skills is prescribed and guided by the curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Research shows that South African learners face various difficulties in developing writing skills. Ramothwala et al. (2021), conducted a study to explore the writing experiences of Xhosa speaking learners in learning Sepedi Home Language, the latter study demonstrating that writing is a pivotal and foundational language skill, as far as language proficiency is involved, especially in South African high schools. This means that writing skills ought to be emphasised in all the parts of the curriculum prescribed, because this gives learners more chances of excelling academically. Sharing the same sentiments, Mhlongo et al. (2023) maintain that writing is a crucial skill to a learner who is exiting from secondary to either tertiary level, or the employment sector. This means that for learners to be competent in their writing skills before exiting secondary school, more emphasis should be put in Grade 11 and 10. This is proven by Maphalala and Mpofu (2018), noting that the inability to show literacy skills by Grade 12 learners reflects a problem coming from the lower grades. Most Grade 10 learners do not have the skills to write meaningful essays (Makgai, 2022).

According to Pretorius and Mampuru (2007), learners use their home language for speaking, with limited opportunities to develop formal writing skills in South African languages. The latter scholars further show that schools often prioritise English language even in the Foundation Phase, which makes the development of the mother tongue weak. In a South African context, there are various languages that are taught as home languages in schools. According to Department of Basic Education (2024), National Senior Certificate (NSC) pass rates 2023 shows that isiZulu = 85%, Sepedi =76% and Xitsonga = 72%. This means that learners experiences languages differently. Mkhize (2016) agrees that compared to other African languages, isiZulu has more textbooks, graded readers, fiction books, supporting writing development. This means that isiZulu speaking learners draw their secondary experiences from the availability of material in their home language.

On the other hand, Kamwendo (2010) shows that Sepedi is often looked down upon and proves less valuable than English and other languages in academic and professional settings, which may lead to lack of motivation for learners to master their home language writing skills. This means that Sepedi speaking learners draw their experiences from their social and physical setting (primary experience). The unworthiness and negative attitudes (personal experience) towards Sepedi home language affects learners' primary experiences towards learning of writing (secondary experiences).

## **2.7. The importance of home language**

The new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa has made the following languages the 11 official languages in South Africa; Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Siswati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, Afrikaans and English. One of the aims of the language policy of Department of Basic Education (2015) is to (i) develop and promote all official languages; (ii) to limit disadvantages from various kinds of mismatches between home languages and languages of teaching and learning. However, Sebolai and Ogutu (2012) argues that the inclusion of the African languages in teaching and learning has not been possible as the languages are underdeveloped as languages of learning, teaching, and academia.

Moreover, Adebayo et al. (2024) state that a language serves as the foundation of communication, facilitating the sharing of thoughts, information and feelings among individuals. Home language refers to a language the learner knows best, and is most comfortable reading, writing, and speaking (Murtiningsih et al., 2025). Moreover, Adebayo et al. (2024) argue that 'mother tongue' also referred as 'native language' refers to a language that a person acquires from birth. Sepedi is a home language mostly used in other areas of Limpopo Province. It is used as home languages to most public secondary schools and as a first additional languages in schools where English is used as Home Language.

The aims of the Ministry of Education's policy for language education as stated by Botha (2022) are: (i) to promote and develop all the official languages; (ii) to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home language and languages of learning and teaching. Sepedi as a home language is crucial for the promotion of the learners to the next grade. This is supported by the Department that declared how a learner achieves 40% in three subjects, one which is an official language at home language level, and 30% in three subjects. Meaning that if a learner fails a home language, he/she repeats a grade.

According to Reno (2024), somehow home languages seem to be looked upon with unworthiness, and their use is limited. This is supported by Khetoa (2019), who states that learners in secondary schools are aware of the insignificance placed on native languages, this reality causes them to put more focus on achieving higher proficiency in their language of assessment, therefore dedicating less time for acquisition of their own mother tongue languages. This means that, for learners to do well in their writing skills, greater emphasis ought to be put on acquiring their home languages.

## **2.8. Discussion on the discipline 'Curriculum'**

Curriculum is a wide and complex concept. Its significance to this research depends on how it influences learners' realities and results mostly in a setting of writing abilities in Sepedi home language. Thijs and Van Den Akker (2009) point out that the term curriculum comes from a latin verb '*currere*' meaning to run. Desimone et al. (2025), define the

curriculum as the incorporation of authorised subjects that will be taught in schools, content, activities together with organisational approaches that direct the learning process. This resonates well with Korobkova et al. (2025) assertion that curriculum functions as a carrier of standards, together with abilities that are important in education.

In the same way, Thijs and Van Den Akker (2009) posit that in the education context, the definition of this 'curriculum' is viewed as a 'course for learning'. The latter author shows that other terms such as Dutch '*leerplan*'; German '*Lehrplan*' and Swedish '*laropha*' also reflect the definition of curriculum as a plan for learning. Mulenga (2018), defines curriculum as a carrier of beliefs, values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and all that education is about. In other words, curriculum is not only about the content that is taught in school. It is also about the different experiences and interactions that take place in the classroom during the teaching and learning.

In the study of Khoza (2015b) different curriculums in South Africa are outlined as: firstly, Christian National Education (CNE); secondly, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was introduced in 1998; thirdly, in 2005 National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was introduced. Recently, since 2009, South African Schools implemented the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). In Sepedi Home Language the curriculum functions as a structure where writing abilities are created. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) summarised specific results and capabilities that learners are anticipated to attain proficiency in writing. However, issues such as inadequate alignment amid learners' cultural settings and curriculum necessities the effective skill growth (Abulibdeh et al., 2024).

### **2.8.1. Levels of Curriculum**

Khoza (2015b), as well as Thijs and Van Den Akker (2009) have identified the levels of curriculum as follows:

The international curriculum, which is referred to as 'SUPRA'. This is the international curriculum vision and goals of striving to make all learners become successful language

learners and appreciate the value of learning the first and second language (Ministry for Education, 2016). The common international framework for languages. The National Curriculum, referred to as 'MACRO', According to García-Vandewalle García et al. (2023), these are the aims of the policies, educational objectives and goals. For instance, CAPS is the official national document designed at national level. Moreover, institutional/School curriculum referred to as 'MESO', this level of curriculum is designed by schools. According to García-Vandewalle García et al. (2023), maintains that it involves educational school projects, materialising through intermediate bodies. For instance, school behaviour and school uniform policy. Therefore, classroom/teacher Curriculum referred to as 'micro', these are curricular products that include lesson materials and resources. For example, teacher- learner classwork activities, group discussions and presentations. The learner curriculum referred to as 'NANO', refers to how a learner learns during the teaching and learning process. For example, writing down notes and creating self-study timetable.

## **2.8.2. Three representations of Curriculum**

### **2.8.2.1. Intended Curriculum**

According to Khoza (2015b) this form of curriculum is a plan for learning and teaching. The intended curriculum has two forms, namely, formal and ideal curriculum (Phaeton & Stears, 2016). This means that the learning objectives, content and assessments that learners are expected to learn constitute the ideal and formal curriculum. This is supported by (Khoza, 2015a); Khoza (2015b) who notes that the intended curriculum is a formal written policy of opinions that are structured by educational vision with set goals of teaching and learning. For instance, the South African CAPS document for Sepedi Home Language would include the aims, descriptions of the content, time allocation, language skills and assessment guideline.

Similarly, Mulenga (2018) adds that this is a formal dimension prescribed by the curriculum designers and specialist in documents such as syllabus, content and subject outline in the curriculum. This demonstrates that intended curriculum is a master of all the representations of the curriculum, because it is the main document outlining what learners

must learn. For this reason, Thijs and Van Den Akker (2009) intended refers to the influence of curriculum developers and policy makers. In the context of this study, this means that for learners to achieve the goals of the intended curriculum in Sepedi HL Paper 3, they need to draw from their secondary experiences. Learners need to be well-equipped with the content and knowledge (secondary experiences) acquired from the CAPS policy document.

In the South African context, the intended curriculum is outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). According to the DBE (2011) the CAPS document emphasises writing skills as the core component of language subject (home language, first additional and second additional languages). Moreover, this curriculum requires learners to engage in writing processes such as mind-mapping (planning), drafting, editing and publishing. Intended curriculum (CAPS) is more about the teaching of the writing process, rather than the final product. During the process of writing, learners are taught how to generate ideas, to think about the purpose and write drafts, and edit work to present a written product that communicates their thoughts (DBE, 2011).

### **2.8.2.2. Implemented Curriculum**

This is the form of curriculum that is about real life in school and the classroom practices. According to Costley and Armsby (2007) this form of curriculum considers the knowledge and skills of teachers in interpreting the ideas of the curriculum developers and putting them into practice. This means that the resources, teaching materials and methods that teachers utilise in class assist them in delivering the curriculum prescribed. Khoza (2015a), Thijs and Van Den Akker (2009) and Khoza (2015b) agree with this notion by stating that this is a practiced curriculum, which interprets the intended curriculum as perceived by educators and the process of teaching in operation. This suggests that implemented curriculum requires learners to draw from their secondary experiences (content and knowledge) reflecting on their prior and past knowledge and what they are presently taught in the classroom. The implemented curriculum therefore contributes to their learner-centred strategy that enhances their critical thinking and writing skills.

Umalusi (2023) National Senior Certificates (NSC) reports show that in the implementation curriculum, many learners experience difficulties with essay and creative writing, due to poor foundational skills. This means that from the secondary experiences that learners are expected to draw from may lead to learners having negative learning experiences. The DBE (2011) CAPS document supports this by showing that, while the CAPS document promotes strong writing development, the implemented curriculum faces challenges such as poor foundation skills (writing), teacher shortage and large classes limiting feedback.

### **2.8.2.3. Attained Curriculum**

Thijs and Van Den Akker (2009) asserts that this kind of curriculum has to do with learners. This means that it is a learner-centred curriculum. According to Khoza (2016), this can be defined as the plan of learning and teaching. For instance, it includes the class activities, tests, exams, and the overall outcomes of learning that show what a learner has learned. Khoza (2015a) supports this by stating that assessed and achieved curriculum which is the experience of learning perceived by learners as measured through their achievement of learning outcomes. This means that learners are driven by their own personal experiences in attaining their learning goals.

### **2.8.3. Types of curriculum and Issues**

#### **2.8.3.1. The Hidden Curriculum (Personal experience)**

According to these studies Cubukcu (2012); (Kärner & Schneider, 2024; Merfat, 2015) a hidden curriculum consist of unstated values, norms and behaviours that exist in the educational environment, influencing learners' learning experiences. In this way, this kind of curriculum requires that learners should be trained indirectly. For instance, learners are given classroom rules and policies on school uniforms and discipline in the school which may positively influence their behavior and learning. This is supported by (Merfat, 2015)emphasising that learners are being put in disadvantaged situations with their peers in the classroom since they are not aware about the rules and goals of this curriculum.

This means that the hidden curriculum is as important as the official curriculum prescribed in schools. Salim et al. (2024) support this statement by stating that this informal 'hidden' curriculum compliments the formal one, focusing on character development and shaping learners' social norms, values, behaviours through implicit lessons and experience. This means that, in the context of this study, the learning of hidden curriculum should be driven by personal experiences as it benefits learners' learning experiences in their school subject. This type of curriculum encompasses real life experiences (Cubukcu, 2012). One of the issues of a hidden curriculum according to Merfat (2015) is that educators can make issue of the informal curriculum 'hidden' and influence negatively on their learners' when they do not understand the hidden curriculum well. This means that both teachers and learners need to comprehend this curriculum to understand it. Moreover, Salim and Rajabiyah (2025) shows that the hidden curriculum has a direct connection with the social and personal experiences of learners in their everyday lives in the school environment.

#### **2.8.3.2. The Null curriculum (Primary experience)**

Tatar and Adıgüzel (2019) share the same sentiments with Gholami et al. (2016) define null curriculum as important content and processes that are neglected or ignored in the educational framework. This means that these are the important parts of the curriculum that are intentionally or unintentionally removed and would be beneficial to learners. Similarly, the null curriculum encourages a critical analysis of the curriculum, revealing what is omitted, content excluded and exploring how it is developed and conceptualise (Gholami et al., 2016). In the context of the phenomenon of this study, this type of curriculum allows Sepedi Home Language learners to draw from their primary experiences (physical and social environment) in order to learn good writing skills in the classroom. This means that learners depend on the interaction with their social environments to enhance their writing skills, since some of the important parts of Sepedi Paper 3 are removed in the curriculum (CAPS) document prescribed in schools.

Gholami et al. (2016) add that some of the causes of the removal of content is because of the preferred educational need of administrators, policy makers, lack of knowledge by teachers and instructor's biasness. For instance, in Sepedi Paper 3, some of the content remove include the teaching and learning of phonetics and writing, designing cards etc.

This means that learners will continue experiencing writing challenges, and lack of learning strategies in their Paper 3 Sepedi HL, where they do not draw positively from their primary experience (null curriculum) since some of the content has been removed. Moreover, according to Tatar and Adigüzel (2019) argue that this curriculum has some controversial aspects, such as to provide for the development of democratic values and moral reasoning. The latter authors further elaborate that these issues enable learners to be interested in taking part in politics and this would enhance their critical and interpersonal skills.

### **2.8.3.3. Explicit Curriculum (Secondary experiences)**

This is the type of curriculum that indicates how the teacher analyses the formal curriculum and how he/she conducts a lesson in the classroom (Tatar & Adigüzel, 2019). The explicit curriculum in the Sepedi Home Language official document (CAPS) would consist of aims, time allocation, assessment, guidelines and prescribed topics. Adding to that, Tatar and Adigüzel (2019) outlines that the explicit curriculum is one designed carefully, as tested by learners and teachers, and presented in the form of curriculum material for schools. The content of a designed curriculum consists of goals, objectives, and organisation of lessons (Goonetilleke, 2020). In the context of this study, learners draw from their secondary experiences (content and knowledge) to achieve the aims of this curriculum in their Sepedi Home Language as a subject.

## **2.8.4. Curriculum Concepts**

### **2.8.4.1. Assessment**

Levy-Feldman (2025) defines assessment as an important aspect that underpins the entire education system. Consequently, for assessment to be engaging, meaningful, and well-designed into the learning activities and learner focused to effectively support learning (Rutherford et al., 2025). In other words, assessment needs to be aligned with the goals and objectives of the subject at hand to drive learners learning outcomes. Furthermore, Levy-Feldman (2025) identified two types of assessment that can be used to drive learners learning outcomes, namely, formative assessment (for learning) and

summative assessment (of learning). Self-assessment is one of the types of assessment that is used within assessment for learning that draws from self-regulation (Rutherford et al., 2025). This means that with self-assessment, learners need to draw from their personal experiences. Al-Serhani (2007) adds that learners who get a chance to self-assess are recognised as active learners who are responsible for their own learning.

In the context of this study, learners' primary experiences drive them to write formative assessments to assess their learning process and give teachers information that will assist them to support the learners. This is supported by Yambi (2020) alluding to the fact that formative assessment (class-activity and home activities) is developed to help the learning process by giving learners feedback and improving performance. Additionally, these language learners' secondary experiences drive them to use the summative assessment to be evaluated if they have learnt or met the objectives of the prescribed content. Moreover, with summative assessment (Controlled test, Mid-year examinations and final examinations), learners are examined to determine if they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to progress to the next grade (Levy-feldman 2025; Yambi 2020).

#### **2.8.4.2. Goals (Aims, Objectives, Outcomes)**

Simon and Taylor (2009) define aims and objectives of the curriculum as a way that learning goals assist in providing 'direction' and 'guidance' and summarises the outlined subject matter/content. Similarly, the objectives for learning assist to analyse how each objective(goal) can be achieved by learners through the content (Lunenburg, 2011a, 2011c). This means that the aims, objectives, and outcomes of language subject are important for both teachers and learners, as they outline what should be taught, learnt, and achieved in the subject. Makumane and Khoza (2020) note that teachers design aims that would guide them on how to achieve objectives effectively and support learners to achieve outcomes.

According to Khoza (2016), an aim is a long-term goal and objective is a short-term goal both are teacher centred. This is supported by Redelius et al. (2015) who emphasise that, if aims and learning goals are well outlined by teachers, learners are in turn more likely

to understand and know the learning outcomes and what to learn concurrently. A learning outcome shows knowledge that learners acquire through learning experiences offered by the teacher during the enactment of curriculum process (Makumane & Khoza, 2020). For instance, in Sepedi Home Language the objective and aims from the subject policy are sometimes not well outlined for learners. This the reason why Sepedi learners do not understand what is it that is expected from them in their Paper 3 module.

Therefore, the teacher is expected to give a setting that best facilitates the accomplishment of the national learning goals (Redelius et al., 2015). For example, the general aim of the National Curriculum Statement (CAPS) Grade R-12 is to provide expression of the skills, knowledge and values worth learning in South African schools. In the context of this study, learners and teachers need to draw from their secondary experiences (Content) as they are guided by the language policy and their societal and context experiences (primary experiences). Sharing the same sentiment with Makumane and Khoza, (2020), learners' experiences of achieving learning outcomes are influenced by professional reasoning (content) and social reasoning (experience from their societies).

#### **2.8.4.3. Learning and teaching Environment**

According to Ahmad (2014), defines the learning environment as the space allocated for classrooms, science labs, open spaces, and offices which can affect learning, achievement, and attitudes of learners. The physical component (classrooms, teaching materials and learning facilities) and psychosocial component (human interaction, learner-learner, learner-teacher, and learner-environment) are the two major components of learning environments (Ahmad, 2014; Malik & Rizvi, 2018). There are three types of learning environments, namely, face-to-face, online, and assessment centred. Face-to-face learning is regarded as a traditional learning and teaching environment that takes place in person, in real time under the direction of an instructor (Alif et al., 2025; Bayu, 2024).

In addition, Sepedi Home Language as designed in the CAPS document needs a physical setting for the implementation of the curriculum to be done in a face-to-face classroom

environment. The classroom environment is optimally used in achieving learning objectives and a good classroom will have a positive impact on the learning process (Alif et al., 2025; Bayu, 2024). This means that in-person contact lessons may be influenced by primary experience (societal and environmental experiences). Moreover, the Sepedi Home Language encourages technology-integrated teaching and learning, where, according to Khatimah and Chisbiyah (2024) an online learning environment takes place via an internet-based platform, and learners allows learners to work at their own pace. This means that they need to draw from personal experiences to address the personal needs of learners. Lastly, assessment-centred learning environment must also be assessment-centred which emphasises the significant of feedback and learning and matching the learning goals. For instance, the formative and classroom assessment are given to learners to improve their learning process. This means that teachers and learners need to draw from their secondary experiences (content) to allow learners to be productive while being assessed. Consequently, the design of these subjects requires teachers and learners to draw from their primary experiences (social and environment) to teach in a face-to-face setting to allow learners to experience the process of teaching and learning effectively.

#### **2.8.4.4. Teachers' role**

According to Alsubaie (2016), the most important individual in curriculum process is the educator. This is supported by Kusmawan (2025) who concurring that the teacher's role in curriculum development plays a significant role in shaping effective teaching strategies and fostering meaningful learning experiences. This means that teachers have the duties and responsibilities of implementing the language curriculum, which may include the role inter alia of prompter and editor, instructor, facilitator and assessor. Alutu and Aluede (2006), explains that for effective and efficient learning and teaching to occur, the teacher (instructor) needs to guide the learners.

To play the role of an instructor, Ly (2024) explains that the teacher, alongside teaching tools, imparts knowledge about the language components, such as word formation, sounds, and grammar. This suggests that the role of an instructor requires teachers to draw from learners' personal experience (what they know) to address their learning

needs. Moreover, language teachers also play the role of being a prompter and editor, as they motivate learners and offer guidance in giving them constructive feedback on their writings or presentations emphasising improvements (Ly, 2024). This suggests that teachers need to draw from learners' learning experiences.

Language educators may also play the role of assessor and facilitator. According to Ly (2024), such roles are concerned with the teacher facilitating the learners' development and responsible for evaluating (assessing) learners through feedback and corrections (formal or non-formal). This suggest that teachers need to draw from learners secondary (content) experiences to facilitate and assess them accordingly. Content is another aspect of curriculum.

#### **2.8.4.5. Content**

According to Khoza (2016), having profound knowledge of a specific subject or content is more important than reconstruction of knowledge. Content in curriculum consists of the information, skills, behaviour and values that learners must learn for them to experience a change in their direction (Ochoma, 2020). This means that content is an important aspect in the learning and teaching process. This is supported by Lunenburg (2011b) alluding to the fact that the content outline is significant for the teacher in guiding and planning the lessons' instructions. For instance, Sepedi Home Language content includes diverse topics, such as teaching the writing process (writing skills), language structures, conventions, and literature as outlined in the CAPS document. Adding to that, content emphasises the issue of 'what are they learning 'or 'what to teach' (Ochoma, 2020; Thijs & Van Den Akker, 2009). Therefore, teachers and learners need to draw from their secondary experience as suggested in the Sepedi HL CAPS document, as it outlines which relevant content can be taught and learnt.

### **2.9. Theoretical framework: Socio-Cultural theory**

Grant and Osanloo (2014) define theoretical framework as the foundation of every study because it backs and builds research. In addition, Maxwell (2012) further explained how a conceptual framework is built by concepts, belief systems, together with theories that

guide the research and offer clarity. Moreover, Kivunja (2018) maintains that a theoretical framework consists of the theories outlined by experts in the field, into which one plans to research, and which one draws upon to provide a theoretical hanger for data analysis and interpretation of results. This suggests that it serves as the structure and support for the problem statement of the study, the rationale, the purpose, the research questions, and the significance of the study (Kivunja, 2018). This study is guided by socio-cultural theory.

This research employs socio-cultural theory as a theoretical framework to explore learners' experiences when it comes to writing abilities in Sepedi Home Language. This theory originated from the work of psychologists Hausfather (1996), Leont'ev (1981), and Wertsch (1985). Rahmatirad (2020) adds that socio-cultural theory is developed from the work of Vygotsky, his successors and co-workers, and is acknowledged in the term (CHAT). Furthermore, Abdullah et al. (2022) explains that socio-cultural theory or cultural historical psychology is a theory of higher mental development regarding social interaction as the core of the learning and communication process. This means that this theory sees knowledge as an element existing in the mind of an individual. Consequently, learners develop knowledge through interaction with the external (social) and the internal (individual) world (Panhwar et al., 2016).

In the context of this study, for learners to develop cognitively, they need to draw from their primary experiences (social environment) and their personal experiences (internal world). Therefore, the socio-cultural theory focuses on learners' cognitive development and specially emphasises the integration of cultural, biological and social elements and believes that socio-cultural plays a crucial role in individuals' cognitive development ; (Herpich et al., 2017; Rahmatirad, 2020) In this study, the cultural point is relevant because learners' cultural background influences how they write, learn, think, and perform in the classroom.

This is supported by Abdullah et al. (2022), alluding that the socio-cultural theory considers learning as social in nature, where meaning is acquired through language use within the social context. This suggests that socio-cultural theory is concerned with the activities that learners engage in to learn in a learning environment. This theory is relevant

to my study because it looks at how a language skill (writing) of one's native language is experienced in a social setting which is the school environment. In the context of the Sepedi Home Language classroom, socio-cultural theory in language skill learning can be practiced through social activities such as orals, presentations, essay writings etc. that stimulate the cultural context of the language.

This is supported by Rahmatirad (2020), demonstrating that in the perspective of socio-cultural theory, the good way to learn a language is to learn it from the environment it is being used and to engage with the speakers of that language. The theory has the following elements: mediation, regulation, internalisation and the zone of proximal development, scaffolding, and the activity theory (which will not be discussed).

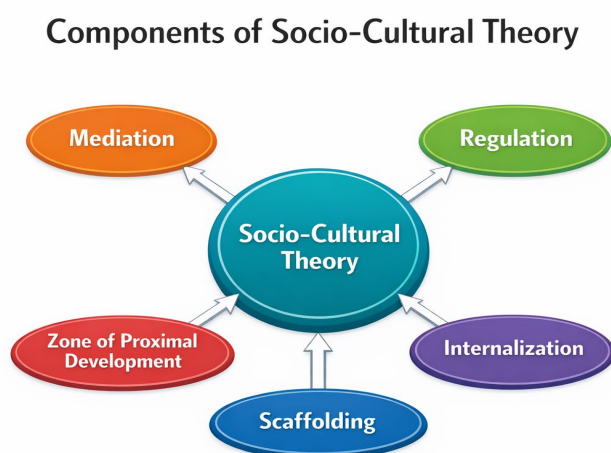


Figure 3: (Components of Socio-cultural theory)

### **2.9.1. Mediation (Primary experiences)**

Mediation highlights the various symbolic tools such as language, stationery and technologies that learners utilise to learn a language. Herpich et al. (2017) adds that mediation is the value construct that gathers all varieties of socio-cultural theory and is rooted in the view that individuals do not act directly on the world, but rather, that their cognitive and material activities are mediated by symbolic tools as well as physical tools. This means that symbolic tools such as language, symbols, and technology are the aids that help learners to think and communicate effectively and allow learners to self-regulate;

where the physical tools would include the writing instruments that allow learners to learn by taking notes to remember the content or memorise ideas in the classroom. As a result, learners are driven by primary experiences to learn Sepedi Home Language, because they use the social context and tools to learn the language.

Furthermore, Yamagata-Lynch (2010) alludes that mediated action links an interaction between the individual and mediating tools and signs. This means that learners need to draw from their primary experiences (social and environment), whereby they learn from their peers, teachers, and in groups. This allows learners to bridge the zone of proximal development, and this allows them to learn on their own (personal experiences). Moreover, Herpich et al. (2017) supports this by stating that language informs learners or individuals with the capacity to free themselves from the situation of their close environment and allows them to talk and think about activities or events. Sharing the same sentiment, language is the most common and effective symbolic tool that people possess to mediate their connection to one another, their world and to themselves (Rahmatirad, 2020). Therefore, this study explores how learners learn Sepedi Home Language writing skills through informal and formal social interaction.

### **2.9.2. Regulation (Secondary experiences)**

Regulation is one of the elements of socio-cultural theory and is defined by Herpich et al. (2017) as the controlling of a process or activity usually guided by rules. It can be inferred that for learners to regulate their own activities, they need to draw from secondary experiences (knowledge and content). This is because the content that the teacher presents to them in class is guided by policies, curriculum documents, ATPs etc. For instance, in a language classroom, learners may use notes, prescribed topics, and study guides which give learners guidance on how to solve or write certain tasks in order to acquire the language skill (writing skills). Moreover, the process of developing self-regulation consists of three stages: Firstly, object-regulation which shows that learners learn and think best when they utilise objects in their environment. For instance, learners may use notebooks and pens to draw a mind map for their essay task.

Secondly, other regulations including implicit and explicit mediation may include a peer, parent or teacher. Lastly, for example, in a language classroom, the teacher may assist a learner who is struggling to write a mind-map or paragraph by showing him/her how to derive points from the given topic and how to write sentences to formulate a whole paragraph. Thirdly, self-regulation, which refers to the ability to complete activities without any external assistance (Herpich et al., 2017). For instance, after learning from the teacher on how to write a paragraph, the learner begins to write a paragraph independently. Adding to that, the stage of self-regulation is when the learner becomes able to complete the activities with any assistance that will enhance his/her cognitive development (Ameri, 2020).

### **2.9.3. The Zone of Proximal Development (Primary experiences)**

The ZPD refers to the space where the learner and the teacher, which is the MKO, intersect. Vygotsky used the concept of ZPD as a metaphor to elaborate the learning potential of learners, while collaborating in problem-solving activities in the presence of an adult (teacher) or peer (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). This means that, in the zone of proximal development, a learner can write a basic sentence alone but can construct a short paragraph with the assistance of the teacher or a peer, or More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). Moreover, Herpich et al. (2017) outlines two stages of the zone of proximal development, the first of which is the initial developmental level, which is a level of skill reached by the learner working independently (via personal experience).

Secondly, this is the level of potential skill that the learner can reach with the assistance of a more knowledgeable instructor. This means that, at the second stage of ZPD, learners need to draw from their primary and secondary experiences. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) adds that learning takes place first interpersonally (through interaction) before becoming intrapersonal (internalised). For instance, as a language educator, I assist my learners to learn individually and to work in pairs. I break down the topic in steps (writing process), which means that when learners work in teams, it will enhance fluency, and when working individually (personal experience), it will enhance their cognitive and critical thinking skills.

The zone of proximal development is a conceptual tool for understanding the difficulties involved in human activity while individuals engage in the meaning-making process, meaning-making, and engage with the environment (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). This means that this conceptual framework is relevant in this study because the study wants to explore how learner interaction with their environment and culture may be able to influence their learning process in Sepedi Home Language writing skills. In line with this, Ameri (2020) adds that the zone of proximal development is seen as a tool that, when used properly by teachers, can assist them in creating learning conditions for their learners to promote their cognitive development in the future.

For instance, one can introduce learners to a language problem-solving activity to check the interaction that takes place between interpersonal activities (primary experiences) that involve social others (peers) and intrapersonal activities that include only the individual (personal experiences).

#### **2.9.4 Internalisation (Primary and personal experiences)**

Internalisation refers to the process that starts with learning on a social level and later becomes internalized (individual) process. According to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), Vygotsky used this concept of internalization to elaborate on the way in which individuals processed what they learned through mediated action to develop realisation through social interaction. Moreover, it constitutes the core concept of socio-cultural theory, during which artifacts such as language take on a mental function (Ameri, 2020). This means that in the context of this study, this element helps to determine how learners learn and develop awareness through socially mediated experiences (primary experiences). Sharing the same sentiment, Liang (2013) alludes to the fact that this aspect accounts for the original connection between social communication and cognitive activity and the instrument through which individuals gain control over their brains as the biological organ of thinking.

This is supported by Ameri (2020), showing that when learners take part in a wide range of grouped activities and internalise the effects of working together, they acquire new world and cultural strategies and knowledge. In addition to that, the learner or the child develops in the company of the teacher, parent, or a mentor, then he/she becomes

independent. For example, in the context of this study in a language classroom, learners may learn the writing process or how to do public speaking (orals) in class with peers then later be able to perform the speech alone or write essays independently (Internalised). This means that language learners in this example, will have to draw from their primary experiences (social interaction) and personal experience (internalised).

#### **2.9.4. Scaffolding (Primary experiences)**

Scaffolding is the process where the teacher builds from prior knowledge to understand the concept or topic learned from a peer. The concept of scaffolding plays a vital role in the socio-cultural theory. This is because, according to Van de Pol et al. (2010), scaffolding is the support that is given to the learner to enhance his/her cognitive potential. For example, in a language classroom, a teacher may give learners a lesson outlining how to structure or construct an essay. The learners may be given an individual activity (draw from their personal experiences and prior knowledge) and then a group activity, which will require learners to work with other peers (social interaction), which they will draw from their primary experiences.

This is called peer scaffolding, where Van de Pol et al. (2010), have shown that a learner can facilitate the novice in language learning. Additionally, scaffolding ought to be provided within what the learner can perform alone, and what he/she cannot perform in the absence of assistance (Ameri, 2020). Scaffolding is important because it allows learners to use their personal experiences (individual activities) and primary experiences (group activity with peers) to enhance their cognitive potential. This is supported by Van de Pol et al. (2010), showing scaffolding to produce learners who are independent, and who promote the autonomy of language learning.

#### **2.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

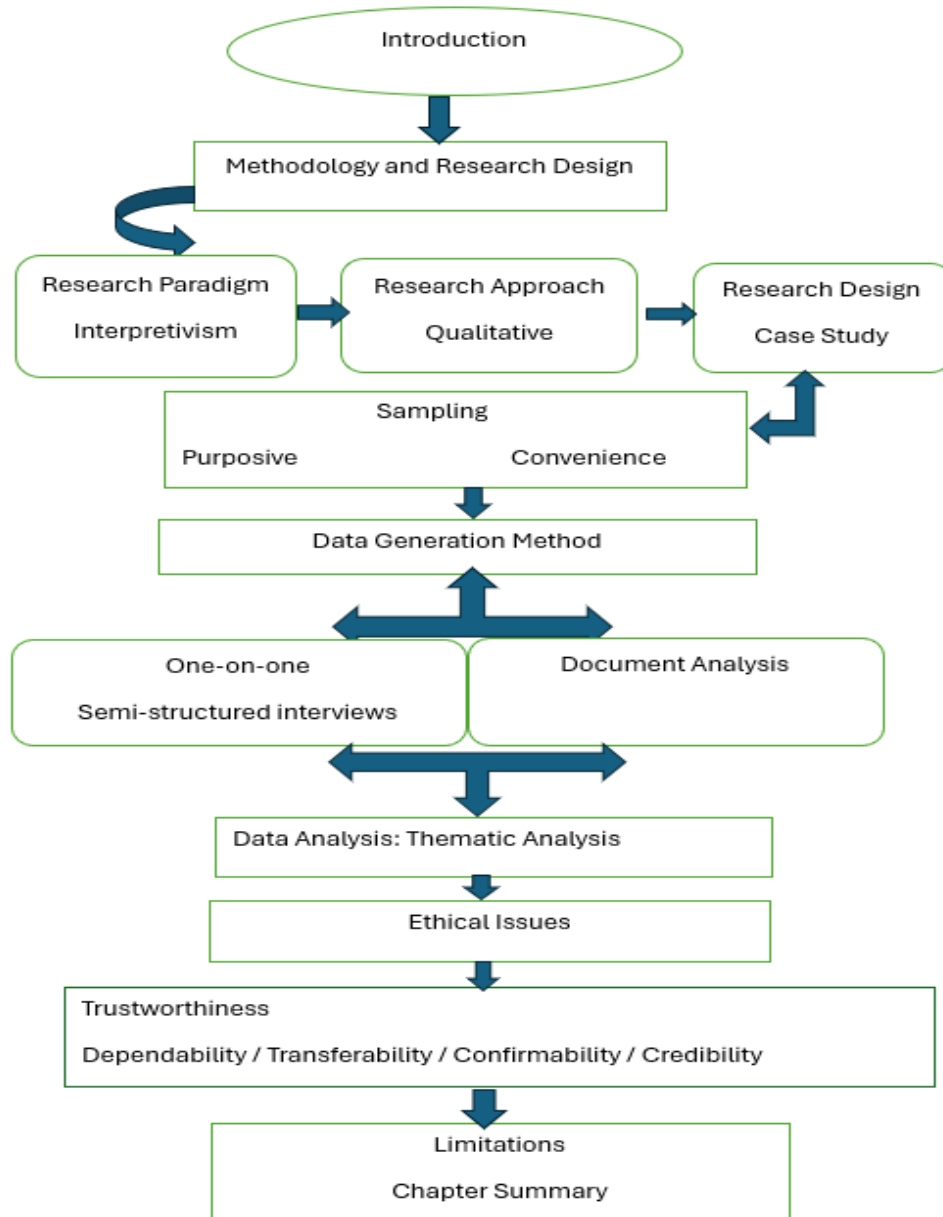
This chapter outlined how personal experience, primary experience and secondary experience emerge from literature. The chapter outlined the recent dialogue about the phenomenon (experience), a brief description of the study focus, categories of the study

focus and international, African and South African discussions on the focus. The levels of curriculum influenced by personal, primary and secondary experiences were discussed together with the curriculum issues. Socio-cultural theory was discussed as the theoretical framework of this study. The next chapter presents the research design and methodology utilised to generate the data.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Figure 4: Chapter 3 (Flow Chat)



### **3.1. Introduction**

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two discussed the learners' experiences with writing skills in their Sepedi Home language in secondary school. Chapter Two included matters related to experiences (personal, primary, and secondary) as the study's phenomenon, the debate on learners' experiences around the world, a discussion on writing as a skill and its categories, a discussion on curriculum issues (intended, implemented, and attained), and curriculum design. The previous chapter also described socio-cultural theory as the theoretical framework.

This chapter (Chapter 3) outlines the methodology and design employed in conducting this research. It consists of an overview of the research approach, design, paradigm, research style, sampling population size, data collection tools, and analysis methods, as well as ethical considerations, limitations of the study, and trustworthiness measures. This chapter discusses and unpacks the research design, and the reasons for choosing this specific approach are also clarified. The strengths and weaknesses of the design. Lastly, how will this approach be utilised in the field. The chapter continues to provide the appropriateness of the use of the paradigm that guides this research, that is, the interpretive paradigm. It also describes the population from which the participants are drawn and outlines the limitations of this study.

### **3.2. Brief Definition of Methodology and Research Design**

Tellis (1997) define methodology as the general strategy taken to conduct research, which includes the methods used and matches the outlined research strategy. Moreover, Ugwu et al. (2021) add that data collection, participants, instruments used, and data analysis are all part of the broad field of methodology. This suggests that a research methodology consists of different elements that help to resolve a problem in a study. Furthermore, Tellis (1997) allude that methodology is all about understanding how to investigate the phenomenon, the approach taken, the principles, and the rationale behind the chosen research method. On the other hand, a research design is a kind of inquiry within a mixed methods approach, quantitative and qualitative approaches that provide a specific direction for processes in a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). According to

Tellis (1997), a research design is a plan or strategy that is made for organising the search and making it practical so that, in the end, the research questions can be answered because of warrants or evidence. In simple terms, the two terms can be differentiated in this way: a research design is a plan or map of a research study, and methodology is the specific techniques needed to collect and analyse data and to answer the main questions of research.

### **3.3. Research Paradigm**

The word '*paradigm*' has its own origin in Greek, where it means pattern (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). From this aspect, (Tellis, 1997) define research paradigm as a collective belief system, or set of principles, the identity of a research group, a way of pursuing knowledge, and on what problems are to be researched, and how to research them. In the same way, a paradigm consists of comprehensive principles and concepts that shape how a researcher sees a setting and how she/he interprets and behave within it (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Interpretivism and positivism are the two research paradigms taken into account here.

Positivism, according to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) is a philosophical approach used by natural scientists, who focus on observable reality within a society. Additionally, the positivism approach believes that there is a world out-there that exists and there are patterns and sense of order that can be explored (Christiansen et al., 2022). Therefore, the positivism paradigm leads to the development of generalisation. Moreover, Pham (2018) shows that positivism is quantitative research that understands the object by methods such as sampling, questionnaires, focus group discussions and empirical tests. In contrast, an interpretivist paradigm allows researchers to perceive the world through the beliefs and participants' experiences (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Following Pham (2018); Thanh and Thanh (2015) emphasises that interpretivism paradigm often targets to explore the current phenomena rather than focusing on the problems related to empowerment of the group or individuals. Sharing the same sentiment, interpretivism looks at how people interpret their own surroundings or socio-cultural setting based on their different viewpoints, ideas, opinions and daily interactions.

Moreover, this paradigm focuses on in-depth exploration of context-dependent meanings created by individuals, acknowledging that they cannot be studied in the same way as physical phenomena (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). From this aspect, interpretivist approach in research is guided by the perception that human actions are context-dependent (Christiansen et al., 2010).

This study adopted the interpretivism paradigm. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) outlines the four elements of paradigm, namely: methodology, epistemology, axiology, and ontology. The aspects of methodology and axiology focus on the methodological logic and ethical process to be followed when conducting research. Moreover, according to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), ontology explores a phenomenon, examining what it means to exist, whereas epistemology explores how individuals acquire knowledge and understand reality. This suggests that epistemology and ontology focus on how knowledge and meaning are acquired in individuals' reality. This means that, what one language learner views as reality may differ from what another language learner views as reality. Furthermore, according to Pham (2018), interpretivists adopt an ontology in which a single phenomenon may have many interpretations rather than a truth that can be determined by a process of measurement. In this study, I interacted with the Grade 11 learners regarding their experiences with writing skills in their Sepedi Home Language so that I can have an in-depth understanding of their different experiences individually in the school context. This is supported by Tellis (1997), emphasising that the aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand how this reality takes place at one time, in one place, and compare it with what is taking place in different times and places.

One of the strengths of the interpretive paradigm is that one can use their different opinions on phenomena to not just interpret the people, objects or events, but also to deeply understand people in their socio-cultural context, because they believe they have shared belief system in the society in which they find themselves (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022; Pham, 2018). As the researcher using this paradigm, I used semi-structured interviews to obtain the ideas and viewpoints from learners regarding their experiences on writing skills. Moreover, this interpretive paradigm is essential for this study, because all the important data gathered will give a better insight for further action later (Pham, 2018). This means

that, as the researcher, I used this strength of the paradigm by using the qualitative methods such as document analysis and semi-structured interviews to explore the depth and context of the social phenomenon, which later assisted in the discussions of this study. Supporting this view, according to Thanh and Thanh (2015) in the interpretive paradigm, “the crucial purpose of the researcher is to get ‘insight’ and ‘in-depth’ information”. In the context of this study, interpretivism provided rich and deep insights into learners’ behaviour and social interaction.

In contrast, Pervin and Mokhtar (2022) note one of the limitations of the interpretive paradigm to be that it is criticised for its notion of subjectivity, beliefs, and views of participants. To overcome this limitation, I used multiple data sources (triangulation) and clearly outlined the methodology of this study (data collection and analysis procedures) to ensure transparency and credibility of this study. Another limitation is that interpretive research results are unquestionably affected by the researcher’s own interpretation, beliefs, opinions, or cultural preferences, which causes bias (Pham, 2018). To overcome this limitation, as the researcher, I made sure that I used a reflective approach, understanding my opinions, assumptions, and acknowledging my cultural background to ensure that my perspective does not influence the interpretation of the data collected.

### **3.4. Research Approach**

There are three advanced approaches to sociological research, namely: the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach (Christiansen et al., 2010; Creswell, 2009). This study adopted a qualitative approach. Qualitative research involves delving into the meaning of people’s lives under real-world circumstances (Yin, 2011). In simple terms, this type of approach looks at how people behave and why they behave in that manner in different situations. Additionally, Kothari (2004), notes that qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomena, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality and kindness. This means that the qualitative approach is suitable for various purposes in this study. This is because, in qualitative research, data is generated when depth is required (Christiansen et al., 2022).

This suggests that this approach allows researchers to collect data and analyse it in depth, which might not be possible with quantitative research. Qualitative research data is textual or verbal, whereas quantitative data is numerical, and emphasises quantity (Christiansen et al., 2022). On the other hand, qualitative research studies the phenomena within the cultural and social context in which they take place. This is supported by Creswell and Creswell (2017) stating that this kind of approach is concerned with looking at and understanding participants' ideas and experiences in a social setting. This is relevant to the goal of gaining insight into the learners' experiences (phenomenon) when they engage in teaching and learning in their social context during language periods.

Cresswell (2009) adds that qualitative research explores emerging questions, methods, collecting data from participants' natural environment, and analyses data from specific themes. On the other hand, qualitative research is the kind of interpretive inquiry for which people conducting the research make an interpretation of what they see, understand, and hear (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, Mack et al. (2005), are of the view that qualitative research is an example of scientific research that seeks answers to questions, gathers information, and produces findings and evidence. This is done through various data collection tools such as field notes, interviews, diaries, observations, etc. (Nassaji, 2020). This means that qualitative research can be utilised to understand a set of questions for which a quantitative method may fail (Nassaji, 2020).

Several reasons led to my selection of this qualitative approach. Firstly, Makgai (2015) believes that qualitative methods of research are employed in many different academic disciplines, since their aim is to provide an in-depth understanding of human behaviors and the reasons that govern it. This approach will assist in this study to explore and collect thorough evidence on Grade 11 learners' experiences, perceptions, and behavior in the school context, when they engage in writing activities in their Sepedi Home Language.

Secondly, understanding participants' experiences and opinions is the main purpose of qualitative research (Nassaji, 2020). Sharing the same sentiments, Creswell and Poth (2016) adds that the qualitative approach focuses on exploring individuals' experiences, beliefs, actions, attitudes, and engagements (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Thirdly, talking

directly to people and observing them behave and act within their social context is a major characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, lastly the qualitative research approach seeks to explore and understand rather than to manipulate and explain variables (Nassaji, 2020). This suggests that the researcher used written words and text, which are not complicated to work with when compared to numbers. Moreover, qualitative research is concerned with the truthfulness of the research findings, consistently and accurately representing the reality of the phenomenon in the study (Lotfollahi et al., 2020). This means that, for the authenticity of this study, I had to collect data directly by interviewing participants in a face-to-face setting.

Moreover, a qualitative research approach was selected as the most suitable for this study because it looks at exploring learners' experiences of writing skills in their Sepedi Home Language. This means that the qualitative research was relevant because it allowed me to study deeper and have a better understanding of learners' experiences when they learn in their learning environment, and to consider what influences those experiences on their writing skills, as the most important language skill. Additionally, Creswell (2009) asserts that "qualitative research examines human behavior in the cultural, social, and political context in which they occur". As such, I used all the levels of experience (primary, secondary, and personal) to have a better understanding and arrive at the conclusion of this study.

One of the shortcomings of this research approach is that qualitative research generates non-numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To overcome this challenge, I used both written and spoken words. Moreover, the researchers' presence may bias the responses of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This suggests that, as the researcher, I had to build trust and ensure anonymity, and moreover, I made open-ended questions to allow participants to respond freely. Time-consuming may also hinder the progress in a qualitative research approach. This was managed by formulating a short and straight-to-the-point questionnaire to promote brevity. This is supported by Creswell and Creswell (2017) stating that document analysis under a qualitative approach may require the researcher to search out the data in 'hard-to-find' places.

### **3.5. Research Design: Case Study**

A qualitative case study was adopted as a research design of this research. Cohen et al. (2002), defines a research design as a strategy that is made up of organising the study, and making it practicable, for research questions to be answered based on the evidence of the study. Creswell (2013) defines case study research as a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system(case), through detailed form of data collection that involves multiple data collection. Sharing the same sentiments, (2002) views case study design as a unique study providing examples of real people, in real context that allows readers to understand the ideas more clearly than presenting them with principles or abstract theories. Creswell (2009) further states that “case studies are strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a phenomenon, event, activity or individuals”. This means that this research design allows for a thorough investigation of the issue addressed in this study.

A case study is an in-depth investigation concerning individuals, event, a group of people or a phenomenon (Gustafsson, 2017). This study researched case studies of Grade 11 learners from two different South African secondary schools. Moreover, there are different types of case study, namely: single (Instrumental), collective (multiple), and intrinsic case study (Gustafsson, 2017). Therefore, this study deployed a single case study. This is because, according to Yin (2009) a single case study is analogous to a single experiment, where many of the same conditions that justify a single experiment also justify a single case study. Moreover, Gustafsson (2017) adds that a single case study allows the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the exploring subject.

In this case, I was able to have a deeper understanding of the experiences that learners have during their learning of Sepedi Home Language. This is supported by Creswell (2013), who maintains that case study starts with identifying a specific case. For instance, this case involves secondary school learners. A case study is used in many circumstances to contribute to our individual knowledge, group, organisational, social and political related phenomena (Yin, 2003, 2009). A case study facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context, using multiple types of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Moreover,

It may involve multiple sources, such as interviews, documents, or observations (Yin, 2009).

Furthermore, I chose to use this research design to be able to have a deeper in-sight of the phenomenon (experiences of learners). One of the strength of a case study is that they look at effects in real environment, realising that the environment is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects, where a detailed understanding is needed to do justice to the case (Cohen et al., 2002). This research design assisted the researcher to conduct the study at the school environment in which the learners had their daily experiences so that I could have a clear and deep understanding of their experiences of writing when learning their Sepedi Home Language.

Secondly, the case study helps the researcher to answer the 'how' and 'why' questions of the research problem or phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Consequently, with the research questions, the study achieved an understanding of how and why learners are experiencing writing skill as they do in their Sepedi Home Language. Another strength of the case study is that the data are collected both rigorously and systematically (Cohen et al., 2002). Lastly, according to Creswell (2013), the case study's intent is to understand a specific problem, issue or concern. For instance, this study explores the issue of writing skills of secondary school learners in their home language during both teaching and learning.

However, one of the weaknesses of this research design is that case studies might be inconsistent with other studies or may struggle to show reliability from a positive point of view (Cohen et al., 2002). This means that case studies may or may not be reliable as other research methods. Therefore, to overcome this weakness, I addressed it by giving an in-depth description of the research design and its alignment with data generation and analysis tools. Secondly, according to Yin (2009), case studies can be time-consuming and may result in massive, unreadable documents. To manage this weakness, I selected a small and manageable number of learners that I interviewed and analysed their written work. Lastly, case studies' sympathy due to interpretive paradigm has led to some criticism of the research design (Cohen et al., 2002). To overcome this weakness, I

ensured that the data collection process was performed transparently to participants and by also acknowledged sources that I used in this study as reference list.

### **3.6. Sampling**

Sampling refers to the selected groups of organisations, events and individuals who participates in a research study (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, Cohen et al. (2002) add that sampling involves the researchers' decision-making about which place, individuals or events to observe in the study. There are different kinds of sampling that a researcher can choose from, such as cluster sampling, probability sampling, random sampling, stratified and non-probability sampling (Taherdoost, 2016). Adding to that, there are common non-probability sampling methods that includes quota sampling, purposive sampling, self-selection sampling, and snowball sampling (Berndt, 2020). Consequently, purposive and snowball sampling are the most important sampling methods in this study. Makwana et al. (2023), differentiate the two methods, noting that in purposive sampling, individuals are selected based on how relevant they are to the study, and snowball sampling, also known as chain sampling, includes existing participants that helps recruit additional respondent from their personal surroundings, such as close friends or colleagues. This study employed purposive and convenience sampling.

#### **3.6.1. Purposive Sampling**

According to Etikan and Bala (2017), purposive sampling is a sampling design based on the judgement of the researcher regarding who will give accurate data to succeed for the objective of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental, subjective, or selective sampling (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In simple terms, purposive sampling is a sample method used to find individuals who can give relevant and valuable information for the study. As such, according to Cohen et al. (2002), this kind of sampling asks the researcher to make choices about which group of people to include in the sample.

Further to the above, the aim of purposive sampling is to focus on certain traits of a population that are of interest, which will enable the researcher to answer the research questions (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In that regard, this study sought to understand learners'

experiences of learning their writing skills in Grade 11 in Sepedi Home Language, and to identify and understand what informs those experiences. Therefore, this type of sampling aligned with this study as it assisted the researcher in purposefully selecting appropriate participants (learners) that provided a rich information for the study to address and answer the research questions. This sample method was of good use for this study as it was designed for the researcher to sample with a purpose in mind and assisted in finding participants willing to share their knowledge and experience. Learners were purposefully sampled by selecting four learners with high average, three learners with middle average and three learners with low average to represent all the levels of learners' performance.

However, one of the disadvantages of purposive sampling is that it can be highly vulnerable to researcher bias (Rai & Thapa, 2015). Moreover, the latter study further shows that even the subjective and non-probability nature of selection of participants makes it difficult to justify the samples' representations. In this study, this kind of a disadvantage is addressed by clearly outlining the criteria of selection of participants, that is, the Grade 11 learners doing Sepedi Home Language, and by also being transparent about the sampling method and selection processes. Furthermore, the study used the snowball sampling, as discussed below.

### **3.6.2. Convenience Sampling**

Convenience sampling is also known as 'accidental' samples because participants may be chosen in the sample simply as they just happen to be in the same or near setting where the researcher is conducting the study (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Moreover, according to Yin (2011) convenience sampling involves selecting data collection units due to their ready availability. This means that this sampling method allows the research to select participants who are accessible and convenient to the study. Golzar et al. (2022), adds that with convenience sampling the researcher can spent less effort in selecting the participants compared to other non-random sampling techniques.

For instance, in this study, one of the inclusion criteria used in conveniently selecting the participants was: (a) being a learner in secondary school; and (b) doing Sepedi as a home language. This is supported by Golzae et al. (2022), who showed that, when selecting

participant convenience, sampling proves cost-effective. Sharing the same sentiments, convenience sampling is economical and easy, and units are readily available (Etikan et al., 2017). In this study, I conveniently selected 20 learners to whom I already had access because they were accessible and willing to participate in the study. Furthermore, although convenience sampling is advantageous, this may result in systematic errors and biases (Golzar et al., 2022). Moreover, readily accessible sources of information is likely *not* to be the most knowledgeable sources (Yin, 2011). This means that the small, sampled population may not be able to represent a wider population and provide purposeful data for the study. On the contrary, according to Etikan et al. (2017), the sampling method places primary emphasis on generalisability. This means that the data gained should represent the population from which the sample was drawn. In this study, 20 learners (10 from School A and 10 School B) were purposely and conveniently selected to be part of the study, according to the following designed criteria.

**Figure 5 : Participants Profiles**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>School (A or B)</b>
Participant 1	Sepedi HL	11	Boy	A
Participant 2	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	A
Participant 3	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	A
Participant 4	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	A
Participant 5	Sepedi HL	11	Boy	A
Participant 6	Sepedi HL	11	Boy	A
Participant 7	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	A
Participant 8	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	A
Participant 9	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	A
Participant 10	Sepedi HL	11	Boy	B
Participant 11	Sepedi HL	11	Boy	B
Participant 12	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B
Participant 13	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B
Participant 14	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B
Participant 15	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B

Participant 16	Sepedi HL	11	Boy	B
Participant 17	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B
Participant 18	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B
Participant 19	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B
Participant 20	Sepedi HL	11	Girl	B

**3.7. Data Generation Method**

According to Christiansen and Bertram (2019), data are proof or information that a researcher collects in order to find answers to the research questions. Furthermore, Nchabeleng (2025) defines data collection as a process by which the researcher to answer or test hypothesis and evaluate outcomes of the collection of data to gain more complete data. Sharing the same sentiments, Mwita (2022) maintains that data collection a systematic process of finding information needed to answer research questions, solve a certain research problem, and provide the basis for accepting or rejecting research hypotheses. In other words, data collection involves the gathering of evidence from the research participants. Qualitative research gathers evidence using multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, focus group discussions, and document analysis (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Mwita, 2022; Taherdoost, 2016). This study utilises the following primary data collection tools, which are: semi-structured interviews; and documentation analysis.

**3.7.1. One-on-one semi-structured interviews**

An interview is a method that is utilised to gather information through words of mouth between an interviewer and interviewee (Mwita,2022). Nchabeleng (2025) notes that a semi-structured interview is open and non-formal, allowing participants to bring new ideas during the interview based on their experiences. In other words, this method of data generation allows the researcher to prepare questions and ask the participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of the research’ phenomenon.

According to Creswell (2013), interviews are a one-way dialogue, providing data for the researcher and it is based on the researcher's interpretation and agenda. Moreover, Taherdoost (2021), outlines that semi-structured interviews are conducted based on a guide and are formal. This suggests that a set of questions that is needed guide the interviewer to ask relevant questions to the interviewee to get more information. Semi-structured interviews are open in a way that they can be conducted in different settings, that is, physically or electronically (Mwita, 2022).

Therefore, I chose to use the one-on-one semi-structured interview method because it can be used when aiming to develop a subject such as setting, culture or experience which is not completely understood. These methods helped me in generating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. According to Mwita (2022) semi-structured interviews are flexible and allows the researcher to ask more questions on top of the set questions. The one-on-one semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask to follow up questions to get more understanding of the learners' individual experiences.

In conducting the one-on-one semi-structured interviews, it was necessary to ensure that all participants (learners) are available, and they have assent consent from parents to take part in the study, because according to Creswell (2009), an interview is equated with confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent. I sampled the participants using the purposive and convenient sampling method. Most of the participants were available during the interviews, because I scheduled the last period before after school and afternoon study sessions to conduct the interviews.

### **3.7.2. Document Analysis**

Bowen (2009) allude that document analysis is a systematic and structured approach to reviewing and interpreting documents consisting of both physical and digital materials. To investigate the phenomenon of this study, I employed the document analysis by giving targeted essay topic to get an idea of the errors they make in their writing. Creswell (2009) argues that the advantage of documentation analysis is that it helps the researcher to obtain the language and words of participants. Therefore, I used the learners' essays by reading through and analysing the activity to identify and explore the phenomenon.

Additionally, documents that may be used for examination as part of the study include, agendas, attendance registers, minutes of meetings, diaries and journals, letters and memoranda, newspapers, articles and various public records (Bowen, 2009). This study employed essay writing. This is because the Department of Education (DBE, 2009) prescribed different types of essays, including argumentative, narrative, descriptive and discursive. I gained a deeper insight into the learners' experiences of writing skills through reading and marking essays.

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

Moira and Brid (2017) assert that data analysis is central to credible qualitative research. Data analysis involves identifying patterns, themes, and holistic characteristics, including explanation of certain human behavior (Garay et al., 2024). Sharing the same sentiments, data analysis constitutes a process of classification, description, and connection of the researchers' concepts with the phenomena (Graue, 2015). This study employed thematic analysis, where data was collected from learners and analysed using thematic analysis for its reliability. Thematic analysis is a process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

This means that the thematic analysis method is very crucial in this study because the themes drawn from the collected data were used to address the research phenomenon. In addition to that, Dawadi (2020), maintains that thematic analysis is a qualitative research method by which researchers employ systematic methods to structure and examine complex data sets. On the contrary, thematic analysis is useful in breaking down texts into codes, themes, small portions and understanding the data (Garay et al., 2024).

In addition to the above, according to Dawadi (2020), to increase the overall depth of the analysis, both deductive and inductive approach may be used. The latter elaborates that deductive approach can be utilised as a starting point which allows for analysing data involving themes that emerged through other studies. In this study, categories were worked out to form themes based on literature and the theoretical framework. In other words, the components of the socio-cultural theoretical framework were categorised and used in the deductive approach.

This study adopts a deductive method as content analysis. In the process of analysing data, the Braun and Clarke (2006) step-by-step guide includes informing myself with the data collected, producing initial codes, searching and reviewing themes, naming themes and lastly giving the report. In doing so, I was able to extract the underlying experiences that learners have on their writing skills and make amendments or ways to better these experiences and encourage future research on the phenomenon. Furthermore, in the data analysis process, ethical issues were taken into consideration.

### **3.9. Ethical Issues**

Ethical considerations ought to be prominent during the collection of data (Taherdoost, 2022). This means that all the information given by the participants ought to be considered confidential. Creswell and Creswell (2017) propose that the research process creates a degree of anxiety among the aims of the study to make generalisation for the benefit of participants and their rights to privacy. In compliance with the University of South Africa (UNISA) ethical research policy, all precautions were taken before conducting this research, to protect the autonomy and confidentiality of participants (learners). First, I applied for ethical clearance and received the ethical certificate from UNISA, which enabled and guided in ensuring that I conducted this study in an ethical and responsible manner. Then, secondly, I applied for permission to the Limpopo Department of Education. After receiving the letter, I requested permission from the Koloti Circuit manager and sent the consent forms to the school principals of the selected two schools and the learners.

There are three principles of ethics: autonomy, beneficence, and the avoidance of maleficence (Christiansen et al., 2010). For this study the researcher ensured that harm is avoided through the application of suitable ethical principles. The addressing of the ethics principles proceeded as follows.

#### **3.9.1. Assent consent Forms**

Christiansen et al. (2010), defines informed consent as an agreement that ought to be given freely, participants should understand what is required of them. Cresswell (2013)

adds that informed consent ought to show that taking part in the study is voluntarily and that it would not put participants at undue risk. In this study, when data was collected from Grade 11 secondary school learners, I outlined the research purpose, the title of the research and explained to them that they can withdraw from taking part in the study any time without fear. The researcher assigned assent consent forms for learners below 18 years of age, because, according to Cresswell (2013) a special provision (parent and child) assent consent form for sensitive population is required.

### **3.9.2. The research permission letter**

According to Cresswell (2013), before conducting research, it is important to collect college or university approval from the institution review board. Therefore, for this study, the researcher applied for ethical clearance certificate from University of South Africa (UNISA) as well as for permission letter from the Limpopo Department of Education and after receiving the gatekeeper's letter, I requested permission from the circuit manager and then sent the consent forms to the school principal where data is going to be collected.

### **3.9.3. Confidentiality**

According to Christiansen et al. (2010) the researcher should consider the confidentiality of the participants. In this study the research ensured that the participants are guaranteed to be always kept confidential. The researcher ensured that the participant's right to privacy by using codes such as Learner 1, 2 or 3 instead of their identity.

Furthermore, the generated data was kept safe and protected into the researcher's locked drawer in the storage room at work. The written essay tasked was marked and packed safely in a locked drawer. The interview audio records were saved in a laptop with protected password file, where after five years, all the collected data will be deleted.

### **3.10. Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness proves importance to assess qualitative research and its most crucial aspect is transparency (Adler, 2022). Adding to that, the strategy to ensure trustworthiness of content analysis begins by selecting the good data collection method to respond to the research questions of interest (Elo et al., 2014). Moreover, Haq et al. (2023) indicate that credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability constitute the four important concepts used to increase trustworthiness. The four concepts of trustworthiness are discussed below.

#### **3.10.1. Credibility**

According to Roslyn (2011) credibility is one of the most important elements in locating trustworthiness and determining how coherent the findings are with reality. Moreover, Haq et al. (2023) posits that, if the study's results are like human experiences and accepted, the study proves credible. In order to ensure credibility in this study, when collecting data, I made sure that all the data collected during the document analysis and one-on-one semi-structured interviews were kept safe for auditing and verification. This is supported by Haq et al. (2023) when stating that the researcher ought to engage fully and use good observation techniques and audit trails as strategies to increase credibility.

Credibility can be achieved by continuing observations in the field, prolonged engagement with participants, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, member checking, and reflective journaling (Connelly, 2016; Morrow, 2005). I ensured credibility of this study by spending enough time in the field with the participants in order to gain and build trust. Furthermore, I used peer-debriefing, whereby I explained and discussed the research processes and findings with fellow peers to gain insight and new perspectives. Lastly, I ensured credibility by using tape recordings and keeping the written texts safe after data collection.

### **3.10.2. Dependability**

Frambach et al. (2013) refers to this criterion as the extent to which the findings are unchangeable in relation to the context in which they were obtained. The latter further suggests that in order to determine the dependability of the data collected, data should be collected until no new themes are raised. To ensure dependability in this study I conducted thorough analysis of different literature and undertook comparisons of the phenomenon, where the research questions were clearly scripted and user-friendly to participants. Moreover, according to Frambach et al. (2013) dependability refers to having enough information and documentation of the approaches employed so that the study could be both examined and replicable. I have demonstrated clearly how categories and themes are drawn from the study. Moreover, in order to increase dependability, I took all the notes of all the activities that took place when I visited the field, in the form of interviewees, comments and scripts. This is because one of the procedures of dependability includes the maintenance of an audit trail of the process logs and peer-debriefing with a colleague (Connelly, 2016).

### **3.10.3. Transferability**

Taherdoost (2022) describes transferability as the extent to which the findings of the study can be transferred into different settings. Moreover, Haq et al. (2023) adds that transferability shows the degree of application of the research findings in the same nature of context, population, groups, or setting. After being thoroughly examined for reliability, all conclusions drawn from the findings can be transcribed and transferred to other surrounding schools in Koloti Circuit and Limpopo Province, which will assist secondary schools that are facing same issues regarding writing skills. Moreover, Transferability is achieved when the researcher gives enough information about the self and the study context, process, population and researcher-participant relationship to enable the reader to decide how the results may transfer (Marrow, 2005). Therefore, I gave a rich detailed description of this study and made conclusions which assisted in understanding other studies related to this one.

### **3.10.4. Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are focusing on the study's participants and background instead of researcher's bias (Connelly, 2016). Creswell (2009) adds that this criterion is a way of ensuring that the study findings are the outcomes of the experiences of the participants, rather than the choices of the research. In this study, I ensured that I do not twist the words from participants interviews, so that all the collected data are based on how the Grade 11 learners are experiencing writing skills. I provided a clear list of all references used in this study. Creswell (2013) shows that qualitative research requires confirmability, that is, documentation of all data included in the research. This may be carried out through an audit path of raw data, memos, notes and data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). For confirmability, the findings of this study may be confirmed using the references listed in this study and be repeated in other studies.

### **3.11. Possible Limitations of the study**

According to Ross and Bibler Zaidi (2019) limitation represents weaknesses within the study that may affect the conclusions or outcomes of the research. This study may be limited by the unavailability of learners. I planned to conduct these interviews around the school premises, where the availability of my participants may be compromised by writing common tasks and curriculum coverage. To overcome this limitation, I planned to interview the participants during or after school study periods or free periods. This study may also be limited in terms of generalisation of data, as learners were purposively and conveniently selected from two secondary schools in the Koloti Circuit. As such, the data collected cannot represent the wider population of Grade 11 learners who are taking Sepedi as a Home Language subject at school.

Furthermore, when it comes to the literature review, there were limited studies that explored learners' experiences especially in home language subjects. To overcome this, I researched about learners' experiences in other studies in an international, national and local context. Another limitation would be the lack of availability of participants to write the research essay during class time and difficulties in handwriting. To address these

limitations, I planned to give them the task during study time and explain to them to write neatly for the reliability of the analysis of data.

### **3.12 Assumptions and delimitations of the study**

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019) define delimitations as the boundaries or limits that the researcher decides to set so that the study's aims and objectives do not become impossible to achieve. This means that the researcher sets standards that she/he will do and not do in their studies. In this study, I used the exclusion and inclusion criteria to set up boundaries in this study. According to Hornberger and Rangu (2020), the exclusion and inclusion criteria set the stage for who can take part in the study. The latter study shows that the inclusion criteria elaborate on the various requirements participants ought to meet in order to participate in the study. For instance, in the selection of the participants, I determined the criteria to purposively select learners who would be able to give me more answers to the research questions. The inclusion criteria involved: (a) selecting learners in South Africa secondary schools, specifically in the FET Phase (Grade 11); (b) who are doing Sepedi as a home language subject and aiming for 10 learners from each of the two sampled schools.

Conversely, the exclusion criteria applied to learners who would not contribute relevant information to the study. Hornberger and Rangu (2020) state that the exclusion criteria consist of attributes about an individual or external factors in their surrounding that would go against the goal of the study or interfere with it. In this study, the exclusion criteria eliminated learners who are not doing Grade 11, as well as learners who are not conveniently accessible and available.

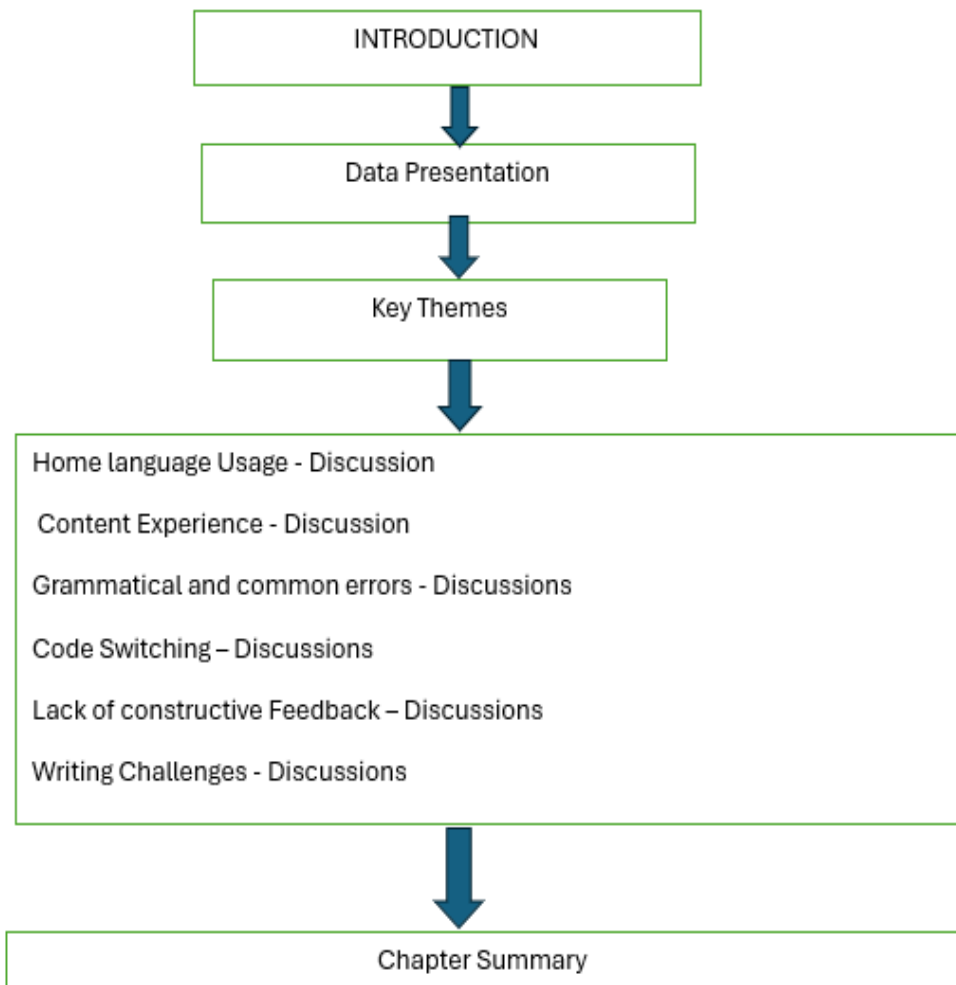
### **3.12. Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the research paradigm, approach and design chosen for this study. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the population sampling which led to how data was collected and analysed. It further outlined the steps taken to ensure validity and trustworthiness of the study findings and how ethical issues were considered to protect the rights and privacy of participants. The next chapter will provide the reader with data presentation and discussions on the research findings.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.

Figure 6 : Chapter 4 (Flow Chat)



## 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (3) provided a more detailed research methodology, highlighting the research design and data generation methods employed in this study. It provided the researcher with a systematic approach to investigate the research questions. Therefore, this chapter (4) presents the findings and discussions drawn from the qualitative data analysis, providing a deeper understanding of the research topic. The aim of this chapter is to present the interpretations of the data generated from the 20 participants (learners) using document analysis and one-on-one semi-structured interviews. This chapter provides an overview of the major themes derived from the analysis of learners' essays and interviews. Moreover, this chapter gives critical discussions and reflections on the significance of these findings in the field. Lastly, the relevance of the socio-cultural framework is discussed.

## 4.2. Data Presentations

### 4.2.1. THEME 1: HOME LANGUAGE USAGE

L1 said:

*“I use Sepedi every day because it is my home language. I speak the dialect Sepedi known as “se-Moletji” which is different from the Sepedi we are taught in the classroom. For example, we say tlhapa instead of hlapa...”*

L17 said:

*“Sepedi is a language I use daily with my family, but I am more used to speaking English... I watch too many cartoons and that influenced my limited exposure to knowing my mother tongue.”*

L2 maintained:

*“I live in rural areas of Moletji, where we speak the dialect Sepedi known as ‘se-Moletjie’. This dialect language contributes to my struggle of learning how to speak the proper*

*Sepedi home language used in books and in the classroom. I have been learning Sepedi as a subject from primary school until now.”*

L3 asserted that:

*“I’m from a Sepedi speaking family but grew up in Gauteng Province. I have never really spoken proper Sepedi language because I grew up speaking a dialect language ‘sepitori’ that I learned from the streets...In 2018 when I was doing Grade 1 and 2 I was doing Sesotho as a home language and later in Grade 3 did Afrikaans. All these changes of home languages resulted in my lack of having basic skills of Sepedi language, which affects my performance till today.”*

L4 stated:

*“Sepedi is my home language, and I use it daily to communicate verbally or non-verbally. I have been doing Sepedi as a subject since Primary school.”*

L7 affirmed:

*“I am a Shona speaking person. I grew up in a family where we speak Shona at home because it is my mother tongue and learn and speak Sepedi at school. I use Sepedi to communicate with my friends and teachers at school. I have started learning Sepedi as a subject at Primary school.”*

## **DISCUSSIONS:**

From the findings, participants are driven by different kinds of experiences that influence their usage of Sepedi as a home language for their daily communication tool. The majority (11 out of 15) of the participants are driven by their own personal or self-experiences. L1 and L2 support this by stating that ‘I use Sepedi every day because it is my home language’. Consequently, other participants are driven or influenced by primary experiences. This is because some participants are not native speakers of Sepedi; therefore, the geographical setting and the school location influence the usage of dialects. This is confirmed by L1 and L3 who noted that ‘I live in rural areas of Moletji where we speak the Sepedi that is influenced by our geographical setting referred to as ‘seMoletji’. This suggests that participants were guided by both personal and primary experiences,

because their language usage is influenced by their location. Moreover, some draw from primary experiences because Sepedi is not their home language, hence they also perform poorly in the subject. L17 affirmed that 'I am a Shona speaking person... we speak Shona at home and Sepedi at school with teachers and friends.' This means that learners whose mother tongue is not Sepedi have to take Sepedi as it is compulsory to do it as a Home Language subject.

The literature suggests that learners need to be encouraged to put more emphasis in knowing their home languages, as this will boost their APS score when applying for higher institutions. This is supported by Khetoa (2019) stating that learners in secondary schools are aware of the lack of significance assigned to native languages. This reality causes them to focus more on achieving higher proficiency in other assessments, thereby dedicating less time to acquiring their mother tongue languages. Consequently, DBE (2006) describes the LiEP as the language through which a person learns to organise experiences and thoughts.

Socio-cultural theory considers learning to be a social process, where meaning is acquired through language use within a social context (Abdullah et al., 2022). This suggests that socio-cultural theory is concerned with the activities that learners engage in to learn in a learning environment. In applying this theory, it is possible to recognise that the social context and cultural background influence the way learners think, write, learn, and perform in the classroom. Moreover, this aspect has a scaffolding and mediation role in learning. For instance, teachers need to break down the writing process step-by-step to ensure that they give learners the appropriate support in acquiring the language writing skills.

The aims of the Ministry of Education's policy for language education, as stated by Botha (2022) are: (i) to promote and develop all the official languages; and (ii) to counter disadvantages resulting from different kinds of mismatches between home language and languages of learning and teaching. Sepedi, as a home language, is very important for promoting learners to the next grade. This is supported by the Department that declared how a learner achieves 40% in three subjects, one of which is an official language at home language level, and 30% in three subjects. This means that if a learner fails a home

language, he/she repeats a grade. In addition, the CAPS documents provide a brief outline of the Sepedi HL curriculum for Grades 7-12, which includes weekly lesson plans, assessments, and learning outcomes such as speaking, listening, and writing skills.

#### **4.2.2. THEME 2: CONTENT**

L1 asserted:

*“Writing language is difficult compared to spoken language. This is because teachers don’t teach some of the content related to writing skills (specifically paper 3) .... they just introduce it at the beginning of the year.”*

L2 maintained:

*“The writing part of Sepedi as a home language is a challenge. We are given 2 or 3 writing activities (transactional texts) and the teacher does not control our books...we hardly write essays in our classwork books.”*

L3 affirmed:

*“Sometimes we don’t understand the Paper 3 content because we are taught by teachers who did not major in home language.... the teacher would say they don’t understand some of the content and skip...they will only focus on paper 2 (literature).”*

L4 said:

*“I did not receive proper foundation on writing content... some of us were affected by Covid-19 in our primary years and this resulted in our lack of writing skills... Secondary teachers assumed that we were taught writing in primary school.”*

L5 noted:

*“Some teachers don’t even finish the syllabus on time... they don’t follow the ATP... we only do revision when its nearing final examinations. some of the content such as the process writing were not taught.”*

L17 maintained:

*“The Sepedi HL that we speak is different from the one we are taught in class and required to use when writing our assessments such as essays, letters, grammar etc. In Sepedi subject... I manage to write stories and find descriptive essays to be challenging... I fail to find good descriptive words”.*

L5 asserted:

*“I have a content gap... writing skills were not taught properly in my previous grades and it disadvantages my performance in Sepedi HL.”*

## **DISCUSSION**

From the findings, it seems learners were not equipped with secondary experiences; they solely depended on their prior knowledge and peer-to-peer learning when it came to Paper 3 (writing). This is because some participants showed that the teachers do not know how to teach the content and often fail to complete the syllabus. The learners do understand the different content for Sepedi HL as a subject. Sepedi HL consists of three papers, which are Paper 1 (language structure and conventions), Paper 2 (literature), paper 3 (creative writing), and Paper 4 (orals). From the learners' responses, it appears that sometimes they are not taught by qualified educators in the subject (put one quote from one participant that proves this). This suggests that teachers cannot meet the learners' needs in this subject. This means that learners had to draw from their personal experiences in learning some of the writing content.

Learners were not taught how to approach different types of essays and their characteristics. L17 responded 'I fail to write descriptive essays... I only enjoy writing stories. Some participants showed that they find the writing content to be more difficult compared to speaking content (oral presentations). L17 showed that 'the Sepedi we speak is not the same as the one we are taught and assessed during exams'." This means that learners end up writing how they speak, which is incorrect. This also suggests that learners also draw from their primary experiences when given tasks as secondary

experiences are less dominating in this regard. Moreover, L5 maintained that ‘...some of the content, such as process writing, was not taught in class... and only do revision when it's nearing final exams.’ This shows that the main reason that learners have negative experiences of writing in their home language is due to factors such as an unfinished syllabus or content.

The literature shows that the findings of Makgai (2016) were supported by the findings of the current study, which shows that the teaching of the Sepedi home language content were compromised by the unfinished syllabus and being taught by unqualified teachers. This means that learners were not taught well due to inexperienced teachers who did not receive any training on how to teach writing skills. In addition, Rammbuda (2024), demonstrates that the lack of teacher training contributes to the challenges faced by both learners and teachers. This suggests that learners needed to draw from their personal and primary experiences. In a study by Makgai (2016), the learners' responses proved that teachers do not teach skills for essay writing.

Moreover, the findings of this study also reveal that some participants were failed to understand or approach the essay topics given. Nchabeleng (2025) suggests that the difficulty of not understanding topics can also stem from learners not reading for enjoyment in order to grasp current affairs content in their surroundings. At the same time, Makgai's (2016) study findings demonstrate that learners did not understand different types of essays, since they were not explained to them, and that teachers blamed other aspects, such as learners' attitudes towards their home language. Moreover, socio-cultural theory comprises regulation as one of its key elements. Nystrand (2023) defines regulation as the controlling of a process of activity guided by rules. In this study, from the findings, learners were taught Paper 3 content in the classroom, which followed the rules from the CAPS document. However, the regulation element was not followed, as some syllabi and content were not taught properly.

According to DBE (2011), corresponding topics in Sepedi home language (Grd 10-12) content involve reading (types of texts, comprehension skills), writing (types of writing, writing processes), speaking, and listening (oral presentation skills). Moreover, Mulatedzi (2024) emphasised that the implementation of CAPS as a curriculum policy can guide the

way in which writing is both taught and assessed. This suggests that learners need to draw from secondary experiences (content and knowledge) as guided by the CAPS document in order to enable learners' acquisition of writing skills in their home language subject.

#### **4.2.3. THEME 3: GRAMMATICAL AND COMMON ERRORS**

L1 said:

*"I have bad experience when it comes to writing in Sepedi home language. This is because some parts of writing I find to be difficult for me since I did not receive adequate foundation when it comes to writing skills. Sometimes I forget the actual words in Sepedi and end up writing them in English."*

L2 asserted:

*"I have average experience when it comes to writing in Sepedi Home language. I can write essays and any writing activities using Sepedi and get great marks. My writing skills improved as I joined writing competitions and managed to improve where I was struggling."*

L3 maintained:

*"I have a very bad experience when it comes to writing. This is because I find Sepedi to be difficult, and I haven't got best marks in my report card... I fail to construct understandable paragraphs, and I cannot write other words in the formal Sepedi language for example, sometimes I would fail to write, 'struggle', in my mother tongue and this result in my writing not to be good."*

L13 responded

*"I have average experience when it comes to writing in Sepedi. I only struggle with flow of ideas and spelling..."*

L4 responded:

*"I have average experience because when I write I use correct writing format, but marks always come back very low. This makes me lose confidence when I write. I am not perfect at writing essays but I'm perfect at narrating stories."*

L5 maintained:

*"I struggled with writing in my past grades. I couldn't form well-constructed sentences and paragraphs and couldn't find suitable words to use when writing especially during the Covid-19 era it made my situation to be worse. But I am now improving."*

L17 said:

*"I don't feel confident when writing in Sepedi... I tend to take Sepedi for granted because it is my mother tongue... I take it as a minority as compared to other subjects."*

L14 showed that:

*"...I fail to write well-constructed and meaningful sentences and paragraphs ...this is affecting my essay writing skills so badly."*

L1 alluded:

*"The most challenging thing I come across when writing in Sepedi is grammatical errors and punctuation marks. I find it difficult to even use suitable Sepedi words when writing and correct tenses. for example, I would use 'gating' instead of 'dikgoro'. Moreover, I struggle with construction of sentences that are readable and well punctuated."*

L2 maintained:

*"Growing up I never really had enough time to learn basics of Sepedi as a home language. I am struggling with basic things such as writing months or numbers in my home language. This resulted in obtaining lower marks in my assessments in class."*

L11 affirmed:

*"Flow of ideas is a huge challenge for me... the incorrect usage of punctuation marks and incorrect spelling..."*

L13 mentioned:

*“I am having a challenge with incorrect spelling and grammatical errors when writing. Moreover, I also have a challenge with writing meaningful sentences and paragraphs, and this is because I don’t know which correct words to use.”*

L4 said:

*“I have serious spelling problem for example “hlaka” instead of “tlhaka” or ‘hlompho’ instead of ‘tlhompho’. This is a serious challenge....and the use of punctuation marks when writing.”*

L5 added:

*“My biggest struggle is spelling and grammatical errors...”*

L18 said

*“I struggle with analysing the topic and how to approach it...and which points to include on the mind map.”*

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that most Grade 11 learners face significant grammatical and writing challenges. The reason for this was confirmed by L1, who said, “I have a bad experience when it comes to writing essays in my home language... I did not receive adequate foundation... I am struggling with the wording choice. I forget the Sepedi words and end up writing English words.” This means that no level of experience helps learners in this regard. Furthermore, most participants shared that their attitudes towards the subject ultimately led to them failing drastically. L17 stated, “I don’t feel confident when writing in Sepedi...I take this subject for granted because it is my mother tongue... I take it as a minority as compared to other subjects.” This suggests that learners were only drawing from their personal experiences (attitudes) during learning time without giving this subject much attention in the classroom.

Moreover, L5 maintained that “I struggled with writing from past grades... I can’t formulate well-constructed sentences and paragraphs or find suitable words... the gap made by Covid-19 made my situation worse, but I am improving now.” This suggests that learners also drew from classroom lessons, but due to changes brought by Covid-19, which

disturbed their acquisition of writing skills (incomplete sentence). Furthermore, the participants reflected on the challenges they face when writing their formal essays. L11 noted “the most challenging thing is grammatical errors and punctuation marks... I find it difficult to use correct tenses and words.” Another participant maintained that “I have a serious spelling problem, for example, 'hlaka' instead of 'tlhaka' or 'hlompho' instead of 'tlhompho'. This is a serious challenge... and the use of punctuation marks when writing.”

Furthermore, the findings of Rammbuda (2024) show that the grammatical challenges that learners experience are due to ineffective teaching and learning methods. Learners had to draw from their prior knowledge and their social context in learning writing skills in the Sepedi Home Language. Ramothwala (2021) supports this by stating that errors that learners make in Sepedi writing are costly because teachers penalise them, where their performance is affected negatively, and most schools pass percentages drop due to failure in Sepedi HL results. This is supported by Nondabula and Nomlomo (2023), who state that learners experience language-related challenges. For instance, many learners also experience the clash between speaking and writing Moletji, for example: omission of vowels, they use “O” instead of “go” and “gedimo” instead of “godimo” to mention a few. As such, learners who get low average marks in their final examination do so because of the existence of extra linguistic and language factors experienced by learners throughout their academic years (Khetoa, 2019; Majyambere, 2024).

The concept of scaffolding plays a vital role in the socio-cultural theory. This is because, according to (Majyambere, 2024), scaffolding is the support provided to the learner to enhance their cognitive potential. In applying this theory, it is recognised that this element did not apply because participants proved that they have writing and grammatical challenges due to a lack of receiving a writing skills foundation from previous grades and the present grade.

The Sepedi HL CAPS document clearly outlines ways to improve learners' writing errors, where according to DBE (2011) Sepedi HL CAPS document outlines the language structures and conventions that learners need to draw from in mastering the grammar (content) of this subject. This suggests that learners ought to follow the policy guidelines to enhance their writing skills. On the contrary, the findings of this study proved that

learners' grammatical and common errors made in their essays are likely due to a lack of sufficient knowledge of the grammar content of that specific language.

#### **4.2.4. Theme 4: CODE-SWITCHING**

L11 asserted that

*"...I tend to code-switch between English and Sepedi and this affects my writing skills badly because... I fail to write other words in Sepedi because I am used to speaking in Sepedi."*

L17 maintained:

*"...I doubt myself a lot when writing...I am used to code-switching between English and Sepedi hence I struggle to find correct words when writing Sepedi essays."*

L18 asserted:

*"I mix English with Sepedi (code-switch) ... I struggle with writing because I sometimes confuse Sepedi words with the Setswana words..."*

L10

*"I can express my thoughts creatively, but sometimes it can be difficult to find the correct words or idioms as nowadays we are used to language 'mashups'."*

## **DISCUSSION**

From the findings of this study, the evidence shows that one of the challenges with writing is the issue of code-switching between English, Sepedi, and other mash-up languages. L11 stated "I tend to code-switch between English and Sepedi, which negatively affects my writing skills. I fail to write some words in Sepedi." This suggests that learners sometimes draw on their primary experiences. They engage with their peers daily, and this contributes to how they speak, which will end up affecting how they write. Some of the participants brought a different viewpoint on this aspect, mentioning the use of 'mashups' languages as their form of communication.

L10 said “I can express my thoughts creatively, but sometimes it is difficult to find the correct words or idioms, as nowadays we are used to language ‘mashups’”. This means that learners also draw on their primary experiences to learn a language, influenced by their interactions with other individuals and the environment. Moreover, L18 maintained that “I mix Sepedi words with Setswana words (code-switch), this is because I speak Setswana with my grandmother when I get home.”

The literature suggests that code switching could form more writing challenges for learners, where Nondabula and Nomlomo (2023) assert that learning is evaluated through writing, and does not accommodate code switching. This is true because, when learners draw on their primary experiences (context and environment), they often struggle to grasp what they ought to learn and do in the classroom. Code-switching is defined as the change from one language to another that is understandable by the speaker and the receiver (Ntombela et al., 2025). From the findings, participants code-switch from English to Sepedi, or vice versa.

Using code-switching in creative writing can be tricky, as it requires both imagination and linguistic precision, where it may not be the best approach when trying to master formal language skills, especially in academic writing (Nondabula & Nomlomo, 2023). This means that learners ought to draw from their secondary experiences, which is the content knowledge they get from their creative writing classrooms, in order to master good writing skills. Moreover, Ntombela et al. (2025) shows that the school’s location has a great impact on the development of a learner’s language. From the findings, learners draw from their primary experiences, that is, their context and environment. This is what constitutes their social reality.

In applying the socio-cultural theory, the mediation elements are highlighted in this theme as it emphasises that, in a language, there should be symbolic tools (language, technology, stationery) that will assist learners in their learning process. In the context of these findings, language learners are influenced by various tools in learning Sepedi HL writing skills. For instance, participants were influenced by different languages, social media, and this influenced learners to code-switch when communicating, which later affects their writing skills.

The CAPS document is not clear about the issue of code-switching.

#### **4.2.5. THEME 5 : LACK OF CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK**

L1 alluded

*“Teachers need to improve teaching writing skills by teaching it regularly and effectively... and give more work on writing skills.”*

L8 maintained:

*“As Grade 11 learners, we lack proper feedback from teachers.... They don’t even give us enough learning materials.”*

L5 asserted

*“...the feedback we get is very limited...teachers don’t mark our essays correctly...they do shadow marking and give marks...some don’t even use the rubric when marking.”*

L2 said:

*“Teachers don’t give us enough time to learn about the basic writing skills especially in Grade 11...sometimes they don’t give us our paper 3 scripts for feedback.”*

L3 alluded

*“...some teachers don’t give us enough support when we consult about our writing activities.”*

L10 quoted:

*“We don’t receive proper feedback especially on Paper 3 assessments... being taught by one educator disadvantages us... fail to mark our essays properly. For improvement we need to have two or three educators teaching writing skills so we can have a better understanding.”*

L13 said:

*“We don’t receive enough revision time... you find that the teacher teaches this paper at the beginning of the year and never repeats it in class.”*

L17 showed:

*Educators don't assist us in structuring our essays and how to use correct punctuation when writing... also they take less time teaching writing skills and assess us with few activities.*

L13 responded:

*"I feel like teachers' inputs lacks effort... they need to give us correct feedback that has got hints of writing correctly."*

L14 said:

*"Teachers needs to be patient with us... especially those who are struggling to write. They need to always mark and give us constructive feedback... sometimes it's impossible to get feedback since we are taught by one teacher in a Grade of 164 learners."*

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings show that learners encountered learning challenges in acquiring writing skills in their home language subjects. One of the challenges included lack of constructive written feedback from their teachers. This may suggest that secondary experiences are less dominant. Plaindaren and Shah (2019) emphasise that written feedback is important in writing as it assists learners to identify their mistakes and do editing to their written tasks. Moreover, the findings show that both teachers and learners lacked experience in teaching and learning writing skills. L5 stated "...teachers need to improve on how to teach writing skills...they need to teach Paper 3 regularly and effectively... and give us more writing activities". Learners were not well equipped with Paper 3 content and did not receive enough guidance on how to approach writing activities.

This means that they are driven by personal experiences in the learning of Sepedi HL skills and competencies. Moreover, the participants showed that teachers do not guide them, and this is the challenge that learners encounter. L8 alluded "as grade 11 learners, we lack proper feedback.... teachers don't even give us enough learning materials to study Paper 3 contents. Furthermore, L5 added that "...the feedback is very limited... they don't mark our essays thoroughly. They do shadow marking and give marks... some

don't even use the rubric when marking". This suggests that learners' secondary experiences are negative, because they don't receive sufficient study materials and feedback from their assessor. This is a very disturbing issue that learners encounter. L14 added that "...teachers are not patient with us... especially those who are struggling to write. They don't provide guidance and feedback... Sometimes it's impossible to get feedback since we are taught by one teacher in a class of 164 learners." Participants came forward with another concept that may hinder their performance in language classes, which are overloaded with one educator.

Makgai (2016) reveals that the mistakes in the learners' essays from different schools show that skills for essay writing need a great deal of attention on the part of the educator. However, teachers do not have good guidelines to give feedback which makes learners have challenges in correcting their written task (Plaindaren & Shah, 2019). This suggests that if educators give feedback to learners that can improve their writing skills. Moreover, Mulatedzi (2024) shows that educators should give targeted and timely feedback to guide learners towards better writing practices. This is supported by the findings from this current study, namely that if educators mark learners' scripts and give feedback, writing can no longer be a challenge. Learners' responses showed that sometimes it is impossible to receive feedback, due to overcrowded classrooms.

Most language classes are overcrowded, and this contradicts DBE (2025) and SASA (1996), which outline that, from Grade 1-12, the learner-teacher ratio ought to be 1: 40 (a maximum of 40 learners). Adding to that, Mulatedzi (2024) argues that in large classes, it can be difficult for learners to receive feedback and support individually, and this affects their essay writing skills. The element of the ZPD is crucial in socio-cultural theory. However, in applying this theory, this element is not emphasised in this theme. The findings prove that most learners fail or perform badly in their Sepedi HL tasks due to a lack of feedback from teachers. This suggests that the teacher did not play the role of MKO, which may be disadvantageous to learner progress and performance.

Furthermore, the CAPS document of the Sepedi Home Language Curriculum emphasises the importance of providing learners with feedback as a learning process. The CAPS document indicates that feedback forms part of continuous assessment, helping learners

to identify their areas of improvement and track their academic progress (DBE, 2011). In addition, the findings show that most participants responded negatively to receiving inadequate feedback from teachers. However, this means that Sepedi HL learners are mostly driven by their personal and primary experiences.

#### 4.2.6. THEME 6: WRITING CHALLENGES

##### DISCUSSION

From the findings, learners struggling with mind-map skills. They do not know how to come up with points to support the topic. L6 has serious spelling problems for example, He wrote '**sechaba**' instead of '**setšhaba**', '**kutlwano**' instead of '**kvano**', '**melago ya naga**' (country's rules) instead of '**melao ya naga**' and he cannot use correct Sepedi words. He wrote '**thuto e thuša go humana mereko ye me kagone**' (education helps in finding good jobs) instead of '**thuto e thuša go humana mešomo ye mekaone**'. All these writing errors resulted in the learner not finishing a two-page essay and getting low marks. This proved that learners are driven by their personal and primary experiences. Their articulation when speaking influences how they spell and write words. This is evident in the essay of L18 where she experienced many spelling mistakes such as '**mantšhi**' instead of '**mantši**' (many), '**šuma**' instead of '**šoma**' (work), '**go didišwa**' instead of '**go dirišwa**'. She also wrote '**menyetla ya ko godimodimo**' instead of '**menyetla ya kua godimodimo**'.

On the same sentiment, L2 made a lot of spelling mistakes and errors. For example, '**kamkgo**' instead of '**ka mokgwa wo**' (in this way), '**hlompho**' instead of '**tlhompho**' and also '**dintšhi**' (flees) instead of '**dintši**' (many). Additionally, Learner 2 was separating words which were to be combined (disjunctive writing), for instance, he wrote '**le naba la thuto ke go tšwafa**' (the enemy of education is laziness), instead of '**lenaba la thuto ke go tšwafa**', '**ma kgona tšohle**' instead of '**makgonatšohle**' and Learner 11 wrote '**hloba boroko**' instead of '**tlhobaboroko**' and '**go bane**' instead of '**gobane**'. In this instance, the findings showed that the learner is driven by both primary and secondary experiences. This is because Conjunctive writing was observed from the learners' document. For instance, the learner wrote '**thuto ke senotlelo sa dilo kamoka**' instead of '**thuto ke**

*senotlelo sa dilo ka moka*, '*sena*' instead of '*se na*' and '*gotšwa*' instead of '*go tšwa*'. She also struggles with punctuation marks. Not starting sentences with capital letters. Furthermore, the incorrect usage of tenses for example, she wrote '*o tla kgona go fetolwa Bophelo bja gago*' instead of '*o tla kgona go fetola bophelo bja gago*'.

Moreover, other participants were driven by secondary experiences because they lack foundation in the learning of grammar as a content in Sepedi HL subject. This is confirmed by L14 who had a challenge with starting sentences with conjunctions such as '*gomme*', '*ebile*', '*eupša*', '*efela*' , the direct translation of which are but, although, because, while respectively. She also uses incorrect grammar such as '*ko gae*' instead of '*ka gae*', '*efeela*' instead of '*efela*' and '*swenya*' instead of '*tshwenya*', "o" instead of "go", "*o hlaletše thelebišene*" instead of "*O lebeletše thelebišene*" (he is watching TV). Adding to that, L9 had writing problems. He cannot construct a meaningful paragraph, and this led him in not writing a two-page essay, instead he only wrote 1 page. He wrote wrong words such as '*sechaba*' instead of '*setšhaba*', '*ki kemisheditše*' instead of '*ikemešeditše*', '*gomanago*' instead of '*humanago*'. This suggests that learners were driven by poor primary and secondary experiences in writing meaningful essays.

The above findings are similar to the findings of Thaba and Motlhaka (2025), which show that learners make writing errors such as wrong word form, prepositions, omitting vowels, punctuation errors, spelling, and incorrect connection of ideas that affect their writing. Moreover, the literature suggests that learners have poor secondary experiences because they were not taught thoroughly how to write meaningful and well-constructed essays. Ramothwala (2021) showed that errors that learners make in Sepedi writing are costly because teachers penalise them, thus their performance is affected negatively, and most schools pass percentages drop due to failure in Sepedi HL results. For instance, many learners also experience language differences, where they speak and write their Moletji spoken language, for example: omission of vowels, where they use "O" instead of "go" and "*gedimo*" instead of "*godimo*" to mention a few. As such, learners who get low average marks in their final examination are a result of existing extra linguistic and language factors experienced by learners throughout their academic years (Khetoa,

2012; Majyambere, 2024). As such, factors affecting learners' writing skills may be sustained by their primary, personal, and secondary experiences.

Socio-cultural theory emphasises that social interaction is crucial for correcting mistakes. This means that learners benefit from feedback and guidance from a more knowledgeable other (MKO), such as a teacher or peer (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). This means that it encourages learners to draw from their social context, however, this becomes difficult when they do not receive any feedback from the teacher. Moreover, this theory encourages teachers to provide scaffolding and support to their learners. For instance, some participants showed that they do not receive adequate support or feedback from their teachers.

The CAPS document emphasises that learners ought to be taught the writing process, which includes planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (DBE, 2011). This suggests that the CAPS document encourages learners to draw from their secondary experiences to be competent in their writing skills. Learners fail writing skills because they are not taught all the processes or syllabus that need to be covered from the CAPS documents. Moreover, writing should be assessed regularly, with feedback provided to learners to help them improve (DBE, 2011). Of the 15 learners interviewed, seven reported that they only write essays during formal assessments, indicating that secondary experiences are not well imparted to them. The CAPS documents show that Grade 10-12 learners should be able to write well-structured and coherent texts as one of their specific outcomes.

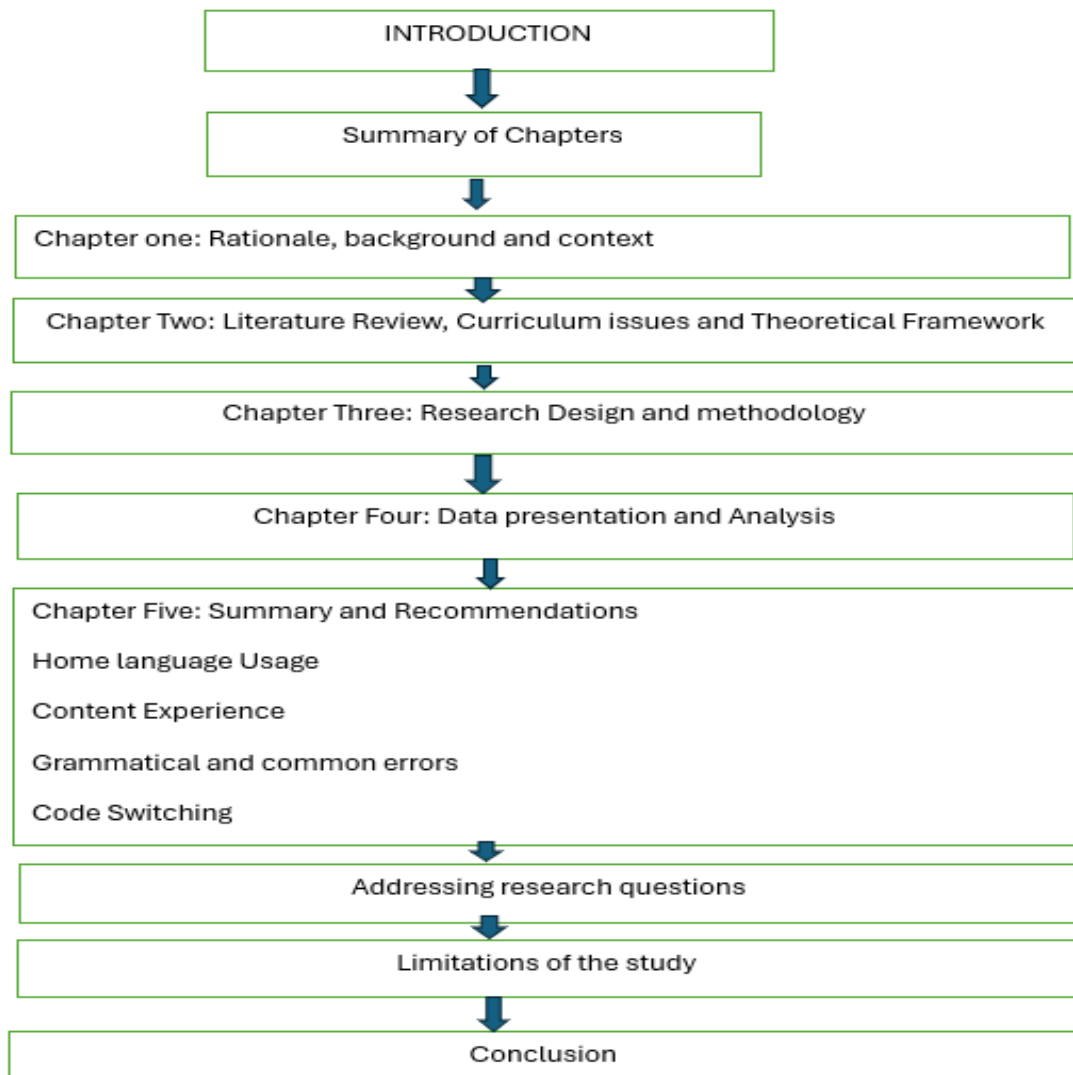
### **4.3. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the data collected and findings discussions generated from document analysis and semi-structured interviews. This chapter analysed the data using thematic analysis which revealed themes devised using socio-cultural theory. As a result, themes were identified with the aim of answering the research questions and objectives of the study. The next chapter will outline conclusions, and a summary of the research and make recommendations from this study.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 7 : Chapter 5 (Flow Chat)



## **5.1. Introduction**

Chapter Four of this study gave a detailed layout of the researcher's presentation of data and discussions based on the findings from the semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The previous chapter further presented the data analysis using thematic analysis, where different themes emerged related to the socio-cultural framework and those found in the findings. This chapter outlines the themes, and these emerging themes was used to answer the research questions of this study, namely : (i) What informs grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language? and (ii) What are the aspects that influence Grade 11 learners' experiences when developing writing skills in Sepedi Home Language?

Moreover, this chapter focuses on giving the reader a summary of the four chapters (chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4) compiled in this research study and gives detailed findings and recommendations to address the limitations and challenges found. The chapter concludes with a summary and educational implications for this study.

## **5.2. Summary of Chapters**

### **5.2.1 Chapter One**

This chapter outlined an overview of the study, the rationale, background as well as the research objectives. The chapter briefly elaborated the research problem and identified the three levels of the research phenomenon (experience): personal experience, primary experience, and secondary experience, which guided this study. It further outlined a brief synopsis of related literature, the research methodology, ethical considerations, and the trustworthiness(measures) found in this study.

### **5.2.2 Chapter Two: Literature and Theoretical Framework**

Chapter Two covered the related literature review, focusing on discussions based on learners' experiences with writing skills. This chapter began by reviewing related studies on the phenomenon (experience) and discussing its levels. Furthermore, the writing skills were discussed looking at African, national and international context. The matters of

curriculum (intended, implemented and attained curriculum) were discussed. This chapter further discusses the five levels of curriculum representations: micro, supra, macro, nano, and meso. Lastly, the theoretical framework of socio-cultural theory was discussed in detail, applying the levels of experience in each of the four stages, and the framework was justified as to why it is relevant in this study.

### **5.2.3 Chapter Three: Research design and methodology**

This chapter outlined a detailed research design and methodology. The study employed a qualitative research approach within an interpretive research paradigm, utilising a case study method. This study used two types of data generation methods, namely: one-on-one semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (essays). Furthermore, the study's trustworthiness issues were discussed, along with the appropriate methodology. Lastly, ethical considerations were discussed, along with the limitations and challenges that may arise.

### **5.2.4 Chapter Four: Research findings and discussion**

Chapter Four presented the research findings and discussions on the experiences that learners have when acquiring their writing skills in the Sepedi home language subject. Seven themes were discovered, influenced by thematic analysis and the study's theoretical framework. Moreover, in supporting the findings, I used the literature and socio-cultural framework to examine the themes. I applied the research phenomenon (experiences) across all themes to support the aim and purpose of this study, which is to understand what drives learners in each theme.

## **5.3 Summary of findings and Recommendations**

This study had two objectives: (1) To explain the aspects that influence the Grade 11 learners' experiences in developing writing skills in Sepedi HL and (2) to understand what informs the Grade 11 learners' experiences in writing skills. These two objectives were addressed by answering the two research questions, which are: What are the main aspects that influences Grade 11 learners' experiences when developing writing skills in

Sepedi Home Language? What informs the grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in their home language?

The findings in this study reflected the six mentioned themes, namely: home language usage, content experience, grammatical and common errors, code switching, lack of constructive feedback, and writing challenges, addressing the two questions in this research. The key findings and recommendations are provided in the following section, organised by theme.

### **5.2.5 Home language usage**

The findings of this study show that of the three levels of experience (personal experience, primary experience and secondary experience), participants were driven by personal and primary experiences. Eleven participants out of 15 were native speakers of the Sepedi language, which is a language they are supposed to communicate in daily. Three out of 11 participants were not native speakers of Sepedi but had to do Sepedi as a home language subject at school. Moreover, the findings reveal that those who were not influenced by their personal experiences were influenced by their primary (social and environmental) experiences. In this theme, learners were less driven by their secondary experiences when developing writing skills in their home language subject because their cultural and social interactions significantly influenced the way in which they wrote. The participants revealed that the Sepedi they use in the classroom during lessons and outside the classroom are two different languages.

Participants' language usage is influenced by their dialectical interference. This study recommends that Sepedi HL learners ought to be exposed to a wide range of writing and reading materials in their home language. Both teachers and learners need to avoid dialects variations when communicating inside and outside the classroom. The study recommends that teachers develop writing sessions for learners who have failed significantly in their subject. Moreover, learners need to be taught the importance of their home language to develop a positive attitude towards their home language subjects. Thus, they need to draw from secondary experiences.

### **5.2.6 Content**

The findings of the study reveal that Sepedi HL learners were not well equipped with secondary experiences; instead, they depended on their prior knowledge and peer-to-peer learning. This means that these learners were not taught writing skills thoroughly; instead, they relied on the limited content they had acquired from previous grades. The findings reveal that some teachers were not well-equipped with the skills to teach writing skills as part of the subject content. The study showed that teachers do use CAPS documents and ATPs (secondary experience), but they fail to teach these skills to learners in the classroom. Furthermore, the findings suggest that Grade 11 learners are driven by personal and primary experiences in learning Sepedi content.

Additionally, the study indicates that teachers often fail to complete the syllabus and do not teach learners how to approach different types of essays. This indicates that the relevant content was not adequately taught or covered, and that learners draw from their primary experiences when writing, since secondary experiences are less dominating. In addition to the above, the findings of this study confirm those of Makgai (2016), which suggest that the teaching of Sepedi HL content was compromised by an unfinished syllabus and was taught by unqualified teachers. This suggests that learners need to be driven by secondary experience (content and knowledge) to develop writing skills as guided by the CAPS documents.

### **5.2.7 Grammatical and common errors**

The findings of this study indicate that grammatical and common errors continue to hinder learners' progress in developing their writing skills. Participants' responses show that most Sepedi HL learners have poor experiences when it comes to writing essays in their home language. Moreover, participants reveal that they did not get a proper foundation and commit lot of grammatical errors when writing. This suggests that there was no level of experience helping learners in this regard. The findings show that learners have developed attitudes towards this subject, which is why they fail drastically when given writing tasks. The findings reveal that learners have a bad experience when writing

because of incomplete sentences, unfinished mind-maps, incorrect word choice, omission of vowels, and incorrect use of punctuation marks.

Mulatedzi (2024) literature points out that language learners have grammatical challenges due to ineffective teaching and learning. Moreover, Ramothwala (2021) notes that teachers penalise learners for errors they commit when writing. These two pieces of literature are similar to the study findings.

### **5.2.8 Code switching**

The findings of this study reveal that one of the challenges with writing is the issue of code-switching between English and Sepedi. This suggests that learners draw from their primary experiences. The findings show that as participants engage with each other daily, they tend to code-switch, and this affects their writing.

### **5.2.9 Lack of constructive feedback**

The findings of this study show that the lack of constructive feedback from teachers to learners is a major academic challenge. Learners' responses reveal that teachers' feedback is very limited, and they often fail to thoroughly mark their essays. This suggests that secondary experiences are less dominant because learners are not adequately exposed to instructional writing and constructive feedback. Moreover, the findings show that both teachers and learners lack secondary experience in acquiring writing skills. This means that learners rely more on their own personal-based experiences and their interaction with the environment and peers rather than depending on structured content knowledge to develop writing skills. On the other hand, teachers are not consistent in the use of ATPs, language policies, and regular feedback.

### **5.2.10 Writing Challenges**

The findings and discussions of this theme indicate that learners experience serious challenges in Sepedi writing. Common errors include incorrect word forms, misuse of prepositions, omission of vowels, spelling and punctuation mistakes, and poor logical connection of ideas. These weaknesses suggest that learners have not been adequately taught how to produce coherent and meaningful essays at secondary level. As a result,

errors are heavily penalised by teachers, leading to poor academic performance and, in many cases, declining pass rates in Sepedi Home Language.

## **5.2.11 Recommendations**

### **5.2.11.1 Improvement of writing skills**

This study recommends that both teachers need to encourage learners to refrain from using mashup languages or code-switching when they engage with each other, as this affects how they write in class. Learners should use Sepedi HL dictionaries, reading materials etc. to improve their vocabulary. Learners need to embrace their home language subject and learn how to communicate and write effectively using. The study recommends that parents ought to support their children by teaching and doing writing and reading activities with them.

### **5.2.11.2 Teacher Professional development**

This study recommends that both teachers and learners should draw on secondary experiences (CAPS, ATPS, language policies) to facilitate the proper acquisition of writing skills. Therefore, teachers need to spend more time teaching writing content and provide learners with different types of text genres to practice writing. The study also recommends that learners need to join book clubs in order to improve their reading and writing skills. These recommendations emphasise the need for systemic change at policy and curriculum levels. By improving curriculum design, teacher support, assessment practices, and resource provision, policymakers and curriculum developers can significantly enhance learners' writing skills in Sepedi Home Language and improve overall academic outcomes.

### **5.2.11.3 Increased writing practice**

This study recommends that learners practice writing regularly. Teachers are recommended to give learners more writing activities and provide proper feedback, rather than very good comments. Teachers need to emphasise the process writing, and how to plan, draft, revise and edit their essays, before doing the final draft to avoid error, as this will assist learners to develop their writing skills. Moreover, teachers are recommended to form remedial classes for learners who are struggling with writing skills.

#### **5.2.11.4 Constructive feedback mechanism.**

This study recommends that language teachers organise writing workshops or remedial classes to provide learners with feedback and support for those who are struggling. It also recommends that the DBE consider the implementation of the ratio of 1 teacher: 35 learners per class, which will assist teachers to give constructive feedback regularly. Teachers need to learn how to use a rubric effectively when marking learners' essays.

### **5.3. Addressing research questions**

**Research question 1:** What informs the grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language?

The findings of this study indicate that Grade 11 learners' writing experiences are largely informed by instructional practices, linguistic competence, feedback methods, and prior learning experiences. Learners reported limited explicit teaching of writing skills, particularly in essay construction, grammar, and coherence. This finding showed incorrect word forms, misuse of prepositions, omission of vowels, and poor organisation of ideas, suggesting inadequate instructional support.

Furthermore, the study revealed that learners' language usage challenges were limited vocabulary, spelling errors, and punctuation difficulties - negatively shape their writing experiences. This supports findings by Ramothwala(2021), who argues that errors in Sepedi writing significantly affect learners' performance, as they are often penalised during assessment.

Conversely, both native speakers and those whose home language is not Sepedi experience writing challenges as their exposure to the standard language is limited to the school environment. This showed that participants lacked secondary experience. The findings answered this question by indicating that learners from Moletjie use localised dialect (seMoletjie), which is totally different from the standard Sepedi HL needed for

teaching and learning in the classroom. This proves that learners were only driven by personal or primary experiences.

**Research question 2:** What are the main aspects that influence Grade 11 learners' experiences when developing writing skills in Sepedi Home Language?

The findings of this study highlight several interrelated factors influencing learners' development of writing skills in their home language subjects. The study found that teaching methods often do not adequately support writing development, as there is limited emphasis on the writing process. Secondly, Learners' limited vocabulary, weak grammatical knowledge, and lack of confidence were identified as major barriers to writing development. The study revealed that assessment practices that prioritise error penalisation negatively affect learners' motivation and development. This supports Ramothwala (2021), who found that excessive penalisation of writing errors contributes to poor learner performance and declining pass rate. Moreover, Limited exposure to written Sepedi outside the classroom was found to hinder writing development.

The findings showed different aspects, such as learners' attitudes towards their home language, dialectical variations, and foundational aspects that are driven by personal or primary experiences (interaction with other learners and their environment). The core aspect is the lack of foundational writing skills, which influences how learners write. The participants demonstrated that they lacked a sufficient foundation in grammar and writing from their previous grades. As a result, this contributed to learners experiencing challenges with sentence structure, word formation, paragraph construction and grammar or vocabulary choice. This lack of foundational learning negatively shaped learners' writing skills, which resulted in learners drawing from personal experiences rather than secondary experiences.

Moreover, the emerging theme of lack of constructive feedback also influences how learners develop their writing skills in their home language. Teachers' feedback plays an important role in influencing learners' writing experiences; therefore, the findings indicated that a lack of constructive feedback, unfinished syllabus and content coverage, insufficient teaching time, and few writing activities result in learners' negative experience

in writing. This means that learners were drawing from their personal and primary experiences due to the limited scaffolding by teachers, which disadvantaged them.

#### **5.4. Limitations of the study**

This study is limited to two secondary schools in Koloti Circuit, Capricorn North, Limpopo Province. The results from this study are from Grade 11 learners (20 selected participants). Therefore, this study is limited to the few selected participants and may not be generalisable to other contexts. Due to unknown reasons, five learners withdrew from the study. Only 15 learners were interviewed out of the 20 participants. Therefore, the learners represented the Grade 11 students from their respective schools. Moreover, the geographical area of Moletji as a rural area in Limpopo Province might also limit the generalisability of the findings to local or other provincial areas. This is because the unique factors in this environment might have influenced the results.

#### **5.5. Conclusion**

The study explored the experiences that Grade 11 learners experience when writing in their Sepedi Home Language. The study revealed that learners have a bad experience when it comes to writing due to their geographical setting and dialect variations. Learners tend to write how they speak and pronounce words incorrectly. Moreover, the study revealed that learners lack constructive feedback from their teachers after writing assessments, omitting vowels, grammatical errors, and are not familiar with the writing process and language barriers. This study believes that if teachers can be equipped with writing skills content, offer learners support and feedback, that could boost end-of-year results and a 100% rate in the Sepedi Home Language subject.

This study demonstrates that learners face significant challenges in academic writing, particularly in Sepedi Home Language as a subject. The study revealed that learners were not drawing equally from various experiences (Personal experience, primary experience and secondary experience). This led to them not receiving positive constructive feedback from teachers and having average or negative experience when coming to writing essays in their home language subject. This study recommends that

teachers be equipped with training and teaching writing skills in the subject. Moreover, learners should refrain from having attitudes or a lack of interest towards home language subjects in school. This will allow for the successful implementation of the learning and teaching of writing skills.

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## ANNEXURES

### ANNEXURE A : Consent Letter



#### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT TWO OF THE SCHOOLS IN CAPRICORN NORTH DISTRICT.

Research title : LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES ON WRITING SKILLS IN SEPEDI HL KOLOTI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.

**FROM : SHAI R (22407073)**  
**CONTACT DETAILS : 060/873/0962**  
**TO : THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR**  
**(CAPRICORN NORTH DISTRICT)**  
**DATE :08-09-2025**  
**SUBJECT : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT**  
**RESEARCH AT THE TWO SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT.**

1.The above matter best refers.

2.I hereby ask for permission to conduct my research project under Capricorn North District, in the two selected Secondary School (Mmakgabo and Boetse Secondary) under the Koloti Circuit.

3. Kindly note that the topic for my research is: **Grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.**

**The study is undertaken at the University of South Africa (UNISA)**

4.I am requesting permission to select 10 participates from each school in Grade 11 classroom (learners only).

I will give them a writing task and analyse it in the form of marking it and to interview and record the interview responses for the mentioned study topic.

5.A full research report with finding and recommendations will be made available to the school.

6. There are no threatening risks involved in this study.

Waiting in anticipation for positive response.

Yours faithfully (Med Student) 



PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MMAKGABO SECONDARY SCHOOL

**FROM : SHAI R (22407073)**  
**CONTACT DETAILS : 060/873/0962**  
**TO : THE PRINCIPAL**  
**MMAKGABO SENIOR SECONDRY SCHOOL**  
**KOLOTI CIRCUIT**  
**DATE :08-09-2025**  
**SUBJECT : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT**  
**RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL PREMISES.**

- 1.The above matter best refers.
- 2.I hereby ask for permission to conduct my research project in your school premises.
3. Kindly note that the topic for my research is: **Grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.**

**The study is undertaken at the University of South Africa (UNISA).**

4. I will request permission to select participates from your Grade 11 classroom (learners only). To give them a writing task and analyse it in the form of marking and to interview and record the interview responses for the mentioned study topic.
- 5.A full research report with finding and recommendations will be made available to the school.
6. There are not potential risks involved in this study.

Waiting in anticipation for positive response.

Yours faithfully (Med Student) 

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT BOETSE SECONDARY SCHOOL

**FROM** : SHAI R (22407073)  
**CONTACT DETAILS** : 060/873/0962  
**TO** : THE PRINCIPAL  
BOETSE SECONDRY SCHOOL  
KOLOTI CIRCUIT  
**DATE** :08-09-2025  
**SUBJECT** : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT  
RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL PREMISES.

- 1.The above matter best refers.
- 2.I hereby ask for permission to conduct my research project in your school premises.
3. Kindly note that the topic for my research is: **Grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.**

**The study is undertaken at the University of South Africa (UNISA).**

4. I will request permission to select participates from your Grade 11 classroom (learners only). To give them a writing task and analyse it in the form of marking and to interview and record the interview responses for the mentioned study topic.
- 5.A full research report with finding and recommendations will be made available to the school.
6. There are no potential risks involved in this study.

Waiting in anticipation for positive response.

Yours faithfully (Med Student) 

**2.DECLARATION OF CONSENT FORMS**



**Assent Consent Form.**

**ASSENT CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/GUARDIAN.**

I....., give permission for my child to take part in the research project titled:

**Learners’ experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language.**

**The study is undertaken at the University of South Africa. Supervisor: Prof Mpungose C.B**

The study has been outlined and explained thoroughly to me and my child. I understand that my child participation is voluntarily, and he/she can withdraw from the study at any stage. I understand that her responses and identity will be kept confidential.

Name of Parent/Guardian

Name of child (Learner)

.....

Signature .....

Date.....

Researcher’s signature

Date... *R.D.* ....

**Title: LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES ON WRITING SKILLS IN SEPEDI HOME LANGUAGE.KOLOTI CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

**1. Questions for the learners**

1.1 Tell me about your background and how Sepedi is used in your daily life?

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1.2 How long have you been studying Sepedi Home Language as a subject in school?

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1.3 How do you perceive Sepedi writing as compared to the spoken language?

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1.4 Can you describe your experiences with writing in Sepedi (e.g. Essay, Stories

etc.).

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1.5 What challenges do you face when writing in Sepedi?

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1.6 Do you receive adequate support from teachers at school to improve your writing skills?

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1.7 Do you feel confident when writing in Sepedi? Why or why not?

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1.8 What do you think would help improve your Sepedi writing skills?

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1.9 Do you have suggestions for teachers on how to improve teaching writing skills in Sepedi Home language?

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2. Essay Topic: **Bohlokwa bja go tseba maleme a mantis / E be ke re ke mogwara wa ka go fihlela...**

## ANNEXURE D: Ethical Clearance



College of Education

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)

Ref # : 8179

Name: Ms Refiloe Shai

Student # : 22407073

Staff # :

Date: 17/07/2025

Dear: Ms Refiloe Shai

**Decision: Ethics Conditionally  
Approved**

---

**Researcher:** Ms Refiloe Shai

Mmakgabo Secondary School, Moletji Moshate stand no 324

Polokwane

0608730962 22407073@mylife.unisa.ac.za

**Supervisor:** Prof Cedric Bheki Mpungose mpungcb@unisa.ac.za

**Co-Supervisor:**

**Co-Researcher(s):**

**Email address:**

# ANNEXURE E: Gatekeepers Letter



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
**CAPRICORN NORTH DISTRICT**

Ref:2/2/2 Eng: MphaphuliAJ Tel No.:069 513 7305 Date: 30 September 2025 Email: MphaphuliAJ@edu.limpopo.gov.za

To Ms Shai R  
P.O. Box 226  
Boyne  
0728

cc: University of South Africa  
Department of Education

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MMAKGABO AND BOETSE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, KOLOTI CIRCUIT IN CAPRICORN NORTH DISTRICT.**

Title: "Grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language in selected secondary schools in Koloti Circuit, Limpopo Province".

1. The above matter refers.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved.
3. The following conditions should be considered:
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implication for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with both the Circuit Office and Schools concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in any way disrupt the academic programs in schools.

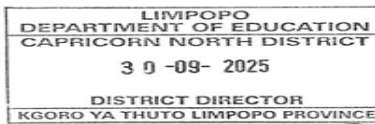
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105 CNR Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna  
Capricorn North District, Private Bag X 9711, POLOKWANE, 0700, Tel: 015 285 7300/7410  
Title: "Grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language"

- 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of examinations especially the fourth term.
- 3.5 During the study, research ethics should be practiced, in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
- 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.
4. Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Circuit and Schools where you intend to conduct your research as evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.
5. The Department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wish you success in your research.

Best wishes

  
MR MOTHEMANE KD  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR



30/09/2025  
DATE

---

105 CNR Blaauwberg & Yster Street, Ladanna

## Annexure F: Turnitin Report

PAPER NAME

**final edited thesis.docx**

AUTHOR

**REFILOE SHAI**

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WORD COUNT

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## Annexure G: Editor's Certificate

PRO EDIT PTY LTD

PO BOX 23081, CLAREMONT CAPE TOWN 7735

## EDITING CERTIFICATE

Date: 2025/10/12

This serves to confirm that the document entitled:

Grade 11 learners' experiences on writing skills in Sepedi Home Language in selected secondary schools, Koloti circuit , Limpopo Province.

by

Refiloe Shai

has been language edited on behalf of its author.

Genevieve Wood  
Pro Edit Pty Ltd